



**Vermont Vegetable and Berry News** – October 2, 2020  
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## **2020 VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY GROWER WEBINARS**

Wednesdays from noon to 1:00 p.m. For details of upcoming topics and links to past webinar slides and video recordings see: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/Webinars2020.html>

- Oct. 7 Managing Leek Moth
- Oct. 14 Aphid and Disease Management for Winter Greens in Tunnels
- Oct. 21 Root Washing Systems
- Oct. 28 Steaming Tunnel Soils
- Nov. 4 Creature Comforts that Make Farm Life a Bit Easier

## **REPORTS FROM THE FIELD**

(Marlboro) All field vegetables are slowing down or done, blueberries had a great year without too much SWD due to weather and better luck with organic sprays, summer raspberries were decent but suffered from drought toward the end. Fall raspberries are just now coming on strong after the cold snap but seem to be setting plenty of new fruit. We have drip irrigation in them which is probably making the difference between this decent crop and nothing whatsoever. Fall raspberries, hoop house greens and tomatoes will probably continue until it gets colder. All in all, as good a season as we could expect and actually a bit better- We are thankful that people seem to want local produce more than ever. And eggs? what is with the demand for eggs?

(Rochester) Four consecutive killing frosts, starting September 18, brought the fall raspberry season to an abrupt end before it had begun. Can't complain. We have had a great blueberry year and you can't win 'em all.

(Charlotte) Getting ready for next season is underway. Draining the irrigation lines and cutting back this year's black raspberries. Thinking forward and wondering if the primocane black raspberries maybe a good option to extend our season along with thinking about installing proper drainage in the current black raspberry field, and considering fall raspberries in the field that has been in the works for a couple of years. Welcoming the rain that we will be receiving in the next few days and enjoying the fall colors and then blueberry pruning will be happening soon after that!

(Westminster) All of our fall root crops are doing quite well, and harvest is well underway for many of them, including storage cabbage and parsnips. We finished harvesting our winter squash just in time for the mid-September frost – the earliest frost in at least 20 years. It certainly didn't help our paste tomatoes and the last two plantings of sweet corn didn't make it.

But we're very happy with the two inches of rain, long-awaited, we got last week, which have given a big boost to crops still in the ground.

Cover crops are doing a good job of covering bare ground. NRCS requires two or three different varieties of cover crops for each seeding, which is a little difficult because of the differing seed size for field peas, crimson clover, tillage radish and winter rye, as well as a few turnips we've planted.

Sales have been strong this fall for just about everything. Lettuce sales have picked back up and our Florida market is back on track. So all in all, the outlook is good.

(S. Royalton) Worst squash, pumpkin harvest in 25 years. Heat and vine borer, and lots of rotting fruit on the ground. On the upside onions, shallots were great. Four crazy hard early frosts: 25, 20, 25 and 25, yup 20 degrees. Sales still crazy strong, wish I had more product.

(Greensboro) Elderberries 2020 - about 8% of a crop, massive pressure on the fruit due to the drought and insects (Japanese beetles, SWD, slugs, etc.)

(Guildhall) We finished harvesting squash just ahead of the 4 overnights of 25 degrees. Yields were down but varied by variety. Delicata was down by 40% but most others only 20%. A fair number of Butternut had to be left in the field because they weren't fully ripe. Jack O Lanterns did well and sold well. The upside to the cold was our potato vines got killed, saving us the time rotobating them (we don't use herbicide). So having given the skins 10 days to set, we start digging in earnest tomorrow, 10/2.

(Burlington) I can't recall another September we've had four nights in a row of frost. That said, we came through mostly unscathed, with only minor damage. I have never covered winter squash before, and hope that we don't have to make a habit of it.

Most of our fall crops are doing nicely and it appears they will be ready for harvest on schedule. We enjoyed intense insect trouble this year, with CPBs, onion thrips, squash bugs, cucumber beetles, bean beetles, and flea beetles all causing significant damage. Plenty of things around the farm appeared to suffer generally from heat stress, despite being pretty well up on our irrigation game. I'm not looking forward to more of this in future decades.

(Huntington) I know all seasons are kind of weird, but this one has me scratching my head. We transplanted out our winter squash the last week of May, like usual. We had way more GDD than usual from that point on, and good irrigation all summer. Those plants were at least 2 weeks late maturing, and while we twiddled our thumbs waiting for things to ripen up, we had to deploy row cover for the first time ever on squash to stave off the mid-September cold snap. I've never left so much green fruit in the field before, especially considering we harvested later than usual. Yields were very good, but not where I would have expected.

Happy to have gotten 2 inches of rain this week - that kept us from smashing our previous record for driest-ever calendar month. Snow on March 14th, 90 degrees 2 weeks later (and plenty of heat all summer), little rain, then 5 hard frosts in mid-September. Sheesh.

(Plainfield NH) 2.5 inches of rain was the most welcome guest of the season. In full harvest mode here; irrigation was out of the question with no labor for it and no water in the river. Potato crop is decent despite lack of moisture, fall carrots should size up nicely with the recent rain. Most beets are in bins, garlic is dried and topped. Turnips and late potatoes need to be pulled.

The farmstand will close Oct. 11, and that will free up time for cleanup and projects. Sales have been very good this year. It will be a challenge as to how to go forward with this economic pandemic blip. Stay the course or expand? What will the real norm look like in a year? Ray has been filling up greenhouses with stuff for the fall CSA, as it was hard to get later stuff in the field without any rain.

Biggest pest now are deer. Despite plenty of mast in the woods they are eating in the fields at night. Put out 3700 fall strawberry plug plants next to a renovated bed of strawberries. In 2 nights they had cleaned every leaf off the plug plants, but not the other strawberries. Only difference is that I had put on some copper to protect the other plants, and they didn't like it.

(Argyle NY) The dryness of the past 2 months was cut by one rain event Tuesday night with 1.77" of gentle rain. Finally! Fall started with 4 mornings of 31 degrees leaving a few things damaged but most, with some rowcover, still chugging along. It pushed us to get winter squash and sweet potatoes out which are curing right now at 85 degrees. Yields are below to average which surprised us with the heat this past summer. We have plenty of irrigation. We are still picking beans. A little on the late side but tunnels are getting planted as they become available. Just picked 150# of cherry tomatoes 2 days ago.

Pest of the month is flea beetle which have been hanging on but we understand there is a nematode you can apply that controls them and we are excited to apply them next year but would love anyone's feedback on that method. Diseases coming in are Alternaria on our Brassicas and some Cladosporium on the spinach! That is usually a problem only in tunnels.

Farmers markets have been steady with the craziness subsiding but our home deliveries are ramping up, so lots to consider this winter about where we will put our efforts.

## **YOUR INPUT SOUGHT FOR COVER CROPPING RESEARCH ON FIELD PEAS**

UVM is looking for farmers to fill out a brief field pea cover cropping survey. Your participation is essential to ensure our research is applicable to all farmers in the Northeast. The survey is only 17 questions and should take a few minutes to complete. <https://forms.gle/6Aj4bfiBuQaTPb2C7>

## **NORTHEAST GREENHOUSE CONFERENCE WEBINARS**

Though the in person conference is postponed, there will be a webinar series this fall, beginning Nov. 4 sponsored by New England Floriculture Inc. The content will address greenhouse pests, diseases, biocontrols, PGRs, and sanitation. Pesticide recertification credit will be offered for New England states and New York. For dates/topics and registration information visit <https://www.negreenhouse.org/virtual-series-schedule.html>.