# Vermont Vegetable and Berry News January 19, 2010

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## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(K Ygha ]bghYf K Ygh) K YffY putting finishing touches on new 40'x96 Harnois greenhouse. Installed new Modine infinity 93% efficient heater, looks great. Water heated rolling benches, all the candy a grower like me always wanted. Interviewing new staff for the season, had great response using local list serve. 5 Wh U`mgtUfhX d`Ubrjb[ h\]g mYUffg dUbgmUbX j ]c`U Wcd" GlUfrjb[ \YfV W hrjb[ g Ug k Y`" Grj`` k cf\_]b[ cb h\]g mYUffg d`Ubg hfm]b[ hc UbUmmY `UghmYUffg Ua Un]b[ fYgi `hg/ Wb k Y fYdYUh Wb k Y Xc VYhYf, Xc we want to? Growth is a double edge sword. I do love the pace of the winter months, time to think, plan and spend time with family and friends. We are blessed!

(West Rutland) Growing two new varieties of garlic for me this year: Bavarian white and Russian red. No idea how they will grow but giving it a shot. Firewood is ready for the greenhouses and I am hoping for a good spring, keep positive.

(Craftsbury) The new year is in full swing already. Getting together potting soil, planning starts, selling storage crops and winter greens, tuning furnaces, sneaking in the occasional ski and trip away. It's a full time occupation now-be aware of that as you make changes that extend your season. Buying all I can on Craigslist; use Searchtempest, it allows you to search Craigslists all over the country. You can kill some time buying equipment this way but there are some hot deals out there. Hoping to make wise decisions this season so that we don't have the four crop failures on key items that we had last year.

(Little Compton RI) We are finally taking a breather and doing our last farmersDmarket of the season. It was our second season and much was learned. The two biggest takeaways: Get a lot more seeding and sequence charting of seeding done in the late August/September period. And second, plan on banking crops of spinach in the December/January period so you have plenty of spinach to supply your markets. By planting a lot more extra spinach you will have ample supply for your markets without the stress of waiting for it to re-grow, which won't happen till February anyway

(Rochester) Most of our raspberries will need to be replaced over the next couple of years so we will be doing an experimental planting of seven varieties, to see what else might thrive in our almost-zone-three conditions. We are most excited about early fall-bearers, especially Polana which should fruit in mid-August. It will require more fertilization than the others but we can manage that through our drip irrigation (we use liquid marine emulsion) and it should extend our summer raspberry season nicely. In blueberries we will be trying some Northblue for their hardiness and reputedly high yield. Some fast-growing sweet sap silver maples will be going in by the customer parking area to give us future shade and hopefully nice sap in as little as ten years. We aim to bring in bumblebees (from Koppert) to strengthen blueberry pollination. We have been relying mostly on wild bumblebees since the honey bees spend all their time among the dandelions and raspberries, but wild bee numbers were not sufficient last year for our early-blooming Patriots (due to a warm April) and pollination was incomplete.

(Montpelier) Well a bit of an odd winter so far here in Vermont. Very little snow, some very cold temperatures, and a huge lack of sun. Winter salad/spinach has been good but could have been better with a bit of sun. Soil temperature is 5 degrees below where it normally is in the greenhouses. Spinach is doing just fine and demand at market remains nice and strong. Value added product is the new push, in particular soup. Hot by the cup, frozen quarts, and wholesale. What a great way to use culls and #2 product. Last year big greenhouse drainage project looks to be having a great impact so far. The real test will be this spring and hopefully the resulting drier growing environment and less disease and aphids. This year big project will be to focus on just growing, taking a break from large capital improvements. Need to step back and work with what I have and really get everything up to its full potential. Farm "crew" is hired and already helping out. Excited about the upcoming season as always and the promise it holds. Forever an optimist although realism tends to creep in around the edges and temper things a bit more.

(Westfield) Love to report something, but we haven't a clue what we are doing yet, but once we figure it out, we'll be reporting.

#### GROWERS WANTED FOR DAY NEUTRAL STRAWBERRY ORDER

Wanted: growers that might be interested in some dayneutral strawberries from Lassen Canyon Nurseries in California (<a href="www.lassencanyonnursery.com">www.lassencanyonnursery.com</a>). I need to get enough order to fill a pallet, which is 30 plus boxes of 1000 plants per box. I don't need many plants myself this year, but I still want to get a few and also try some new varieties. The varieties would certainly include Seascape (that one seems to be the best for the Northeast right now), Albion and then there are 3 new ones just released for trial: Monterey, San Andreas and Portola. I think we could have any of these but am not sure. I will contact Lassen Canyon when I get enough orders to fill a pallet. Black River Produce has been bringing them East for me other years and I am hoping they will do it again this year. Thanks, Bob Gray, 4 Corners Farm, S. Newbury. <a href="mailto:fourcornersfarm@earthlink.net">fourcornersfarm@earthlink.net</a> or (802) 866-3342.

## LOCAL DISTRIBUTOR SEEKS VERMONT PRODUCE

From: Louise Calderwood. A small distributor named Bernard Earl is currently distributing VT apples and VT potatoes to schools, senior centers, and small stores in northern VT. He is interested in carrying more VT products and can accommodate very small quantities. During the summer months he will also develop a road side stand in Wolcott. He is interested in developing relationships with VT producers for wholesale purchases both for his distribution route and for his roadside stand. The best way to reach Bernard is 888-3953 in the evenings.

# REMINDER: REGISTER FOR VT VEGETABLE AND BERRY GROWERS MEETING

The annual meeting will take place on Feb 1 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Montpelier E details at: <a href="http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/meetings/VVBGA\_Feb10\_Montpelier.pdf">http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/meetings/VVBGA\_Feb10\_Montpelier.pdf</a>. Pre-registrations are