



University of Vermont

Extension

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – August 3, 2026

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<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/horticulture/commercial>

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Westminster) We are preparing for the annual Jamaican Independence Day party on our farm, attended by Jamaican workers from around the area. On the menu: curried goat and rice, and the Jamaican goat soup, mannish water.

Things couldn't be much better, weather-wise. Dry weather has been interspersed with just the right amount of rain when we need it. We may have dodged a bullet recently, when we got 1.5 inches of rain, while five inches fell just west of us. How can it last?

But it's not a perfect year. We're starting to see some *Cercospora* on our beets. It's been a lively market for bunched beets but we may see problems with diseased tops in a few weeks.

Recent rains may have compacted the soil surface, which affected getting our last planting of carrots out of the ground. I'm tempted to use our Treffler, a modern Lely-type cultivator. It's spring-loaded, with nine different settings; it should break up the soil while taking care of very small weeds.

A more long-term problem is the appearance of a weed we just started seeing in this area the last few years. It's called carpet weed and resembles pigweed but is low growing, spreads out, germinates late so it avoids flaming, and is difficult to hand weed. The seeds can sit for a long time before emerging. It's worse than galinsoga; my biggest worry is about our root crops.

Lettuce sales have increased, maybe with growing demand from consumers leery of packaged lettuce due to the cyclospora outbreak. Winter squash looks fantastic; kale and collards are doing great. Right on time, farming like a pro!

(Underhill) Just received 1.1" of gentle much needed rain. Sweet corn was looking great but is starting to show drought signs across all plantings, with soils dried and cracking, leaves starting to yellow and wilt. Transplanted corn was small (as expected) but came in 2 weeks earlier than direct seeded and the customers (and racoons) were excited for the teaser.

Farmstand sales have been strong, PYO flower has been steady. Pest pressure has been strong on the pumpkins, half look stressed, ½ look good so far. Too-frequent thunderstorm threats to make hay, but too dry this month for our field crops. I'm glad we're diversified. Adding more cover crops to improve our soil's water-holding capacity.

(Huntington) Hoping the best for farms in Southeastern NY affected by the biblical 11.5" that fell in last week's Nor'Easter. Thankfully we had only 2" of gentle rain, which gave our irrigation pumps a rest. But I couldn't stop looking at the radar with the stationary bullseye of red over the Hudson Valley.

We have been laying drip tape in our potato hills for the last 5 years, and it has been a huge boon in summers like this when it is relatively dry in the critical July bulking period. Winding up the drip after harvest adds a slight annoyance. Moving and babysitting a traveler to irrigate 6 acres of potatoes (often spread over 2 or 3 separate fields) is quite time-intensive and uses ~10x the water that drip does. The \$300/acre material cost for drip is recouped quickly during the first 10 day stretch without rain.

Local wholesale markets have been strong in NW VT. We appreciate the folks who choose to pick our produce off the shelf at our local stores, and the people who work in the retail end of the produce industry. I'm also grateful to our excellent crew this year, and for having been able to avoid buying any \$5/gal off-road diesel.

(Westminster West) Just returned from 10-day vacation; it always shocks me to see how much crops advance in such a short time! Sarah's Choice cantaloupe is ripening; many are ready and very sweet. Ocelot seedless watermelons are also ready. The cucurbit field hasn't been cropped in ten years so I was disappointed to find that Fusarium is still present when some plants collapsed.

Garlic crop is our best ever, in size and quantity. Demand for seed is strong, and we finally have enough Carpathian to sell, along with Music. Sweet onions are huge; started selling them two weeks ago. Will pull entire crop this week. Expression is big and keeps well for a sweet type, with great disease resistance. Much better than Walla Walla which we used to grow but the bottom rot was unavoidable so we stopped.

Potatoes look great; started digging last week. Grew some tunnel potatoes as an experiment and they did well, gave our June sales a boost. Carrots sales are strong, have huge roots from consistent rains. Winter squash is our biggest crop, with two acres, under row cover. It has good fruit set and little insect pressure so far, no sprays at all this year.

Cultivating plastic beds with the Tilmor electric Super E tractor. There's a learning curve but it's been great.

We've had enough rain, so watering is not an issue this year, but weeds are! With a limited crew it's been a challenge to harvest, market, maintain crops and plant fall crops, but trying out best!

(Orwell) We got through the hot weather by shifting work hours and delaying some tasks; also employing shade cloth in our tunnels, which improves worker comfort. Recent rains were welcome but a little late for some non-irrigated outdoor crops. We are convinced that reliable irrigation water supply is critical to farm resilience.

In our tunnels we are experimenting with soluble fertilizers to find substitutes for sodium nitrate, with hopes of reducing salt inputs and moving away from an unsustainable product. We learned that some "soluble" products dissolve better than others. Also, some smell better than others. Price varies quite a bit but the spaces we fertigate are small and we are curious about the performance of the pricier products. We are comparing soluble soy protein, soy protein hydrolysate, soluble blood meal, fish, and liquid hydrolyzed protein. The soy products smell like a delicious milk shake, which is a big win over the porcine blood meal and sardine/anchovy liquid fish. Stay tuned for more result reports!

(Guildhall) We planted 30 potato varieties in 60 acres. Got 10" of rain in the first 3 weeks following planting which gave the weeds a jump in the earliest plantings that despite our best efforts we have to live with. Some new efficiencies were realized. We re-did the setup for the liquid pop-up fertilizer on the planter (to complement the granular) and refurbished a seed conveyor to get seed from trucks to planter quicker. Little improvements that did save a lot of time. Time we quickly burned by changing varieties so often. Generally, the potatoes look good. Alternating mag and boron every week, put some N down; spraying for bugs.

Put in 25 acres of oats that look nice. And 15 acres of pumpkins which I wish were bigger; good flowers but they seem behind

(Argyle NY) We went from super dry to super wet in a matter of days. We are grateful for our tunnels! It's been hard to get into the fields, today we could in some areas but more rain is on the way. We put a silage tarp over a section for planting out lettuce starts, hopefully tomorrow.

Peppers and tomatoes just starting to ripen, as we planted late. Been running fertilizer through the drip lines weekly. We learned about changing the seals on the Dosatron! Our new pond filter system has worked flawlessly with the self-cleaning backflush.

For years, we hardly had any tarnished plant bugs, perhaps due to a beneficial that was killing most of them, but this year, they are abundant, damaging lettuce and dahlia flowers mostly. Flea beetles are managed well with row cover if timing is good, but then we had aphid issues because beneficials (ladybugs) were excluded. We will cover the leeks soon to prevent allium leaf miner damage. Deer have munched things so putting up electric fence soon is on the list.

Annual bed Chandler strawberries were average this year, not much multiple crowning. Hoping to plant the plugs a bit earlier (first week of Sept) this year. Berries in the tunnel always outperform the outside beds.

USDA-FSA ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIALTY CROP FARMERS (ASCF)

If you completed 2025 crop reporting for ASCF by the April 24, 2026 deadline, you are eligible to apply for this program. Reach out to [your local FSA office](#) to complete the application by the **August 7 deadline**. You can read more about the program and payment rates [on the ASCF website](#). If you did not report crop acreage by the April deadline, you are not eligible to apply. If you don't remember if you reported by the deadline, reach out to [your local FSA office](#) to check. Questions? Julie.callahan@uvm.edu 518-944-7149

TESTING FOR GARLIC BLOAT NEMATODE

Before you replant, and especially if you sell garlic seed, it is a good idea to have it tested for [garlic bloat nematode](#). This pest may occur along with [Fusarium basal rot](#), or not, but you can't tell with the naked eye. For many years we have used the University of Arkansas [Nematode Diagnostic Laboratory](#) for this specialized service; the cost is just \$30 for out of state samples and they are fast. Here is the [submission form](#), select "custom assay" and mail with at least 4 bulbs. You must print out and include page 1 of their [APHIS permit](#).

TISSUE TESTING FOR SMALL FRUIT

For blueberries, raspberries or strawberries, [leaf analysis](#) aka tissue testing provides data that can optimize fertilizer applications and yield. The next few weeks are a good time to do this. UVM Extension will cover the cost of one test per [VVBGA](#) member farm, sent to the Penn State [Ag Analytical Services Lab](#). You can add more samples and pay \$24 each.

Here is the [submission form](#) to complete, do the best you can with the management questions, they are not essential. Note on the form to charge the test to UVM Extension. Collect recently mature, fully expanded, healthy leaves. Avoid plants/areas with problems (diseases, environmental stresses, etc.).

Blueberries should be sampled during early harvest, or soon after. June-bearing matted row strawberries are sampled after renovation, first fully mature leaves. (Plasticulture strawberries are best sampled in the spring, around the time of first bloom or a few days earlier to allow time for the analyses to be completed and to correct problems.) Summer-fruited raspberries are sampled from non-fruited canes that will fruit next year.

Collect at least 40 leaves for blueberries, strawberries or 60 leaves for brambles, from multiple plants in the field. If you have a problem area, you may want to sample that separately, for comparison. Ideally leaves are taken from the same variety, but in small plantings sampling several varieties at the same stage of maturity is reasonable i.e still informative. Place leaves in a paper bag / envelope (label with farm name and field) and mail to the address on the form.

UPCOMING VVBGA 2026 ON-FARM WORKSHOPS

Full workshop descriptions are [posted here](#).

August 5 from 1-3. Vermont Herb Growers' Initiative workshop at Zach Woods Herb Farm, Hyde Park.

August 25 from 4-6:30. Reduced Tillage, Insect Scouting, and NRCS practices on a small-scale diversified vegetable and cut flower farm at Stone's Throw Farmstead, Shrewsbury.

September 23 from 4-6:30. Interseeding, Living Mulches and Cover Cropping Equipment at Hurricane Flats, S. Royalton

October 21 from 3:30-6:00. Root crops (harvest, storage and marketing) and electric tractor, High Meadows Farm, Putney

SUMMARIES OF RECENT VVBGA WORKSHOPS

[Soil Health and Pollinator Support at The Farm Upstream in Jericho](#)

[Strawberries, Tunnel Tomatoes, Marketing at Full Belly Farm, Monkton](#)

[Organic Blueberries at Wild Hill Organics, Fairlee](#)

[Planning for Orchard Success at Stargrazer Farm, Brookfield](#)

NO-TILL/REDUCED TILL ON A DIVERSIFIED VEGETABLE FARM

August 6 from 5:30-7:00.

Milkweed Farm 27 Earth Bridge Rd, Westminster West, Vermont 05346

Join the Windham County NRCD for a tour of Milkweed farm's veggie operation, learning from one another's no till strategies and methods, and learning about technical and financial assistance opportunities. Light food and beverages provided. Stipend available to compensate for your time! [Register here](#)

NOFA-VT [ON FARM WORKSHOPS](#)

August 12. [Reading the Farm Landscape to Increase Water Resilience](#) (West Burke)

August 14. [Tractor Parts, Mechanics, and Maintenance](#) (Brattleboro)

Sept. 1. [Farm Stand Sales Strategies: Merchandising, Collaboration, and Customer Experience](#) (Hinesburg & Bristol)

Sept 9. [Seed Keeping Basics. Introduction to Seed Growing and Seed Saving](#) (Northfield)

Sept. 29. | [Managing Biodiversity on the Farm: Soil, Habitat, and Agroforestry in Practice](#) (Vernshire)

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION SUPPORT

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Being certified organic is great way to demonstrate the best practices and careful stewardship you have put into your products. Farmers cite many reasons to be certified organic, including economic, social, and environmental benefits that come with organic methods and the organic seal. With its third-party verification, the term "certified organic" holds value in the marketplace and may command higher prices. Legally, a farm must be certified in order to use the term "organic" to describe its products (except farms with less than \$5k in sales).

Although there is a fee to be part of the program, a significant portion can be reimbursed through a federal program. Having good records is important to the certification process, and can benefit your farm too. Regular note-taking can help refine decision-making, improve management, track profitability of crops, and be an important part of food safety. To learn more, contact the Vermont Organic Farmers office at 802-434-3821 or info@vermontorganic.org