



University of Vermont

Extension

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Vermont Vegetable and Berry Grower News – September 2, 2025

Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension

(802) 656-7534, vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu

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

VVBGA ON FARM WORKSHOP Tuesday September 23, 3:00-5:30 pm

Organic Medicinal Herb Production and Processing

Hillside Botanicals, 5675 VT-12, Randolph, VT 05060. Cost: Free.

Hillside Botanicals is a certified organic medicinal herb farm, plant nursery, apothecary and wellness product manufacturer. Started by Sarah Shaw and Nathan Bacon in 2018, the 5 acre farm grows and processes many species of herbs primarily for wholesale markets and on-line retail sales. Their products include dried herbs, tinctures, teas, Fire Cider, and body care products. Sarah and Nathan will describe their production practices and provide a tour of the on-farm processing facility. Topics to be covered include crop selection, production practices, post-harvest processing and related infrastructure, market development, and value-add enterprises for herbal products. Attendees will also learn about a new herb growers initiative aimed at strengthening the network of herb growers and buyers in the state, co-led by Sarah and Julia Etter of Nomad Farm. This event is supported by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture [Specialty Crop Block Grant program](#).

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Hinesburg) Smooth summer. Great crew. The combination of our irrigation pond and dug well has held up. My fears of running out of water have been eased with a rain last week and this week. Half the tunnels are prepped and ready for transplanting fall and winter crops. We will be gradually working on switching over the other tunnels as the summer crops finish up. Nematodes for winter cut worm are on order.

Started a new plot this year and grew winter squash on it. Mini butternut did well, Delicata yielded poorly. I wonder why the difference?

(Westminster) It's interesting how fields four or five miles away from each other can see such a difference in rainfall. One field gets a lot; the other nothing. That's the way it's been this summer. Fortunately, although one brook has dried up, we can irrigate just about everything we

need to (out of the river). The winter squash, however, is in a dry part of the farm, so we're curious about how that will size up.

The hot weather this summer made everything mature quickly. We keep planting things later but they mature earlier. We've had a great sweet corn season. We usually pick corn well into October but that may not happen this year because the corn is maturing so fast. All the fall root crops and cabbage are growing really well, too, but there's one drawback: getting it into storage early will limit how long it keeps.

Although onions aren't a big crop for us, they are excellent this year, probably because we watered them every couple of days as they were bulbing up. Other than that, we're prepping our greenhouses for winter greens.

(Dummerston) The sudden slow down of high tunnel tomato ripening is happening again; it happens every year at this time. It must have something to do with our pruning techniques in the high tunnel because it happens with 10 different large tomato varieties which all produce like crazy throughout August and all but stop around September 1. Then they continue to ripen at a more moderate pace through fall. The tomatoes in the field just keep going. Vern suggested pruning fruit clusters but that's more fussing with tomato plants than I can handle in the summer, so the CSA members just have to deal with a boom and bust of large tomatoes in the shares. They are getting tons of cherry tomatoes anyway.

It has been a good growing season on the whole. Slow to start but great growing weather after that, so long as we keep irrigating. Now we are starting seedlings and getting ready to prepare high tunnel beds for winter greens production.

(Underhill) A hot and dry August taught me how to use our new irrigation system on our mixed veg space. Sweet corn was 2 weeks late, which was a bummer, and multiple plantings are ripening now on Labor Day weekend. Disease pressure was minimal on the pumpkins this year. The vines are dying back now and showing us great numbers of fruit. We could have used more rain, but still many of great size. Picking the gourds and squash feels early, but the quality is there so we're jumping on the opportunity to get them in the farm stand.

(Westminster West) Very dry here, no serious rains since May! Two of three wells are dry, so delivery of truck loads of water by the Westminster fire department are keeping us going! Most crops have done fine as they have drip irrigation, except potatoes show a reduced crop so far.

Finished harvesting the squash and pie pumpkins and yields look comparable to other years; quality is high. Sweet onion crop did well, no thrips, growing on white plastic was very effective. Leeks look great, no leek moths here. Garlic crop was fantastic this year and sold out.

Insects kept in check mostly using Azera, worked well on cuke beetles, squash bugs, and CPB with added Entrust. Cover crops looking good and squash field will be seeded next day or two.

Ginger and turmeric sales are strong at farmers market, along with melons. Looking forward to a vibrant fall!

(Guildhall) About six weeks without rain here. Several early potato varieties have died down because of it. Other varieties have good tops, and if we got some rain the tubers would get some size out of it. As it is, yield is going to be down, size profile is going to be down. However, as of now, quality is looking excellent. Little to no hollow heart even in susceptible varieties, no scab, rot or rhizoc found yet. We dug 2 acres of Red Norlands in August, got 18,000 lbs. to the acre, so way off our usual yields, but got “new potato” money for them so maybe it’s ok.

Pumpkins (jacks and pie) are fully colored and we start shipping this week. Definitely the best pumpkin crop we’ve had in years. Need some? Text 207.323.4439.

(Plainfield NH) A few spot showers helped us limp along, but each day I want to hear that a tropical depression is headed our way. And because there hasn’t been one, disease pressure is insignificant. Burned the potatoes down and there was a little Alternaria in there, but most varieties were senescing naturally. Hoping to dig and get them in early this year.

Pulling a respectable crop of melons out of the weeds that overtook us during blueberry harvest. Picking fall squash that is mature; the vines were healthy and without any mildew - a first. Deer are raising hell with the pumpkin crop. Electric fence worked for about a month then they just bulled through it to feed.

Little SWD pressure and respectable crop of fall raspberries still ahead of us. Strawberries are renovated and weed free (at the moment). The river here is so low we won’t set up the solid set irrigation on the older beds. Next year’s strawberry crop was planted on drip. That is one of the best ideas we have had in years as they look very good.

(Little Compton RI) Drought continues in our area. A couple of showers have pulled some crops through while others have suffered. Irrigation wells going dry. Meganet overhead sprinklers have been the only way to get direct-seeded crops started. Have heard that the extra hot weather created ozone damage on crops that looks like spray damage! Our winter squash leaves had brown rings around the leaf edges.

We learned some details about spraying copper. Spray water should have a pH of 6.5 or higher, and don’t spray too close to evening. You want the copper to dry before evening dew comes in.

Trico has been our best deer repellent. We spray it on entrances paths into fields. Where we have deer fencing, we added a second electrified tape 5 feet in front of the main three strands. This challenges their depth perception. Also, during drought it is important to put in extra ground posts and spread them 10 feet apart. The dry soil needs increased contact to deliver the higher volts!

Started two weeks early spraying Entrust on Leeks for Allium Leaf Miner. Missed the early window last year and paid the price. We use a new OMRI spreader sticker called Kinetic that we prefer to the pine tar based NuFilm, but one must totally clean the spray tank because any left over spray creates a weird film if left over night.

Farmers markets are very strong, and higher prices holding up.

BEGINNING FARMER PROGRAM

Do you have a goal of starting your own farm? Or perhaps you're running your own farm and want to learn more about whole farm planning, financial management, marketing and more?

NOFA-VT's Farm Beginnings is a year-long cohort-based program for aspiring and beginning farmers designed to help participants launch or grow their farm business. Program offerings include in-depth online learning modules with Vermont farmers and service providers, as well as on-farm visits and a mentorship program. Program cost is \$500. Scholarships are available.

Applications are now open for this one-year program that starts in early fall; the **deadline to apply is September 15**. Questions? Megan Browning at megan@nofavt.org or 802-419-0073.

Details and application available at: www.nofavt.org/farm-beginnings

NRCS LOCALLY LED CONSERVATION DELIVERY

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCDs) in Vermont are using a new paradigm for delivering technical and financial assistance called Locally Led Conservation Delivery (LLCD) which leverage partnerships and funding to restore, conserve, and protect Vermont's working landscapes.

NRCDs in Vermont gathered feedback from Local Working Groups and put together Locally Led Conservation Plans (LLCPs) that describe resource concerns and goals, proposed solutions and actions, necessary funds and technical assistance, monitoring and evaluating methods, and a timeline with partner roles. See <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2025-08/nrcs-vt-llc-executive-summary.pdf> for a brief, summarized list of NRCD LLCPs for Vermont. (Funding awarded is subject to fiscal year 2026 funding allocation.)

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 14, VVBGA on-farm workshop, 3:00-5:30 pm. High Tunnels for Year-Round Organic Vegetable Production. Intervale Community Farm, Burlington VT

November 12-13. Northeast Greenhouse Conference and Expo. Manchester NH.

<https://www.negreenhouse.org/>

December 10-11. High Tunnel Production Conference. Lebanon NH

<https://extension.unh.edu/event/2025/12/high-tunnel-production-conference-enhance-your-tunnel-vision>

January 20, 2026. VVBGA Annual Meeting. Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee VT