



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – August 18, 2014
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Rochester) We captured a few male SWD on 8/17, in both summer and fall raspberries and in early blueberries (Patriot). There were no captures in our later blueberries (Blue Ray and Jersey). Reports from New York State indicate that SWD numbers are not building rapidly so hopefully that will be the case here. We will apply Entrust asap and try to keep the population in check.

(Craftsbury) Blueberry season is in full swing with a bountiful and healthy harvest at our U-Pick. Greatly reduced Japanese beetle presence this year for no apparent reason. We do not spray. Berries are firm and unblemished. No bird or bear predation to date. Yield looks to be similar to two and three years ago, following last year's hot weather which accelerated ripening and shortened season.

(Elmore) We have storybook little round plum trees loaded with fruit; garlic is very small this year; pears are gathering size and blackberries are plump and good already. Huge blueberry harvest, no SWD sightings. Black currants are harvested and frozen. We are trying to decide on a cider press.

(Ange-Gardien, Quebec) Cantaloupe and canary on harvest. Triploid coming soon. Butternut starting setting flowers on 12th node, I thought it was pretty late but fruits are there now. No major mildew problem on squash and pumpkins so far although this wet and cold temperature should start it. Garlic looks great, no drying problem. 5 rows on 1,2m bed, 15cm on the row on overfertilised bed, 1 hand weeding. That's the cheapest I could produce garlic for.

(Walden Heights) An odd year for harvesting. Presumably due to weather conditions this last month, the orchard is experiencing a bottleneck harvest. During the last 3 weeks we have been picking red, white and black currants, summer raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, gooseberries, and 7 apple varieties. During 'normal' years these are spread out over 2 months. No sign of spotted wing drosophila so far this season. Japanese beetles are higher in number, but have found little damage to target plantings since we leave a good many 'draw' plants. They prefer grapes, wild brambles and many herbaceous plants (aka weeds) to our cultivated plants, especially the tree fruits. It is evident that eradicating all competing vegetation is asking for trouble. A lower yield apple year, but fruits are nearly perfect.

(Warren) Still no major disasters. The biggest issue we are having this season is keeping up with harvesting and finding storage space. Shallots are the size of onions and onions are the size of softballs. Really solid too. Tomatoes are cranking out of high tunnels and every last one is getting sold. High tunnel red peppers are in. I think that's my favorite crop. Potatoes are starting to die back and are looking really clean. Salad greens are still cranking along but it's getting harder and harder to find the time to seed them every week. Hoping to start seeding winter cover of oats and peas this week.

(Williston) We have had plenty of rain here in Northwestern VT. Slugs and snails are plentiful along with lots of weeds, and some mushroom growth in straw mulched rows. Downy mildew hit my basil; I need to pull it but basil in hoophouse is clean so far. Fields will be seeded down to pea/oats/vetch for fall/winter cover crop. Japanese beetles still present but hand picking reduced their numbers. Farmers market sales are holding on but numbers of people are down. Value-added product sales are a bit slow but increase dramatically when doing demos. Regrowth has been good in herbs and I have not had to irrigate much. Eggplants are done in hoophouse; put in some purple basil to see what happens. Garlic is all harvested and drying. Size was good but not outstanding like a few years ago. Cold weather this past winter did not seem to bother it, they mulched with straw. Cherry tomatoes have been producing great this season. I sprayed Dipel in early August at the first sign of frass and was amazed at how many hornworms there were in plants! Dipel was very effective! Winterbor kale transplants look great which will follow hoophouse tomatoes in early September. I had powdery mildew in tarragon and rosemary so sprayed Milstop. The next time I went to harvest the tarragon all the areas that had mildew were black. Not sure if I sprayed too heavy but last time I sprayed I used same dose. Rosemary was not affected and still had some mildew. Overall good season with sales just down a bit.

(Plainfield NH) We have dodged some pretty foul weather this summer that has pounded some others. The fairly moist summer favored our sandy soils, but in our fall cucurbits on some heavy ground we have suffered a crop failure. Onion crop is wonderful; tops on many varieties still upright and booking. I hope they die down soon before the summer help leaves. Late blight is not a problem here. Downey mildew on basil, hoppers in mums and new planting of beans, Erwinia in a couple of my potato varieties, PM on cucurbits-- signs of where we are in the season. A cool season has resulted in variable brix levels in the melons, but the set and overall quality are good. Corn has been great with good flavor and the cool temps have allowed us to keep up with it. Wrapping up blueberry harvest, and now the gargantuan task of summer pruning and beating back the weeds that got a foothold during harvest. Summer raspberries all pruned up and looking good; Autumn Britten and Caroline are coming in. SWD has not shown up in any appreciable numbers either in the Extension traps or the USDA sphere experiment. Historically we have not built high numbers until late September. Lucky, I guess. Sales good this summer, starting to flag a bit now as the schools ramp up and the tourists head back to work.

(Monkton) This is our first year with a high tunnel for tomatoes and I am loving it. Sprayed with copper when we heard late blight was in Mass. and so far it seems effective, though we do have *Alternaria* in our single bed of heirlooms and Sungolds. We spend a lot of time wiping the fruit before sale, but I think it's worth it. Onions are drying in the barn, and the garlic crop was stellar. Our Brassicas are heavily damaged by swede midge, which seems to move around. Fall cauliflower is so far unaffected, but kale of all varieties is suffering.

(Brookline) SWD are causing moderate damage, really time to take action. It's that time of year I fear. If we can dry out it would be nice. We have seen that light to moderate SWD damage for three plus weeks. This pest is rough on one's nerves. Late blight is not kicking our rears yet, but this continuous moisture mandates that we keep fungicide on the tomatoes and potatoes.

(New Haven) Late blight is trying to get a hold on the field, we have been spraying with OxiDate to control. Corn, peppers, eggplant, cukes, and summer squash all producing well. Melons crop is on target to be one of the best. Fall crops on target and looking good.

UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC (Ann Hazelrigg)

Tomato: Late blight is widespread across VT in both fields and in high tunnels with high humidity. Septoria and early blight are there but of less concern. See the New England Vegetable Management Guide for fungicide options if you have healthy tomato or potato plants you want to protect: <https://nevegetable.org/crops>

Potatoes: If you do have late blight, best to mow/cut plants then let potatoes suberize for a week or two before harvesting.

Eggplant: two cases of *Verticillium* wilt diagnosed. Symptoms look like the plant is scorched and not getting enough water. Cut open the stem under the skin and look for browning. Rotate. <https://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/diseases/verticillium-wilt-0>

Basil: Downy mildew is widespread. It looks like nutritional deficiency on upper side of leaf and dirt on the underside.

Carrots: *Alternaria* leaf blight causing "flagging" (yellowed leaves) on some plantings. If you look carefully, under that yellowed top you will see a small lesion/spot on the petiole that will ultimately girdle the top. Significant harvesting losses can occur when 10-20 % of the leaf area of the crop is blighted. Yield losses also occur when blighted leaves retard root growth. Spores can also wash down and infect carrots. Use protectant fungicides at first sign to protect the plants. An Israeli study found copper hydroxide was effective in reducing the disease by about half compared to control. They also found that early initiation of spray program was important regardless of material being applied. More info on the disease go to http://vegetablemndonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Carrot_LeafBlt.htm

Beets: Leaf spotting fungal diseases on the rise with wet weather. The same guidelines apply for spraying the beets as the carrots. Early preventative sprays would have the most effect. Plow down crops as soon as they are finished to slow spread.

<https://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/articles/cercospora-leaf-spot-swiss-chard-beets-and-spinach>

Cucurbits: Saw zucchini plants infected with *Phytophthora capsici* that had wiped out the entire field. This is an aggressive pathogen that rears its ugly head when there is 24 hours of soil saturation. The pathogen can also attack pepper and to a lesser extent, tomato and potato. Scout fields for symptoms routinely, especially after major rain storms. Include any areas where water did not drain well and near the end of irrigation pipe. When symptoms are localized in a small area of a field, disking the area is worthwhile. Begin with a border of healthy-appearing crop around the affected area. Clean equipment (and boots) between fields. Long term management includes rotations, improvement of soil drainage and use of raised beds especially in heavy soils. Fungicides are minimally effective and should only be used in conjunction with cultural controls.

http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Cucurbit_Phytoph2.htm

Cucurbit powdery mildew is present but not too bad in Chittenden county. Conditions favoring infection include a dense plant canopy, low light intensity, high nitrogen fertilization, relative humidity >50%, and 68-80° F. Cucurbit downy mildew still listed as ‘minimal risk’ for NE so far.

Plectosporium blight is on the rise on zucchini and pumpkins. Lesions are <1/4 inch and white. On vines, petioles and leaf veins, the lesions tend to be diamond-shaped; on fruit and leaves lesions are usually round. The lesions increase in number and coalesce until most of the vines and leaf petioles turn white, become brittle and the foliage dies. On fruit, the pathogen causes white, tan, or silver russeting which can merge to form a continuous dry, scabby surface. Rotation, preventative fungicides provide good control. There are no resistant varieties.

<https://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/diseases/plectosporium-blight>

Sweet Corn: low pressure from corn earworm this year. European corn borer counts are high in signaling peak flight. Expect the caterpillar counts in tassels to go up over the next couple of weeks as the second generation caterpillars hatch and feed, so keep scouting pre-silk blocks.

UPCOMING EVENTS For links see: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/?Page=meetlist.html>
Aug. 27 – Tractors, Tools, and Tricks for Mechanical Cultivation, Diggers Mirth Collective Farm, Burlington. From 2-5 pm.

Sept. 4 – Greenhouse Energy Extravaganza, Claussen’s Greenhouses, Colchester. 9:30-3:30. Space is limited and advance registration by August 22 is required.