



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – July 2, 2024
Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension
(802) 656-7534, vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/horticulture/commercial>

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Westminster) I don't think we've ever been so on top of things: on-time planting, cultivating, hoeing, and weeding. On-time enough to give the workers a day off here and there.

Fertility seems to be holding up well, and we're averaging 0.72 inches of rain a week, a shade over my perfect average of one-half inch but well within acceptable limits. We're on-time for at least a meal of sweet corn on the Fourth of July, the earliest ever. A combination of wasps and timely Entrust spray seem to have taken care of corn borer. Timely spraying has also been effective against cabbage worm in the cabbage, which we've started to cut. We've seen no *Cercospora* on our beets.

Therein lies the rub. We tend to fall behind when we're picking and selling crops, especially when we're trying to establish fall crops. And we're not selling nearly what we should be. With excellent growing conditions, every farmer from Maryland to Canada has lettuce and kale and that has dampened sales, I'm hearing from around the region. So, while the season might not be "perfect," I'd like to invoke another favorite saying: "close enough."

(Marlboro) Raspberries coming along earlier than normal, looking good so far but still lots of time for things to go wrong. Black raspberries have a great crop. but we lose more than ever to birds, will have to cover them someday. Lighter blueberry crop than normal and ripening a bit early, SWD net in place over a part of the patch and putting out SWD traps soon. A good growing season with enough but not too much rain, and in good intervals.

(W. Rutland) Blueberries are slowly getting ripe. Early varieties look good, as do the late varieties. Mid-season varieties looking thin due to excessive pruning.

Garlic harvest in 2-3 weeks. Had to irrigate for 2 weeks since the rain went all around us. Observed more leek moth than ever, glad the spinosad still works. All brassica crops rocking.

(Grand Isle) Blueberries look nice. We anticipate opening 5-7 days earlier this year. We are trying a new idea to get our Japanese beetle issue under control. We have covered all the grass areas up to within inches of the plants with ground cover. We have stapled the cover down with staples every 3 feet or less. Our hope is that once the Japanese beetles emerge, they will not be able to find a way out from under the ground cloth. Our plants are completely enclosed under SWD insect netting, so the Japanese beetles can't get in or out.

(Newfane) Strawberry season will be coming to an early end. This season is 10 to 12 days earlier than usual. Extreme heat and 7 or 8 inches of rain was not good. Raspberries earlier than any time in forty-one years of picking. Pick-your-own totals will be down as customers expect good strawberry picking leading into July 4. The yield potential in the raspberries and blueberries is excellent.

(Orwell) Tunnel tomato harvest is underway with good looking fruit and steady harvest. This is our third year with potato aphids as one of our main pests. With a combination of early releases of beneficials and spraying hot spots, we are keeping them under better control than past years.

Botrytis is our biggest disease issue, especially in the middle of larger tunnels where ventilation and air circulation are limited. These areas of the tunnels also suffer most in the heat.

Other crops look good although brassicas and eggplant are taking a hit from heavy flea beetle pressure. We are appreciating the moderate but adequate rainfall we've received so far this season--hoping that continues.

(Northfield) With the exception of a blue jay stealing our ripest strawberries we were pleased with our crop. The cat is on probation. High tunnel tomatoes have set fruit, with no signs of blight. Epsom salts seem to do the trick. Northfield's farmers market enjoyed the best 4 weeks ever. The 96° market was slow.

(Newbury) Digging new potatoes. Harvesting shell peas for the last week. Fava beans are ready. No signs of leek moth and Colorado potato beetles are scarce. Squash and cukes look good. Brassicas are robust but not producing eatables. Observed first cabbage moth.

(Westminster West) Besides a few very hot days the temperatures have been cooler than normal, and the melon crops are behind last year even though we had row covers on them. Winter squash is also about 5 days behind. Few striped beetles or squash bugs have appeared so far, the acres of row covers make all the difference for us.

Potatoes doing well, in a clean field due to new Treffler type wire weeder, hilled and starting to flower. CPB have started and the first round of sprays hopefully did something! Trying Bio-Ceres first time in the mix.

Started picking tomatoes, mostly cherry and grape types, strong demand at markets. Celery and cabbage flowing to stores and markets. Garlic harvest is very close, no sign of leek moth. Raspberries are coming in now, big and sweet from our high tunnel!

Hard to find time to get fallow fields under cover crops but next few days hopefully. Farmers' markets seem a bit behind in sales so far. Hosted a training for NRCS staff, using Cornell CASH testing on our soils, very interesting. Happy to see so many women going into this field of work! Hoping for a "normal" year this year for us and everyone!

(Guildhall) The weather here has been good, knock on wood. Catching 1 to 2 inches per storm every week and I hope that continues. We've got 52 acres of potatoes out, 11 varieties. It took us

2 weeks to plant, so here at the end of June we've got potatoes in all stages of growth. The first field planted is hilled and 2-foot tall, the last field is just popping up.

Gearing up to start spraying this week, first insecticide and weekly foliar feeds. Going to be putting down foliar boron and magnesium alternating weeks to combat hollow heart. Plus our trusty kelp juice. Weed control so far is good, but hard to tell how long it'll last. There's a fair amount of morning glory in the fields this year; got me jumping off the tractor handweeding when I should be cruising.

The transition to summer work is underway with the barn nearly cleaned, 3 potato trucks getting brake jobs, and the potato planter getting its usual deep clean plus parts. We sold potatoes later than usual by a far margin this year. Cool weather in April and May kept the barn looking nice and we made our last sale of the 2023 crop on 6/19. Unprecedented late. All in all, pretty good.

(Wilmot NH) Grateful for less rain and more sun this season. Last year I had baby carrots first week of July while this year I missed the baby stage and went right into full size middle of June. Insect pests all seem much earlier and more aggressive. Might need to invest in greenhouse netting as even my earliest cucumbers are suffering. Entering year 5 on never-farmed loamy sand and just starting to see some real improvements like the first crop of perfect spinach.

(Saratoga Springs, NY) Summer vegetables look good, though we saw reduced pollination in pickles after the heat wave. Lots of bacterial wilt in the Asian cukes, but they are still producing. Cornell Extension did not see downy mildew yet; that's good. We have early blight in the heirloom tomatoes, mostly Brandywine. Pruning, fertigation, and spraying Zonix seems to help.

Potato plants look nice despite leafhopper and CPB pressure, which we are treating with pyrethrum and spinosad. We'll see how many the voles have eaten. The voles ate some Forum onions and half of the spring fennel. They are developing quite the palate.

We will harvest garlic soon. Anthracnose confirmed in the scapes, but bulb size looks good. We will cut the tops before curing. There are thrips in the spring sown onions, otherwise they look good and are bulbing up.

Recent markets have been slower due to rain. Thank goodness for the regulars. Lots of weeds as usual, especially purslane, and the grass is growing too fast. We finally have a great part-time employee who is helping us to catch up.

(Little Compton RI) Farmers' markets are well attended, and sales are brisk! A cool spring with ample rain has benefited us.

We discovered that two usually dependable sources of *Encarsia formosa* (white fly parasitoid) were sending us almost completely unhatchable controls. One gave us our money back, the other we are negotiating some compensation. Bottom line: always save a few cards in a place where you can ascertain if they are viable or not.

A second discovery is that Entrust appears near useless on CPB, even on young larvae. We now have to rotate to a field three miles away to try and control the infestation with rotation. Three years ago Trident from Certis was our answer, but it has not been available since then.

Strawberries did well because our varieties were early and midseason, so we missed the heat blast that took down others around us. Anthracnose was a problem, but a couple of copper sprays alternated with Oxidate kept it manageable.

Greenhouse tomatoes: learned a lesson not to remove leaves below the first fruit cluster before the plant has set two or three other clusters. Doing that set them back and we lost two weeks of good early season prices. Another farmer told me to always leave enough foliage in case of prolonged heat, so plants can transpire enough water to stay healthy. We are spraying prophylactic treatments of Double Nickel to keep grey mold at bay.

Deer: Trico-Pro is a very effective deterrent, even if sprayed away from the field, where the deer move toward crops. It's not certified by OMRI so can't be used in our organic fields, but since it is essentially lamb fat, I'm hoping it will be someday!

NAP insurance through USDA~FSA has been one of the best investments we have made in the last ten years! With hurricane season gearing up and 16 major storms projected, it is a no brainer as close to the ocean as we are.

(Argyle NY) Warmer than normal spring definitely made some crops earlier like rhubarb and strawberries. Irrigation was hooked up in April and didn't have to be broken down because of freezing weather. Rains have been light and infrequent.

This spring into summer has been (so far) the lightest amount of flea beetles, cucumber beetles and squash bugs I have ever seen in all my years. No idea why but oh so thankful. We have seen some tarnished plant bugs though which is unusual.

More and better help than any recent year have made it easier to get everything planted and weeded mostly on time but we still work long hours (too long).

The transition to spring and summer crops was fairly smooth. The peas on hortinova did great. The snow peas were a trial and were light colored but prolific. The beans started a few weeks ago. Seychelles real nice and darker green; Northeaster also good as a Romano. Pill bugs were real issue but the Sluggo likely helped. Now it's Japanese beetles!

Tomatoes on basket weave system, in the tunnel, have already hit 6 feet. Some varieties are producing now, and we try to do weekly fertilizing. Cukes and squash are pumping out like crazy and we picked our first eggplant today! Some strange wilting of summer squash unknown but working on it. Celery amazing crop and profit maker as usual.

Overwintered onions are also amazing crop this year. With plastic were kept fully weeded and size is great w little bolting. Forum still our favorite and the scallions from oversized sets been productive every week all spring.

Sales for us are all online and doing well with a few wholesale accounts for surplus. Administrative time on the computer is too high but it works. Look forward to some travels in August to recharge!

UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC

Ann Hazelrigg, UVM Extension

Blueberries-Exobasidium leaf and fruit spot identified. This fungus is sporadic and considered to be a more southern disease. Pale green spots appear on the upper leaf surface with pure white fungal growth on the underside. Infected spots on berries stay green and do not ripen. Spots become sunken and distorted over time and berries may drop prematurely. To reduce disease, encourage air flow and reduce humidity in the blueberry field. Use drip irrigation instead of overhead irrigation, eliminate standing water, and remove trees on the perimeter that block air movement. Prune bushes to create an open canopy with good air flow. A single application of lime sulfur about two weeks before bud break will provide significant control of Exobasidium leaf and fruit spot. <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/exobasidium-leaf-and-fruit-spot-of-blueberry>

Strawberries-several plantings have experienced significant collapse. Some crowns are infected with anthracnose and show severe damage. Black root rot is commonly seen in roots. <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/plpath-fru-05> This is a catch-all term for red stele disease (*Phytophthora*), nematodes, *Rhizoctonia* and other soil borne fungi. Even though the winter was on the mild side, I suspect the very saturated soil of last summer contributed to the collapse we are seeing this year.

Tomatoes-Anticipate seeing a lot of leaf spot disease (Early blight, Septoria) showing up this week on the lower leaves of field tomatoes. Fungicide sprays can protect new tissue but need to be reapplied often. We don't usually see this in high tunnels, but it can be present in the outside rows. Some tortoise beetle adults (resemble mini turtles) and larval (green and spiny with fecal matter on back) feeding seen on Solanaceous plants. <https://extension.umaine.edu/home-and-garden-ipm/fact-sheets/common-name-listing/tortoise-beetles/>

Squash vine borer reported in western Massachusetts last week. There is only one and maybe 2 generations per year and adults emerge from late June into July with peak flight being mid-July. Some growers sacrifice the first fruit by keeping squash row covered until after their first blooms. <https://ag.umass.edu/vegetable/fact-sheets/squash-vine-borer>

Leek moth damage is high in scapes. **Garlic** anthracnose was diagnosed on garlic scapes in Massachusetts. <https://ag.umass.edu/vegetable/newsletters/vegetable-notes/vegetable-notes-2024-vol-3611> "In garlic, this pathogen (*Colletotrichum fioriniae*) only infects the scapes and bulbils. *C. fioriniae* has a broad host range including celery, tomato, pear, apple, blueberry, strawberry, and many weeds. On garlic scapes, lesions are sunken and initially tan, turning orange as the fungus produces spores. The spores are dispersed by splashing water. The fungus can survive on crop debris in the soil for several years. Remove scapes and rotate."

Suspected **Swede midge damage** seen causing multiple heads in brassicas. Tiny adult flies lay eggs in the growing points. The feeding damage causes deformation of plants including brown corky tissue, galls, blind-heads, multi-heads, and twisted leaf petioles.

Send a picture or sample if you need help identifying a problem. ann.hazelrigg@uvm.edu

POLLINATOR SUPPORT REPORT

Laura Johnson, UVM Extension

Several farms this season are growing sequences of cover crops through bloom and noting their benefits and tradeoffs as pollinator forage and for soil health. Many thanks to farmers who spent time during a busy season observing and reporting pollinators visiting blooms of cover crops and who bring us this month's report. Six farmers on average reported in blooming field pea flowers, nearly no honey or bumble bees, 1 other wild bee type or wasp, 3 flies, 1 moth or butterfly, and nearly no beetles. Four farmers reported in mixed clover blooms an average of 2 honeybees, nearly no bumble bees, 2 other bees or wasps, 4 flies, 1 moth or butterfly, and 1 beetle. Buckwheat bloom observations were reported from one farm, with sightings of 10 honeybees, 6 bumble bees, 3 other bees or wasps, 8 (hover) flies, 3 moths, and 2 beetles. This same farm noted "We have a good bit of fleabane daisy flowering right now and those seem to be quite popular with the bugs." Another grower said "we've noticed the honeybees are way more interested in the broccoli raab that was flowering at the same time [as field peas]. They were very excited about it."

UPDATES FROM UVM EXTENSION AG ENGINEERING

Andy Chamberlin, UVM Extension

A new post-harvest case study is on our website. It describes a custom-built shipping container for a space protected from the elements. Explore the write up, photos, videos, and even a 360 tour. Planning Tames the Postharvest Beast at Wild Work Farm: <https://go.uvm.edu/wildwork>

The latest episode of The Farmer's Share podcast features Lisa MacDougall of Mighty Food Farm! See photos from the visit, and listen to the conversation on the web or in a podcast app. <https://thefarmersshare.com/2024/06/10/lisa-macdougall-of-mighty-food-farm-ep21/>

VERMONT FARM TICK SURVEY

Ticks and tickborne diseases are increasing in Vermont and you, your workers and animals are at high risk of exposure. Scientists at the UVM Entomology Research Laboratory are gathering information about ticks on farms and how you deal with them.

To help us develop resources for farmers to reduce the risk of tick bites, please complete this 5-10 minute survey: https://qualtrics.uvm.edu/jfe/form/SV_00nshllEvEdmldc. And check out our new Tick Information Center <https://site.uvm.edu/vt-tic/> with resources specifically for farmers. Questions? Contact Cheryl Sullivan at cfrank@uvm.edu

STILL TIME TO ADD YOUR FREE PYO LISTING

Promote your PYO crops to the public on the new VVBGA web site vermontpickyourown.org
Log in as a VVBGA member at <https://vvbga.org/> and click “Pick-Your-Own-Listing” on the left. It takes just 5 minutes – or simply ask me to add your information for you (from your existing web site or social media).

UPCOMING EVENTS

For complete listing with event details see <https://go.uvm.edu/2024farmworkshops>

Tuesday July 9, 4-6 pm

ORGANIC BLUEBERRY AND STRAWBERRY PRODUCTION

Clear Brook Farm, 47 Hidden Valley Rd., Shaftsbury VT

Thursday July 18, 9 am-noon.

HIGH TUNNELS, RAISED BEDS, LOW FUSS!

Walker Farm, 1190 US-5, East Dummerston, VT

Please register at <https://forms.gle/ojShJ9BPHk7N2b2u9> or email blunk.wc.nrcd@gmail.com

Sunday July 21, 9 am-1 pm

ADAPTING TO FARMING IN A FLOOD PLAIN

Intervale Community Farm 180 Intervale Rd., Burlington, VT

Wednesday August 14, 4-6:30 pm

PROTECTED GROWING WITH HIGH TUNNELS IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

Joe's Brook Farm, 1525 Joe's Brook Rd, Barnet VT

Monday, August 19, 4-7 pm

TOUR OF NORTH POINT COMMUNITY FARM

2172 Military Turnpike, Plattsburgh, NY

Wednesday, August 21, 4-6 pm

CULTIVATING ORGANIC PRACTICES FOR A THRIVING FARM AND COMMUNITY

Earth Sky Time Community Farm, 1547 Main Street Manchester, VT

Wednesday, August 28, 4:30-6:30 pm

RENOVATING AN OLD BARN INTO AN EFFICIENT WASH PACK SHED

Lewis Creek Farm, 3071 Route 116, Starksboro, VT

Sunday, September 15, 2-4 pm

SMALL-SCALE CUT FLOWER PRODUCTION AND FLORAL DESIGN BASICS

By Hand Farm, Newfane, Vermont

Monday, September 16, 4-6 pm

HIGH TUNNEL TOMATOES, PUMPKINS AND SWEET CORN PRODUCTION

Drinkwine Produce, 1512 Street Rd, Ticonderoga, NY

Wednesday, September 18, 3:30-5:30 pm
BEST PRACTICES FOR ON-FARM MARKETS
Walker Farm, 1190 US-5, East Dummerston, VT

Tuesday September 24, 4-6 pm
CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND SOIL HEALTH PRACTICES
Evening Song Farm, 680 Shunpike Rd, Shrewsbury, VT