

VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY GROWER NEWS – February 1, 2022

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

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VVBGA ANNUAL MEETING RECORDINGS AVAILABLE

Here are the [slides of all presentations](#) at Annual Meeting, and the [YouTube playlist](#) with 18 individual videos of the presentations.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Burlington) I found it easy to forget about the effect of subzero temperatures the last couple of winters when it was relatively warm. This winter we are seeing significantly more damage to our baby lettuce than we have in the past two winters. Spinach and kale look OK, and the parsley and cilantro have been surprisingly hardy. Otherwise, storage crops continue to look good, with plentiful roots, cabbages and squash still coming out of storage.

We are aiming to get better at our succession winter cropping and hoping we can squeeze in baby bok choy in a vacant bed before we need to turn it around for tomatoes and cucumbers in later April. We will see how fast it grows. Looking for that magic spinach that has broad downy mildew resistance but also field resistance to Cladosporium.

(Guildhall) An odd winter thus far in sales. Mid-November to New Years was unusually slow, and brokers were paying \$10 cwt. January, typically our slowest sales month, has been great for sales and the brokers are paying anywhere from \$12 to \$22, depending on quality and variety.

We have a good feeling about this season upcoming. with some good preparation and direction we can be growing smarter and more successfully than before.

The super cold temps have us running to get frozen pipes repaired twice now. Hiring earlier in the season and hiring more crew so we can make sure to cover the tasks needed and hoping this will pay off in higher sales and better-quality crops.

(Plainfield NH) Wholesaling of root crops comes to an end this week. Our pack shed will be converted into a space to seed, set up the pot and flat filler, and gear up for the impending bedding plant season. Our storage/pack barn has turned out to be a great multi use space, and hard to admit that I once argued against it. The month of February will have us seeding ornamentals mostly but trays of tomato seedlings and root stocks as well.

Mike is working on tearing out a cooler that was rotting the floor up next to our farmstand kitchen, and we are going to replace it with an external box outside the farmstand, This and additional repairs to greenhouse and high tunnel doors and gable ends will be ongoing for the far future. I have been taking vegetative cuttings in the greenhouse as well, while Sarah and Anne chase supplies, soil, plants and hardgoods that were purchased or committed in the fall, only to find out that they are unavailable to us now.

We are all going through medical appointments and procedures that somehow pile up for the "off season" while we also try to cram in some off farm vacation time. Zoom meetings seem to

(Little Compton RI)

greenhouse construction missing materials, cold weather, etc. We are trying to keep a core group of employees gainfully employed but it is difficult to give them three consecutive days without a problem arising. We bought a Clear Span storage barn, set the anchors in cement, and found that so now we have a cheese souffle building! Luckily the design has multiple cable tensioners, so it is stiff enough to do the job.

Winter markets are doing very well! As in past years, a large greens display makes the sales of the other roots, squashes, onions, etc. much stronger. On the growing front, we have had another invasion of Winter Grain Mites or Red-Legged Mites. This is our third run-in with these critters and finally learning their cycles and biology. They have occurred all three times in 23-year-old greenhouses where we grow crops in the soil. The organic matter is very high, and we have tomatoes or winter greens.

It is probably time to build two more 30' x 30' houses to allow resting periods for houses in use for over 20 years. The idea is to take the plastic off and grow a series of purification and soil biology balancing covers over a two-year period. We have certainly made enough income out of these houses to afford this capital-intensive solution. The writing has been on the walls for a while on several fronts besides intractable soil borne pest issues.

Looking forward to the 2022 season, we will just have to see how far we can transfer our increased input cost to the city, but at the home farm stand, will have a bigger push back, based on our observation over the years.

SPRING WEBINARS FOR GROWERS. Thursdays, noon-1:00 pm, via Zoom

[Click here](#) for full webinar descriptions. Free and open to all growers and people that work with them. Each session begins with short presentations, followed by open discussion with participants. [Click here to register](#). Register only once to attend any or all webinars. Webinars are recorded and posted to [VVBGA You Tube channel](#). Questions? vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu or (802) 257-7967 x303

February 3. Farm First: Vermont's resource for farmers cold 5.21 TadF9 307a.old 5.21 TadF9 307a.oldF2 12 Tf1 0

NEW BLOG POSTS FROM UVM EXTENSION AG ENGINEERING

Preventing Freezing in Produce Coolers. Occasionally, during longer cold snaps, we receive a lot of questions about storage crops freezing in coolers. This post summarizes some ideas for preventing freezing. <https://go.uvm.edu/frozencoolers>

Root Washers for Produce Farms. There are many ways to wash root crops on produce farms. This guide covers a range of options from smaller farms washing by hand to larger operations with fully automated wash lines. <https://go.uvm.edu/rootwashers>

Floors Design for Vegetable Wash, Pack and Storage Areas. We recently updated this blog post with some new innovative flooring materials and photo examples from other farms. <https://go.uvm.edu/floors>

New Video - DIY Hand Washing Station - Wire Rack Build <https://youtu.be/MLBAIULWPUc>

New Video - Farm visit with Andre Cantelmo of Heron Pond Farm
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRhtZw1o6RdE4TU1nBB6JJ_FKttg-Zrnt

New Podcast - DIY Hand tools for Efficiency & Ergonomics: EP62
<https://agengpodcast.com/2022/01/10/diy-hand-tools-for-efficiency-ergonomics-ep62/>