



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News March 8, 2011

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<http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry>

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Rochester) Our berry bushes are still under a deep snow pack, although a day of rain reduced it down. Still, it seems it will be late March at the earliest before we can get started on the blueberries. We begin when the branches have been released from the snow and a ring of mulch is showing around the crown. That generally means about 6 inches of snow on the ground in the alleys and cold knees until the thaw is done. Just waiting now, and putting some sleep in the bank before it's all systems go for 8 months straight.

(Westminster West) The growing season well under way here with deliveries starting in only 2 weeks! Pansies, herbs and veggies growing well and new staff training starting as well. Incredible cold weather has cost us big bucks but I expect it to average out over the course of the season. Spent the weekend seeding about 20,000 onions; won't be buying plants in this year after last season's problems. Last minute seed buying decisions and meeting with buyers, things are fairly hectic but nothing like the craziness soon to be here.

(Montpelier) March 3rd was sunny and 80 F in the greenhouses while 17 F outside. Ten below followed at night, then a weekend with 42 F with rain. All of this back and forth and I still managed to get 100 lbs of spinach harvested this week and off to market. Salad mix components are much slower to come to life this year, still about a week or two away. The difference is 30lbs out of a 4x88 bed or 90lbs out of a 4x88 bed. So I still need to have patience and turn away my wholesale accounts a bit more. Soil tested the greenhouses (saturated media test on each bed individually); that was a revelation about things not being the same. I grow 12 months and am constantly rotating crops into the beds....all bed tests were different and need to be amended individually. Whopping snow storm that just hit deposited 3 feet of wet heavy stuff that had drifted up on the south facing sides of both houses. All the trusses were flexing and bending. Saved both of them but what a panic. Amazing to watch the snow shed from the inside and see all the trusses flex back into position. The 6 foot snow blower I bought this fall just paid for itself in about an hour. Spinach house is loaded and looking great, will start harvesting in full this week; salad mix is a bit longer. Off to move more snow...and get ready for the next mess coming through later this week.

(Argyle NY) Despite the very cold and cloudy Dec production in our two 30x144 high tunnels. Feb.

had good

(Granville NY) This winter has been tough: first 30 below zero back in January, then just a cold, snowy winter and recent nights have dipped to zero again. We have burned more propane than in the last 2 years combined. Even with our high tunnels we had to remove snow from the bases to keep them from collapsing and to keep light coming in. Crops in general haven't been growing like they usually do. Mesclun and spinach have been slow; bok choy and Asian green seem the only thing that has kept up. Micromixes in heated house look good, we're still figuring out packaging and sales outlets. Tried planting overwintering onions in the field in minitunnels and