

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – March 30, 2015
compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension
(802) 257-7967 ext. 303, vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu
www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Hinesburg) Hoop house spinach and claytonia showed negligible growth this December through February. Other years there's been noticeable growth. Lots of damaged (frost I think) leaves to pick through on the Corvair spinach.

(Colchester) On Jan. 21 we seeded tomatoes in 288 trays for our first greenhouse; we seeded 850 seeds to fill the house. On Feb. 3 we transplanted into the greenhouse bags. We ordered bumble bees on March 16 when we saw about 30% of the plants in flower. Received bees on March 18 and put hive in greenhouse. The bees came in very active and the next morning we saw many in flight pollinating all the flowers they could. Burning shell corn in that house to supplement oil heat, burning smooth no problems so far. We also started seeding annual flowering plants on Jan. 21. All crops looking great; hoping for a warming trend to slow down fuel usage.

(Ange-Gardien, Quebec) Everything in cold greenhouse is up, even the mesclun seeded on frozen soil. The unbalanced air and soil temp make it difficult for the plants to take advantage of that sun. End of March sun really makes the soil mass absorb energy as I am sometime noticing difference between out and in temp at 8 in the morning. Lost 30 percent of overwintering spinach, 10 percent overwintering green oignons and 90 percent on overwintering lettuce. Ginger from seed is outexpecting my craziest dream I wonder how they will keep until transplantation. I am a bit behind with sweet potato multiplication. Getting prepared for season, material is getting slowly to the farm as there is still a lot of snow here and I am now doing maintenance on machinery when the outside temp is not too cold (unheated garage).

(Westminster West) Just returned from Cuba with the Vermont Caribbean Institute on a trip to find common ground with Cuban vegetable and fruit growers. I think I received more than I gave, knowledge-wise. Saw what farmers can do in a land of such scarcity and then returned home to this wonderful state awash in stuff and opportunity. They make do without any outside inputs; were fascinated by the sample of Remay that I bought along! They also don't have this wonderful b

On the ranch here, surprised (not) to still see my fields under a foot of snow and ice.

(Argyle NY) Our three high tunnels are producing winter greens like crazy and the spinach is the nicest we have had in years. We have

Detail pruning will be needed if the remaining canes and laterals are so thick that sunlight can't penetrate throughout the bush. Annual pruning invigorates the plant resulting in new cane development, young canes produce the largest berries, large berries fill containers faster than small berries which in the end equals greater income to the grower and longer lasting healthy bushes.

Blueberry bushes that are under 3 years of age should require minimal pruning: the removal of dead or broken canes and the removal of ALL flower buds which will allow the plants to put all their energy into cane production. Begin fruiting 3 year old bushes with a small crop if they have put on sufficient growth. A heavy crop on a young bush will only stunt its growth.

Brambles: You can't see the ground so you can't prune the brambles yet. As with blueberries, bramble canes are removed at the base. Pruning that leaves long stubs only invites cane diseases to take hold as well as allowing cane borers already in the canes to continue to move to the crown. Sticking the loppers or pneumatic pruners into the snow to remove a cane at ground level often times lead to the wrong cane removed as well as cut irrigation lines. As for winter hardiness of summer bearing (floricane bearing) cane berries, much is variety dependent. With raspberries, most will tolerate the cold temperatures we experienced but not the desiccating winds. Lauren canes above the snow line are likely dead, other varieties may have sustained some damage. Blackberries do not tolerate the cold temperatures of this past winter and most will sustain injury when temperatures are below 0 degrees F if not protected. Protection would consist of laying the canes over on the swing arm trellis or laying them on the ground and covering them.

When you are able to see the ground, remove canes that bore fruit last year, then thin out the remaining canes to 4-6 per running foot of row. Fall bearing (primocane bearers) brambles that were left standing to produce a second crop early this summer, simply remove the upper portion of the cane where last season's fruit were. After they crop in early summer, prune those canes out to the ground. Thin out the remaining new primocanes for better penetration of SWD control materials.

AGRITOURISM CONFERENCE APRIL 7-8, RUTLAND VT

Join farmers, educators, and service providers in Rutland, Vermont for a two-day exploration of open farms. More information at www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism. Register on-line at <https://www.regonline.com/vtagritourism-apr2015-rutland> by Friday, April 3. Space is limited. For more information: contact Lisa Chase at 802-257-7967 or lisa.chase@uvm.edu.

FARM TRANSFER WORKSHOPS APRIL 8 and 10

Farm Transfer workshops to be held on April 8 in Brattleboro and April 10 in South Burlington.

The brochure is also available at <http://www.uvm.edu/farmtransfer/2015TTFworkshops.pdf>.

Workshops will run from 9:00 to 3:30 and lunch is provided. The workshops will address family communication, goal setting, retirement,