



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – August 15, 2017

compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension

(802) 257-7967 ext. 303, vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu

www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry

UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug. 23, 3-6 pm. Produce Safety: Best Practices from Field to Consumer. Root 5 Farm, 2340 US Route 5, Fairlee, VT. NOFA/UVM Extension sponsored. Free.

<http://nofavt.org/events/produce-safety-best-practices-field-consumer-0>

Aug. 29, 5-7 pm. Berry Production Workshop. The Berry Patch, 15589 NY-22, Stephentown, NY. Free. <http://enych.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=789>

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Benson) Things are chugging along pretty well for late summer. The rain has been mostly helpful and we haven't minded not having to drag irrigation pipes around. Winter kale is seeded in the propagation house and fall turnips and radishes are in process for direct seedings. Weeds are thriving but we are spending an hour a day keeping them in check with hand weeding. I am very glad to have three cultivating tractors set up with different tools on each.

I have an alert for farmers growing parsnips. My crew of five people weeded parsnips a couple of weeks ago and every one of them came up with severe blistering on their arms. I feel fortunate to have lost only 20 hours or so of labor with doctor visits. This is apparently a rare thing to happen, but with the right conditions - hot and sunny - the burns can be as bad as with wild parsnip. We will be sure to use gloves and long sleeves in the future with parsnip weeding.

(S. Strafford) Morrill Mountain Fruit Farm is having bumper crops of blueberries, currants and raspberries. The rains encouraged many berries. Regalia spraying minimized molds and other humidity-related diseases. The bushes have been heavy to the point of breaking from the weight of berries. This is a good problem that would be better if I had a field crew to help harvest. Sadly, my wonderful teen workers have grown and gone on to other things and I have been unsuccessful replacing them. With the help of family and friends we've muddled through, but lost a small percent just being unable to pick in time.

(E. Dorset) Our U-Pick blueberry farm had some challenges this year. In the end our season ended about one week earlier than normal. Still a good year with lots of good picking and lots of pickers but off about 15% in our crop. Mostly due to mummy berry and perhaps some SWD at the end. In the spring we treated for Phomopsis and mummy berry. The lime sulfur phomopsis treatment seemed to work. We will have to refocus our mummy berry efforts as that was a challenge in several fields. We did not spray at all for SWD. We might need to look at that next year as well. All in all, another good year.

(W. Dummerston) Ugh! What a depressing mess! The SWD found us even earlier this year and came on fast and furious. Bushes were laden -- and are laden still -- but we lost all but the earliest variety to mush. We had about 2 weeks of good picking and then closed the field to U-pickers. I am resolved to spray next year and will be curious to hear of other's successes with organic sprays.

(Proctorsville) We've think we have late blight on our potatoes and have been trying preventative sprays on the tomatoes for the past 2 weeks They are in two different fields and yet it looks like our heirloom tomatoes may have contracted it. (Editor's note: if you suspect late blight please send samples to the UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic for a positive ID! We have not had any late blight confirmed in VT so far this year.)

There are beetle larva wreaking havoc on our string bean plants, eating the leaves and making ugly marks on the beans. We've harvested all of our garlic and it is happily drying in the tunnel that houses our peppers. Overall, our crops are about 2 weeks behind where they "should" be, yet we are grateful for the rain when compared to last year's droughty experience. Our bees are happy and so are our brassicas.

(Brookfield) We depend on fall crops at our small stand and farm. This year we will have potatoes but our pumpkins (usually 600 to 800) will not mature, and squashes the same. Not enough growing season left.

(Ange-Gardien, Quebec) Nice summer to work outside, not too hot and quite windy here. Temperature has been pretty unstable and working windows were pretty narrow. You had to be ready at the right time. That being said melon crop looks good although lots of foliar diseases especially Botrytis and Sclerotinia. Crows are always a problem on canary melons. Could not get one yet even with early morning hunt.

Garlic has sized up compared to last year when then suffered drought. No problem at drying. Did forget some pollinator in part of triploid watermelon field. Absolutely no triploid in that part of the field.

We tried growing winter rye for grain (12ha). Main issue was quackgrass. In future I will try to sow after Sept 15 that will leave time to control more quackgrass. Seeding density will also need to be worked. Trying to physically prepare for melon harvest and hoping for dry fall.

(Newburyport MA) Exceptionally strong farmers' markets sales this summer. This is the first week we will have adequate tomato harvest to keep up with demand. Still no sign of tomato disease of any type--amazing in this year of damp weather with long leaf wetness periods. Irrigating frequently now to prep land for fall crop seeding, which is running behind. So busy with sales that weed control is slipping. Sales of pork sausage very strong this grilling season and we don't have enough pigs on feed to keep up. Fall crop brambles looking nice. After a tough start, it's beginning to look like a good year.

(Little Compton RI) Claus Martins, of Lake View Organics, once gave a talk where he said that an old time farmer taught him that early cultivation should be slow and tight to the plant but late or last cultivation should be quite open and just the right speed and depth to kick the soil in and underneath the crop canopy. We have always failed at the latter until now. We bought a rear 3pt cultivator from I&J Manufacturing in PA that is doing a great job for the last time through. We got the center coulters, which keeps it from drifting in heavier or wet ground, and some extra S tines and shoes to cover the tire tracks thoroughly. Just under \$2k but worth it for our two row systems with broccoli and beans.

We are having tunnel tomato ripening problems due to cool nights. Dr. Rich McAvoy of UConn said to bite the bullet and turn on some heat at night because tomatoes really need a minimum of 62 degrees. For a few degrees of extra warmth the main cost isn't the fuel but the time and effort of closing up the houses every night!

Between our mini drought and potato leafhopper our main season potatoes are mostly brown and down. Guess I will still have to keep them covered with copper, given late blight in the region. Farmers' markets are good. Kohlrabi is having a comeback. Starting our late fall Chinese cultivars and over-wintering onions today.

CHOOSING FALL COVER CROPS

Becky Maden, Vegetable Nutrient Management Specialist, UVM Extension

It's a busy time of year, but take a few minutes if you can to plan for sowing fall cover crops as your fields open up after harvest. Having seed on hand will allow you to plant when there is adequate moisture, or rain is in the forecast to help get a good stand. Your choice of covers should consider what intend to grow in each field in 2018:

In field(s) where you'll plant early spring crops in 2018 some options are:

Oat/Pea Mix. Drill at 20-40 lb/acre oats plus 100 lb/acre field pea. Broadcast at 40 lb/acre oats plus 120 lb/acre field peas. Seed before end of August.

Straight Oats is a better option for very late Aug./early Sept. Drill at 80-110 lb/acre. Broadcast at 110-140 lb/acre. Oats and peas will winter kill; residue is relatively easy to incorporate in spring for early plantings.

Tillage Radish. Drill at 10 lb/acre. Broadcast at 13 lb/acre. Great for breaking up compaction, scavenging N, and adding biomass. Seed before Sept 1. Can be seeded in combination with oats or oat/pea. Radish is not recommended as a cover crop following, preceding, or adjacent to a planned Brassica cash crop, as it can harbor the same insects and diseases.

In field(s) where you'll plant warm season crops in late May/ June 2018 some options are:

Winter rye plus hairy vetch. Drill 70 lb/acre rye plus 20-30 lb/acre vetch. Broadcast 80-90 lb/acre rye, 30-40 lb/acre vetch. Seed early to mid-September.

Rye-oat-vetch mix. Broadcast 60 lb rye, 50 lb oats, 30 lb vetch per acre. Reduce rates by 20% if drilling. Seed early to mid-September. Oats will winter kill leaving a less dense mat of winter rye in the spring, and more room for vetch to establish itself.

Straight Winter Rye. Best if cash crop will be planted before May 10, here are guidelines for planting dates and seed rates, adjusting for reduced growth later if planted later in the fall:

9/15 Drill 60 lb/acre. Broadcast 85 lb/acre.

9/22 Drill 100 lb/acre. Broadcast 140 lb/acre.

10/1 Drill 140 lb/acre. Broadcast 200 lb/acre.

10/15 Drill 180 lb/acre. Broadcast 250 lb/acre.

Additional Information:

Cornell Cover Crop Guide for Vegetable Growers:

<http://www.covercrop.net>

SARE's Managing Cover Crops Profitably:

<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books/Managing-Cover-Crops-Profitably-3rd-Edition>

Cover Crops – New England Vegetable Management Guide:

<https://nevegetable.org/cultural-practices/cover-crops-and-green-manures>

Effect of Planting / Terminate Dates on Cover Crop Biomass:

<http://www.hort.cornell.edu/extension/organic/ocs/reports/Cover%20Crops%20Planting%20and%20Termination.pdf>