



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News –September 16, 2013  
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## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Burlington) Harvest of storage crops is picking up. Looking good this fall are potatoes and other root vegetables. We are hoping that our short season replacement cabbages transplanted early-mid July will make full heads by November. Winter squash is disappointing; C. pepos are suffering mightily from Phytophthora rot. So far, no sign of it in the nearby butternut, which we hope to get out of the field soon during sunnier conditions. We lightly wipe each and knock stems off at harvest, and I hope that will keep us storing well into March. Will have to pay more attention to anti-Phytophthora rotation in the future; between peppers and cucurbits we now have it on significant parts of the farm. Rain has been good for late summer and fall cover crop establishment; many years we get spotty stands in our August sowings due to overly dry fields. Working to enhance suberization in our storage spuds this year; have the cooler set at 55 and the humidifier running. Will see what difference that makes in quality and weight loss in March!

(Warren) Happy to have things winding down a little. Potatoes still hanging on, wish they would die back. Parsnips are looking really good, so are carrots. Surprised at the lack of downy mildew on salad mix lettuce. Not surprised any more on how local business in the Mad River valley screeches to a halt this time of year. I'm putting a lot of hope in a snowy winter and squirreling lots of storage crops away. Amazed at how productive our new upland field was this year. Both onions and winter squash yielded around 17 tons to the acre. Wondering if it's due to better air drainage or excessive phosphorus levels, maybe both? This is the first year where the majority of business was done through group CSAs and from a marketing perspective it was so much nicer than retail and restaurant sales. Had the good fortune to come across two experienced hardworking employees who seem to get more done when I'm not around; if only it was always that easy.

(Montpelier) Houses are almost all converted to winter spinach, just 2 more beds to go. The peppers in them look so good that I just can't bring myself to tear them out; happy to say goodbye to the tomatoes though. Outside plantings of broccoli and Brussels sprouts are the best looking ever. Hoping that the abundant wild apple crop will let the deer will leave them alone this year. Big planting of leeks is doing well.

Late season direct seeded kale is nice forage for the last of the flea beetles. A real late planting of savoy cabbage might make it if weather is good next 4 weeks. Best squash crop I have had in years; all on raised beds with Biotelo, kept the remay on it with edges well buried until it started to push out. It ran and filled the rows 7 days after we took the remay off. Minimal bug damage and did not have to spray once. I will plant some mache under remay this weekend. I am trialing several different winter speiach planting densities with two different seeders and seeing how Tye does against my favorite, Space. All in all one of the worst seasons ever. The strange part is that it was no one thing that really made it so; a number of smaller issues just kept piling on.

(Guilford) Proteknet seems less successful in reducing SWD in our raspberries than our blueberries; not clear why. Also, combination of wet and reduced air flow through net is wreaking havoc on fall raspberries. Dry beans borderline; pulled all the early beans right before the storm but the others will have to hope for air movement and sun to dry them out quickly.

(Shrewsbury) Early end to blueberry season do too numerous SWD in all parts of the field. Good crop until the end of August. Elliot variety continued on, all others went to mush.

(S. Royalton) I developed Plectosporium blight early on my winter squash and pumpkins. It moved fast and crop prospects looked bleak for a week or so. Regular sprays of copper and Serenade kept it in check. The plant centers died back but the runners looked great and the season turned out to be just fine. Take home message, don't fear the plecto.

(Elmore) We have never seen fruit and nut crops like this! Plums loaded to the ground, pears that are crisp and perfect, apples that have little or no issues, all with zero spraying. We are harvesting on ladders and with extendable pole pickers and packing in boxes and bringing them to stores, we also put up fresh fruit signs that say "local organic pears and plums" and are getting quite a few shoppers. Our coolbot walk-in cooler system is getting a workout with us bringing in hot fruit from the trees and cooling them down, but it is holding up and the coolbot people give the best customer support I have seen. The apples have very good flavor this year, too. We have never been so busy harvesting for a month now and the amazing thing is we learned the stores like hard fruit and of course this keeps a lot better in our cooler but is not as sweet or as tree ripe but that's showbiz; you have to come to the farm to get the juiciest, sweetest, ripest fruits.

(New Haven) Tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, summer squash, cukes all doing well. The heat has pushed pumpkin crop along and they are looking good, winter squash will be a light crop. Late fall crops are all on target.

(Grand Isle) We are assessing what went well and what to abandon for 2014. Growing in unheated caterpillars as well as two tomato/cucumber greenhouses has been good. Field tomatoes continue to be mostly canners with the iffy current weather conditions. This has been the year of the pepper for us. At markets the color peppers and potted ornamental peppers have been quite popular. Kale continues to be popular, while bok choy and rainbow chard have taken a bit of a back seat in popular demand. We are at the start of our fall winter squash, cabbage, and broccoli harvest. While things about the season are still fresh in our minds, we are trying to decide on a list of the most important winter projects to tackle.

(Charlotte) We have SWD in the fall raspberries and weren't able to do PYO and our pumpkins did not do well. We had to close early this season. However, the fall raspberries were really good in the early part of the season.

(Westminster West) Squash harvest two-thirds done. Waiting for the butternuts to ripen a bit more. Very good yields and quality looks top notch on both pumpkins and squash. Onions are selling well and prices are firm and should stay that way for this labor intensive and tricky crop! Tomato house is on its last breath; went down much quicker than last year as we have been too busy to give it the attention it deserves. Artichokes have been a hit at the farmers' market this year; everyone's still surprised to see Vermont Globe chokes being raised. Fall carrots and beets still growing, too small to harvest and I'm in no rush. Hard to get cover crops in due to wet soils and low labor on hand to pull up old plastic mulch from fields. Did manage to try a new high-glucosinolate mustard variety (Kodiak) as a green manure for the garlic field. Got it in just before the rains; it is supposed to help with biocontrol of diseases, hope so. Thanks to VT Extension for the trial seeds. Fall mums and asters are flying out of here wholesale.

(Shelburne/South Burlington) Pressure from the flea beetles on my winter kale has been intense. Never had the problem before, so trying to figure out why. Otherwise, winter crops all looking good and getting up to size. Tomatoes are delayed and now coming in like gangbusters, like several folks I've heard.

(Plainfield) Cherry tomato greenhouse is finally slowing production. Leaf mold has had its way, but season's yield has been great. Picking yellow and orange sweet peppers, turned out to be a good use of greenhouse space. Carmen red peppers ripening slowly in the field. Carrots, beets, daikon, and rutabagas sizing up nicely with the big fall rains. Fall cabbages heading late, thinking about switching to earlier varieties. Winter squash has a low yield, needed more fertility and degree days. Beautiful kales and chards. Still lots to do.

(Argyle NY) Too much rain, too much heat, too many diseases summarizes this growing season so far, but many things still doing well; once again we're glad we grow a large diversity of crops thus losing a few doesn't affect us too much financially. Field tomatoes got late blight 2 weeks ago just as harvest started; a little bit on the top leaves which we caught early. After a few sprays with Oxidate then copper/Serenade there doesn't seem to be any sign of it and the tomato harvest continues. Tunnel tomatoes still producing like crazy and our rainbow assortment of cherry tomatoes is popular. Just started picking a late planting of zucchini, yellow squash, and cucumbers and we have been down to 40 degrees twice already. Chandler strawberry plugs which we grew from tips (and some trial varieties) will get planted this week due to being rained out last week, as well as our last big field planting of lettuce. We are continuing to seed a couple trays of Salanova lettuces weekly which will be planted in the high tunnel and data recorded for when they were seeded, transplanted, harvested, and re-harvested all winter. Sweet potatoes have been under Typar row cover for 2 months to push them on to size up more and to keep the deer out of them. High tunnel plantings have just begun for all our winter production.

(Little Compton RI) Two lessons from 2013. First, watch out for magnesium in wells and ground water. This year it wreaked havoc on our drip irrigation filters and clogged emitters. We had to replace greenhouse tomato drip mid-season because many long stretches just stop working. We found out too late that the Mg was clogging up the fine sediment filters in front of our drip pumps etc. One solution has been a dishwasher de-ruster called Bar Keepers Friend, available at most hardware stores. 30 seconds in a slurry of that cleaner takes all the rust and Mg right off the filters. Obviously, don't put it through your drip system. Action plan for 2014: make it someone's job to check for this problem every week. We lost thousands of dollars for not being on top of this.

Second, when growing greenhouse tomatoes be sure all your nutrients are balanced and in order long before the third fruit cluster and the plant is still somewhat "vegetative". Once you reach five clusters and it is "regenerative" you are not going to be able to correct much in the way of nutrients besides adding a bit of nitrogen or potassium. Also, watch molybdenum levels if you have a tomato house that is going into its tenth year plus. It is a micronutrient but critical. You don't need much but our soil test in our oldest house came up with zero, which our advisor had never seen before. Heard it is available from Hydro Gardens, After 22 years we are forced to remove the top ten inches of soil and restart that house.

## UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC - Ann Hazelrigg

Tomatoes-Late blight reports keep popping up here and there. I think the entire state is pretty well represented at this point. Septoria leafspot (small black leafspots, gray center) and to a lesser extent, Alternaria (early blight, target-like leafspots) still defoliating plants from the ground up. These are the 2 diseases you need to rotate for each year. Rotations for late blight are not so important since this disease blows in each year and does not overwinter.

Sclerotinia white mold-This fungus disease is still showing up in wetter areas of tomato greenhouses. Wilting of the plant may be the first thing noticed. Look lower in the plant for a brown wood-like dead portion. There may be a fluffy white rot on the stem associated with the infected area. If you cut open the affected part of the stem you will see lots of black hard sclerotia (looks like hard mouse droppings.) These will drop in your soil and wait for several years for just the right conditions to attack again. To avoid this building up in your greenhouse, cut the affected plant off at the soil line, bag and get out of the greenhouse. Bury or landfill.

<http://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/diseases/tomato-sclerotinia-fruit>

Squash/Pumpkins-As has been mentioned in past years, there is nothing to be gained by leaving pumpkins that have colored up out in the field. Each cool night will damage the fruit making it more susceptible to storage problems later. Also, rains increase in the fall and saturated soils are perfect for Phytophthora fruit rots on all squash. These rots start out as water-soaked depressed areas that develop into round yeasty-like white spots on the fruit and can RAPIDLY cause widespread loss in the field and in pallets/boxes after picking. The pathogen is soil borne, but has an airborne spore that is produced from these spots that can blow around the field. The disease usually starts in low spots or poorly drained areas. If you have a small section of the field showing these symptoms it is best to till under these areas to try to save the rest of the field. Do not move equipment from one field to another without power washing since the spores are easily moved. Rotate with non-host crops; avoid low lying or poorly drained fields.

<http://www.apsnet.org/publications/apsnetfeatures/Pages/PhytophthoraFruitRot.aspx>

[http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Cucurbit\\_FrtRots.htm](http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Cucurbit_FrtRots.htm)

Garlic-Seeing lots of garlic with botrytis gray mold covering the cloves forming a matt-like growth between cloves. You can't see this without pulling apart the bulbs. This is primarily a storage problem and often indicates improper drying with too high humidity. Do not sell or use infected/damaged cloves for seed. Check out photos/info from this factsheet on stored garlic:

<http://plant-clinic.bpp.oregonstate.edu/garlic>

<http://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/articles/storage-diseases-onion-and-garlic>

CROP STORAGE WORKSHOPS - First two of five repeated sessions are this week in Brattleboro on 9/17 and Rutland on 9/19. These workshops are one-day sessions focused on storage considerations relevant to vegetable, fruit and berry growers. Precooling, refrigeration basics, storage conditions and more will be covered. Other locations are White River Junction on 10/9, St. Johnsbury on 10/10, and Shelburne on 10/16. Space is still available in each. More info: <http://blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah/storageworkshop/>, registration \$20 (includes lunch): <https://www.eventbrite.com/event/7979513941>.

#### COST SHARE ON BIOMASS BOILERS FOR GREENHOUSES

Greenhouse growers in former CVPS territory may apply to receive 50% cost share up to \$7,000 on a biomass boiler installation for greenhouse heating. Deadline is Sept. 27. More info: <http://blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah/greenhousebiomass/>.

Application for funding:

[http://blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah/files/2013/08/Biomass\\_IncentiveQuestionnaire\\_Form.pdf](http://blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah/files/2013/08/Biomass_IncentiveQuestionnaire_Form.pdf).

#### OILSEED and BIOFUEL FIELD DAY

John Williamson at State Line Farm will host an oilseed and biodiesel field day supported by the UVM Extension NW Crops and Soils Team on Sept. 26 from 10am-2pm. \$15 registration (includes lunch): <http://www.uvm.edu/extension/stateline>.

#### FARM AID VEGETABLE FARM TOURS

On Sept. 20 choose one of three farms in eastern NY to visit (one is a dairy). Take the bus or drive yourself. Register by Sept 18 at [www.farmaid.org/events](http://www.farmaid.org/events), cost is \$25, lunch included with all proceeds going to benefit farmers. One tour is of highly diversified vegetables in field and tunnels at Paul and Sandy Arnold's Pleasant Valley Farm in Argyle; for info and driving directions: [arnold.pvf@gmail.com](mailto:arnold.pvf@gmail.com) or 518-638-6501; another tour, and garlic planting Crop Mob, will be held at the 400-acre biodynamic Roxbury Farm CSA in Kinderhook with farmers Jean-Paul Courtens and Jody Bollyut.

#### FINANCING CONFERENCE FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Entrepreneurs and small business owners connected to Vermont's working lands are invited to apply now to pitch their ideas and challenges at the Financing the Working Landscape Conference, November 7 at the Middlebury American Legion. Entrepreneurs interested in receiving professional advice must apply online at <http://acornvt.org/fwl2013/> by Sept. 27. Registration for attendees will be at the same URL. The cost for the event is \$30 (\$20 for students), and includes a local foods lunch prepared by student chefs and post-event beverages and appetizers from local food artisans and craft beverage makers.