



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News –August 13, 2018
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UPCOMING EVENTS

August 15, 4-6 pm. Field based Conversation on Foliar and Fertigation applications. Green Mountain Girls Farm, Northfield VT. Join Nathan Harman, Soil and Plant Health Specialist with Advancing Ecological Agriculture for a discussion of foliar feeding and fertigation goals and demonstration of equipment and methods used on the farm to apply non-denatured (not purely water soluble) products (nutrition and inoculations) to a modest vegetable, fruit and pasture production. Free. <http://eatstayfarm.com/about-us/directions/> RSVP to: Mari@eatstayfarm.com

August 15, 3-5 pm. High Tunnel Twilight Meeting. Grafton County Farm 3855 Dartmouth College Hwy. North Haverhill, NH. Join UVM Extension’s Chris Callahan for a discussion on high tunnel ventilation, and UNH Extension’s Becky Sideman and Heather Bryant for a discussion of high tunnel tomato nutrient and insect management. To register, contact Heather Bryant at heather.bryant@unh.edu.

Aug. 21, 3-6 pm. Improving Soil Health. Good Heart Farm, Worcester VT. Join Becky Maden, Vegetable Nutrient Management Specialist with UVM Extension and farmers Edge and Kate for a tour of the practices the use to build their soils and a discussion on cover cropping. For registration info: <https://nofavt.org/events/improving-soil-health>

August 31, 4-6 pm. Cover Cropping Workshop. Join UVM Extension’s Becky Maden, Jenn Colby and Abha Gupta for a tour hosted by Pooh Sprague at Edgewater Farm in Plainfield NH. Pooh has many years of experience with cover crops and the farm’s innovative practices include inter-seeded plastic mulch beds, late summer sowings of tillage radish, and a trial no-till seeding of sweet corn into roller-crimped winter rye.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(S. Strafford) Morrill Mountain Farm. Our 2018 berry season is almost over. The berries have been abundant and the heat and humidity accelerated their ripening and harvest. For the good and the bad, this is the first year we have finished so early. It was difficult to keep up with all varieties of all berries being ripe and needing to be picked at the same time. On the other hand, it gives a lot more time for putting the rows back in order and getting things ready for the winter and next year. This is a good thing!

(Craftsbury) Our PYO blueberry operation is in mid-season form. We opened on July 21 and have been going daily since. We have created a Facebook page (managed long-distance by a brother-in-law) and keep our website fresh with pics of the day, articles, updates. We advertised twice in a weekly paper, offering a coupon discount to readers. This has paid for itself many times over. We again used 15 second radio spots but have no evidence of this being useful. We are meeting many new customers through <http://www.pickyourown.org/>. Our community farmers' market hosted its 3rd annual Celebrate the Blueberry Festival (which we help sponsor) on August 4. For the first time we had a table, and sold out our 56 pints in no time. Our bushes are thriving and full despite hours of operation from 7am-7pm during this peak. The drought which has hampered a few other growers has had no negative impact here. One geologist/picker suggested that because the hillside is a thin layer of soil over bedrock, any precipitation sits on the rock and holds moisture against the roots. Maybe. No signs (knock wood) of SWD to date

(Charlotte) We just closed our farm for the blueberry season. A week earlier than last year. A large loss in blueberries this year due to the lack of rain. Black raspberries did very well. Wholesale was good, and we had a few different accounts which is good. The next few weeks are getting all the rest of the blueberries off the bushes and cleaning up the raspberries and black raspberries with the people we have left.

(East Dorset) Another fun filled u-pick blueberry season is winding down. There are still berries but the end is in sight. Lots of pickers coming through. Most of our regulars returned and a lot of new faces. The weather made our hours of operation a challenge. We lost more days to rain than any prior year. Not an all-time record crop, but way up the charts.

We enjoyed frequent conversations with our customers about SWD. The Vermont Digger website ran an article about SWD and quite a few of our pickers read the story asked about it. We told them we hadn't been infested with SWD but they should watch out for bears in the field. We did have quite a few bears this year (exclusively in the evening hours.) On that note, if anyone needs some bear manure let me know. I have lots.

(Rochester) We have been fortunate that SWD numbers have not built up rapidly this year. We caught the first flies on July 8 in traps in the raspberries, and soon after in blueberries, but it seems our spray program and the early dry conditions have helped slow down the buildup of their numbers. The crop is abundant and pick-your-own traffic has been good, even on damp days.

(Elmore) Too dry here. Fruit is so much smaller than usual. This is tough as we sell by the pound. Sometimes I feel like a criminal delivering berries to the store, as they say things like: "we have enough berries." or "we'll take them as long as you buy them back if they don't sell." It used to be that people understood and cared that a grower does not make very much and works very hard to bring them fresh food.

It is a good year for grapes and raspberries but not for pears. Looks good for seaberries and northern kiwis, but not for crabapples. I guess diversity is where it's at. Noticed it has been raining hard in Lunenburg and Montpelier but not in Elmore. Thank goodness for irrigation, what a smart investment. For our first 20 years it was not needed, but our next 20 years really needed it! We learn as we go and it gets hotter and drier and we either find new ways to grow or take a break from it all. The trees have deep roots and so do the growers.

(Plainfield NH) Wholesale and retail markets are remaining strong into "the doldrums of August." Melons, blueberries, corn and tomatoes help promote the sales of other, lesser value, crops like squash, eggplant, peppers. Labor shortage continues to be a problem, and this week our three college kids wrap it up, so we will be struggling by Labor Day. Weed control has been suffered. It's hard to think about weeding when the blueberries need to come off the bush.

The drought that so seriously affected us as of our last report has subsided with ample rainfall, but the continued showers, heat and high humidity have us scrambling to keep diseases off crops. I expect my fungicide bill to be pretty high this year.

SWD counts are low, but this weather has us concerned about the fall raspberry crop; both for Botrytis and possible SWD buildup. Last year we waited too long to spray and lost a section of the crop as well as diminishing our sales for the rest of the season. The crop looks good; we have put in additional cane support. Autumn Britten should be into their season by next week. We continue to pick a few blueberries for the farm stand, but have harvested most of the crop which is primarily early Blue Crop, Duke and Patriot.

We will try to lift the onions this week and move them to greenhouse benches to cure, but with 2 acres of onions, I hope we can find enough space, it will be a stretch. Potatoes are bulking nicely, but there is a lot of foliar junk that I think will bring early senescence in the russets. We used Envol as an early white potato this year, and they are beautiful, clean, and earlier than the reds by two weeks. We are not wholesaling potatoes yet, but have an abundance of fingerlings, reds, whites, golds and russets on the shelf of the farm stand and for our CSA.

So far corn earworm counts in the traps have been low unlike for some other farmers. Picking some nice Montauk and the lack of insect pressure is a gift. My son has us trying some no-till in the corn fields. I was a Doubting Thomas regarding no-till on the farm initially, but I am seeing some real benefit and it is looking really good at this point in the two trials. I am pretty sure a no till planter is in our future. We continue at pecking away at strawberry renovation when we can.

(Newburyport MA) Very frustrating growing season. Cold and wet for the first half of spring planting; then hot and dry late May and June; very hot and very dry July into August. May, June, and July 3.1" total rainfall and constant irrigation. This past week we had seven of our farmers' markets completely rained out, while we never received so much as a drop here at the farm.

Friday I seeded five acres with peas and oats, planted into dust. Finally, we received 0.7 inches of rain on Sunday--enough to germinate the cover crop. But we had another four markets partially rained out on Sunday as well. This past week we transplanted the last cucumbers and specialty zucchinis, cabbages, and beets. Next week we will direct seed fall greens and roots.

Weeds thriving on irrigation water. Very few insect problems all season. Hoping for a good fall harvest. In other news, we are shopping for a farm in Grand Isle county--tired of the traffic and frenzied pace here in the suburbs north of Boston. Hope to have green license plates before the year is out!

TECH TIP: IMPROVED HORNWORM HUNTING

When it is completely dark outside, use a black-light headlamp or flashlight to make it easy to spot camouflaged tomato hornworms in the plant foliage. (Thanks to Dave Quickel for this.)

UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC

Ann Hazelrigg, UVM Extension

Depending on where you are located in the state and your weather patterns, foliar leafspot diseases in all crops (carrots, beet, cukes, tomatoes) may be exploding or fairly non-existent. If you are in the 'exploding' group, regular applications of fungicides will be critical to protect new tissue. As we turn the corner into fall and cooler temps, we will see more dews/fogs and continued applications may be necessary. With severe rainstorms, a rule of thumb for reapplication of fungicides is following 1 inch of rain, so you may need to reapply the fungicide before the recommended 5-7 days.

Solanaceae-Lots of weather related issues out there including blossom drop, scorch, sunscald and blossom end rot on peppers and tomatoes, see:

<http://ag.umass.edu/vegetable/fact-sheets/solanaceous-blossom-end-rot>

Blossom drop in greenhouse tomatoes occurs when day time temps are above 85 F and night time temps are above 70F or below 55 F. Pollen under these conditions becomes tacky and nonviable, preventing pollination and causing flowers to dry and drop. See:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/hs1195>

We have seen a few instances of bacterial canker and white mold causing wilting and death on tomatoes. If you see any wilted tomatoes in the greenhouse, first look lower in the plant for any mechanical damage. Dig around a bit at the soil line to see if there is a rot that may have been caused by too much water. If you see a fluffy white rot (can also look like a brown woody rot before the fluffy mycelium is produced) lower in the plant, this is white mold or sclerotinia. Pull the plant and bury or destroy it. This disease is usually hit or miss but one grower recently had it throughout the house- likely a result of missed infections last year coupled with wet soils, high humidity and close plant spacing. The fungus is not transmitted from plant to plant from an airborne spore so any infections you see originated from one of the overwintering fruiting bodies produced from the black sclerotia that are produced within the fluffy white growth. Hence, the goal is to get the infected plant out of the greenhouse so the hard black sclerotia (look like mouse droppings) don't drop into your soils to create future havoc! See:

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/livepath/gallery/tomato/white-mold-on-tomatoes/>

If you see wilting with black streaks on the stems or wilting without the fluffy white rot, cut open the stem lengthwise or cut under the skin to look for browning in the vascular system. This would indicate bacterial canker. This can spread though out a house through pruning. We have rapid assay kits to test tomatoes and positively identify this pathogen very quickly. See: <https://extension.umn.edu/plant-diseases/bacterial-canker-tomato>

Tomatillos showing damage from the three lined potato bug. Larvae look a bit like slugs and carry feces on their back, see: https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource001192_Rep1517.pdf

Late blight-The hot dry summer has slowed the spread of this disease. The closest report is in Onadaga county in central NY as of now. We will alert growers when the disease is closer or you can watch for outbreaks on USA Blight at <http://www.usablight.org/>

Be aware of hot spots of spider mites and broad mites with the hot dry weather. Spider mites would cause bronzing/stippling of the foliage and in severe cases you can actually see webbing. Broad mites prefer peppers and can cause scarring of fruit and curling and twisting of leaves. These are small and difficult to see with a hand lens, see: <https://extension.psu.edu/broad-mites-in-fruiting-vegetables>
http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/broad_mite_not_your_typical_michigan_mite

Cucurbits-Lots of foliar leafspots and powdery mildew showing up. Downy mildew is in western Mass and could show up soon in southern Vermont depending on weather patterns. This disease will take out large fields of cucumbers very quickly if they are not resistant. Watch IPM Pipe for latest outbreaks at <http://cdm.ipmpipe.org/>

Be sure to protect plants before storms move up from Massachusetts. A good article from Meg McGrath at Cornell on the disease and its management in 2018: <http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/NewsArticles/Cucurbit%20Downy%20Mildew%20MGT%202018-NY.pdf>

Black rot and Alternaria leaf spots showing up in headed cabbage. Also cabbage aphids becoming a problem on some farms in broccoli and Brussels sprouts. According to UMASS, treat Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower if greater than 10% of the plants are infested with aphids any time after heads or sprouts begin to form, see: <http://ag.umass.edu/vegetable/fact-sheets/aphid-cabbage>

As always, if in doubt about what you are seeing, send a picture to me, ann.hazelrigg@uvm.edu, or a sample to the Plant Diagnostic Clinic, Jeffords Hall, 63 Carrigan Drive, UVM, Burlington, VT 05405.

REMEMBERING ERIC ROZENDAAL

The celebration of his too-short life was attended by hundreds of people yesterday at his farm in Starksboro, Vermont. It was a testimony to the growers, buyers, family and friends that his big spirit touched. Thanks to all the people that shared their thoughts. Here's the collection shared with his family. http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/Remembering_Eric_Rozendaal.pdf