



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – September 2, 2026
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<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/horticulture/commercial>

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Westminster) There's nothing like a food-borne illness to spur sales of greens – they've been off the charts.

We just began irrigating more intensely to give a boost our kale crop and for new transplants but hope that we'll get a good rain in the next week. The nice weather has allowed us to get our last transplants into the ground and bring all the cultivating and weeding of our storage crops up to date. We should end up with a substantial amount of storage crops like beets, carrots, rutabaga, radishes, and turnips.

We've started harvesting winter squash. It seems early but our kuri, buttercup, and delicata are all ready to go. We've also begun preparing our greenhouses for our winter market at the farmstand.

(Westminster West) Full on harvest season, almost overwhelming, well it actually is! Filling orders, picking crops, getting cover crops in all at once, too much but doing it anyway. Potatoes and winter squash are my big movers this time of year. Tomatoes are slowing down, ginger is coming in. Carrots, leeks, and big sweet onions moving in volume. Cabbage loopers won't stop!

Seed garlic is selling well. Trying to plug in last planting of celery tomorrow; celery has become a big part of our crop picture. Tunnel raspberries have done great this year, very few insect problems; more fertilization has made a difference.

(Underhill) Tough weather in our neck of the woods. Continuing to get too-frequent rain to make hay, but very dry for the field crops. The sweet corn seems to be short, small and variable this year, though still able to yield enough for average sales once the racoons and bears moved on.

Strawberries have been transplanted and look good so far. Water wheeling plugs is so much more fun than hand plating bare roots in plastic.

PYO Flower sales are steady, overall farmstand traffic is up so that's good. Specialty pumpkins, gourds, and squash died off early. I'm about ready to harvest what's there, but not looking great.

PYO pumpkin patch is still very green, sprayed for PM and squash bugs once last week to help push them along while they start to color up, doesn't look like an early harvest of pumpkins for us this year, but I see some nice sized jacks out there hiding in the leaves.

(Elmore) Very dry up here in our fields, and in potted trees are wilting. Can't seem to get enough water to them even if we hand water or sprinkler every day.

Good crops of plums and pears and blackberries this year. Apples are over the top and look so good. I have no idea why this year is so flush with fruit, and at least two weeks early for everything. The marmots (what they call woodchucks just north of us over the border) have no fear this year of coming close to people.

(Ange-Gardien, Quebec) Not so bad year so far, yields are good, working windows to get these yields out of the field are a challenge. Tough year for weed control: re-rooting of the weed when we dig them up, germination through the summer... anyway, lots of weeding for the team!

Edamame crop is awesome although we still have maturing uniformity problems with our day neutral varieties. Any advice on this would be appreciated. Struggling with employees working speed, it seems like it goes down a little bit every year.

(Plainfield NH) It has been a meteorologically benevolent season here: enough rain to grow crops without excessive irrigation and blessedly no sweltering periods of heat. There has been a light amount of insect and disease pressure. Unfortunately the weather has been beneficial to weeds, and the balancing act of labor for harvest and hand weeding has been in favor of harvest.

The main weed problem this year has been lambsquarter escapes. We are also confronted with invasives (grape, bittersweet, pokeweed, buckthorn) in the blueberries. Buckthorn is especially concerning because removal of its tenacious root system often ends up disturbing the shallow roots of the blueberries, so we try to manage it through cutting once or twice annually.

By far our worst pests are birds and mammals. We are battling them primarily with netting and traps. Lasers and noise makers have proven ineffective. Electric fence when well maintained and baited is fairly effective but expensive. Melons and pumpkins are being ravaged by large populations of deer and ground voles, which are having a great year despite increasing local populations of raptors.

A good harvest of onions is in; potato burndown has begun and the farmstand is taking on an autumn appearance with mums and fall ornamentals beginning to appear. Sales have been solid in this slower part of the market season, as schools start.

(Little Compton RI) For the first time in decades we have had a wet year, enough to see disease issues show up that we thought were extinct. Clubroot and Black Rot have claimed 2.5 acres of mixed brassicas.

We will put Brassica fields into thick pasture grass for two to three years and mow it repeatedly to reduce wild mustard and other wild Brassica seed banks. Letting wild mustard proliferate was a big mismanagement issue!

We are improving our greenhouse sanitation protocols and using potting soil amendments like Root Shield and mycorrhizal products. Importantly, we need to replace plug trays at least every other year. I believe funky old trays is the weak link in the chain because they can introduce Verticillium and other pathogens that don't show up until the plugs are in the field.

We tried Seashield, a product from the Advancing Eco Ag. It is a plant food and secondarily has a strong fish scent that is effective at discouraging deer. We still use Plantskydd, too.

After a successful crop of early potatoes that were green sprouted and planted under black mulch, we got our main crop planted July 15. We dreaded planting into a dust bowl, but happily it rained 2 inches two days later. The seed potatoes had suffered by being in a cooler for months, and the eyes had started to sprout. We just cut them up and sent them through the potato planter and didn't fuss with them at all. We now have the healthiest crop ever; no bugs, beautiful row closure, bit of delayed flowering, but with timely rains and a sidedress at last hilling looking good.

Don't know if everyone else has benefitted from the "lettuce freakout" but sales of all our vegetables hit records this summer. "Value added" products also bolster sales at all our outlets. Garlic scape pesto is our most sought after and our highest profit margin.

I've gained valuable insights from the "Growing for Market" greenhouse tomato grower Instagram contributions.

STORAGE CROPS, SOIL HEALTH, MARKETING, AND AN ELECTRIC TRACTOR
Wednesday September 23, 3:00-5:30
High Meadows Farm, 742 Westminster West Road, Putney, VT 05346

Howard Prussack has been farming at this location since 1971. His farm was the first in Vermont to be certified organic, in 1976. He grows a dozen acres of certified organic vegetables in the field and has 30,000 sq. ft. of high tunnels. Sales are at Brattleboro farmers' market and wholesale to coops and garden centers throughout New England, delivered by the farm's trucks and through one distributor. The focus is on a few major crops: potted herbs, garlic, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, and winter squash. Howard also grows some celery, ginger, and turmeric in tunnels. Cover crops, rotations, and various ground covers are used intensively. We'll discuss marketing, tour the fields and tunnels, talk cover crops, and see the wash/pack/storage located in a refurbished barn. Howard will demonstrate his Tilmor Super-E electric cultivating tractor and describe its performance this past season. This event is supported by the [Transition to Organic Partnership Program](#) and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets.

SUMMARIES OF RECENT VVBGA WORKSHOPS

- [Reduced Tillage, Insect Scouting, and NRCS Practices on a Small-scale Diversified Vegetable and Flower Farm. Stone's Throw Farm. Shrewsbury.](#)
- [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](#)

NOFA-VT ON FARM WORKSHOPS

Sept 9. [Seed Keeping Basics. Introduction to Seed Growing and Seed Saving](#) (Northfield)
Sept. 29. | [Managing Biodiversity on the Farm](#) (Vershire)

UVM EXTENSION AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING RESOURCES

Dry Cleaning for Produce Farms <http://go.uvm.edu/drycleaning>

Root Washers for Produce Farms <http://go.uvm.edu/rootwashers>

Reinventing the Wheel: Easing Movement and Adding Flexibility <https://go.uvm.edu/wheels>

DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR 2027 NRCS FUNDING IS SEPTEMBER 25

To apply for Natural Resource Conservation Service programs ([EQIP](#) or [CSP](#)), get in touch with your local USDA office: <https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator>
The [application form](#) is simple, and it only expresses your interest in participating, it is not a commitment. Applications are accepted year-round, but if you apply after the September deadline you will be applying for 2028 funding. Farmers in other states may have different deadlines (e.g. [NH- October 16th](#) and [NY-September 18th](#)).

CONGRATULATIONS VERMONT AG HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Hats off to farmers Paul Harlow and Doug Flack, and Extension professionals Ann Hazelrigg and Heather Darby for their contributions to Vermont's food system! There's a nice [article about Harlow Farm](#) in the Commons newspaper.

IS ORGANIC CERTIFICATION FOR YOU?

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Your farm may benefit from organic certification if you're looking for: More transparency with consumers; Greater access to markets; A premium price in the marketplace; Community in a growing movement; And you don't have to go it alone! Vermont Organic Farmers can support your organic certification journey by walking you through the USDA organic standards, helping you access reimbursement for certification fees, and setting you up with useful supports like record-keeping resources. Learn more about certification support; contact us at 802-434-3821 or info@vermontorganic.org.

NEW ENGLAND VEGETABLE AND FRUIT CONFERENCE
December 15-17, Manchester NH

Join hundreds of fellow farmers for three days of learning, networking, and innovation featuring 31 educational sessions, daily farmer-to-farmer discussions, a research poster session, and more than 120 trade show exhibitors. **Register by November 30** to take advantage of early bird rates. <https://newenglandvfc.org/>. Keep in mind that hotel rooms in the area sell out early!