



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News June 1, 2023

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

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Burlington) From chilly and slow to hot and dry: it must be spring on the farm. Despite a cold winter and not a lot of snow cover we had a lot of crimson clover overwinter, surprising me, and I am happy for the early blooming pollination resource. Other cover crops are finally putting on growth, though flowering is a week or more behind schedule, which will probably true up to norm this week. We are seeing more chickweed in the understory of our winter annual rye and vetch cover crops, which is concerning. I'm hoping we can identify the right timing to plant rye vetch that prevents the chickweed from getting a good foothold in the fall.

Field vegetables are looking good, albeit a bit slower than normal. We lost our first round of spinach to seedcorn maggots and are seeing some onion losses to maggots and/or their subsurface associates in beds that followed a clover sod. Leafminers are showing up and I've seen a few CPBs crawling around.

I'm mostly looking forward to starting our summer CSA next week. Demand is strong, but with the slower spring our selection for week one isn't quite what we'd like it to be, though reasonable with salad mix, kale, PYO cilantro, and hopefully head lettuce and tunnel cucumbers. Week one is half reunion and orientation, so selection seems to matter less than in successive weeks. Trying to up our game with more farming and ag info at our CSA distribution, we'll see if we can stick with it through the busy summer.

(Hinesburg) April farmstand sales were slow. May farmstand sales better. Some interesting temp data from 2 weeks ago: Outside temp was 26 degrees. Inside hoop house with no row cover was 28 degrees; pole beans damaged but now recovering. Inside hoop house, under 2 layers row cover was 44 degrees; no damage to cukes, pepper, tomatoes.

Cool season crops are growing and selling well. Over-wintered onions showing thrips damage. Seems like they find the onions earlier each year. Treated with nematodes; seems to have slowed the thrips down. Irrigating every day.

(E. Wallingford) Early and mid-season blueberries are in full bloom; late blueberries coming out of pink bud. Bees are working hard. Planted 100 peach and plum bareroot and dormant trees in late April; all but one tree have leafed out and pushing new growth. Could use some rain. Very little frost/freeze damage at this elevation, blueberries were not in major bloom yet. Land is ready to plant veggies and 120-day pumpkins.

(East Dorset) The 2023 freeze shows about a 25% blueberry crop blueberry loss for us at this point. More damage in the earlier varieties. It is also a preliminary look at the crop. We will see how it ends up after the summer.

(Grand Isle) The recent cold snap did not hit the Lake Champlain islands as severe as other areas. We had a bit of frost, there were patches here and there. The blueberries are entering petal fall stage and the pollination looks excellent. Monitored and kept track of pollinators this year, 98% bumble bees. Did a 10-minute scout every other day and counted 30-40 bees.

(Richmond) We had a hard frost of 21 degrees here on May 17. Our Bluecrop blueberries were in full bloom with lots of pollinators out and about. Looked like quite a few blossoms were brown the next day and we are starting to see those flowers/blueberries shrivel and fall off. The rest of our blueberries were in late bud stage, so we were unsure about the impact but now they are in full bloom, and it looks to be a strong crop. Lots of pollinator action which is always great to see with a variety of pollinators in the fields. Busy trying to stay on top of weed control and installing irrigation in our fields.

melted off the berries about 11 am. About 14 hours that night. From May 7 to 17 had over 40 hours of frost protection. Flowers look good, the plants not so much. Some winter injury and

anymore. Last year was the best year for strawberri

even with the irrigation.

(Westminster West) We were fortunate not to have lost anything from the killing freeze two weeks ago and were happy to be able to supply plants to some growers that lost theirs. Found CPB on our early tunnel potatoes yesterday. Other than that this trial looks good so should have new potatoes for 4th of July sales. Garlic crop looks the best in many years with virtually no losses over the winter and strong growth with scapes just starting to poke up.

weather certainly helps. We tripled our potato acre the map I may be able to find them all! Trying to get the squash acreage in this week. Have increased scale and added new varieties due to market demand. Tunnel celery and tomatoes are growing well. Water may become an issue.

(Saratoga Springs NY) This spring has been hard on our nerves and our plants. Too dry, too windy, too cool, now too hot. We dodged a hard frost last week, fortunately. We just planted most of our summer-fruiting crops and hope to plant winter squash later in the week. Our main water source, a small creek, will likely dry up soon. We will need to move the pump to an abandoned beaver works 300' upstream. Hard to say how well our pump will do to deliver water to our fields once that happens. Maybe we will have a short season. On leased land, it doesn't make much sense to dig a well and bedrock close to the surface rules out digging points. We would like to move our farm, but the current options are limited.

(Stuyvesant NY) Overall production is great, farmers' market is strong, and we are grateful for a record Memorial Day Weekend. Tunnels are in the last stages of turning over to summer crops, ginger, turmeric, hot peppers, tomatoes and cukes. Snap peas in the tunnels are in full bloom and we started picking last week Sugar Snap our favorite. Strawberry production started mid-May and is going strong, Tried two new varieties this year in over-wintering, Jewel and Allstar, producing well, small plants, but big berries, Jewel not the best keeper for us. Covered with 2 layers of row cover to protect from the frost earlier.

Conditions are perfect for flea beetles this spring for some reason. Our greens have been assaulted regularly and we are trying our best to beat them, to no avail at times.

Put in tiling this spring over about 4 acres. Also will be trialing a "no-till" area in a 16x100 tunnel. Thrilled with our staff this year! Whenever we have that spare time we are ready to construct 2 more caterpillar tunnels.

(Saratoga NY) Had 27 degrees for almost 5 hours. Lots of damage to blueberry plants. Flowers all turned brown and dropped the next day. Every plant has leaf damage. Planted 200 new plants this spring, some in the least-protected areas lost nearly all their leaves, recovery uncertain. Remains to be seen what will happen with fruit. Peaches (personal use) have no fruit this year. Smaller asparagus keeled over. Strawberries survived without damage. reatest concern now is drought, have had zero rain for several weeks, everything is hurting for water.

(S. Cambridge NY) The temperature dropped to 27 degrees on May 18, perhaps lower in our berry patch. We covered asparagus and strawberries with Typar and they made it fine. The blueb Now we are trying to get our tender crops out in the heat (no cloudy days for transplanting) and irrigating constantly.

The garlic is huge and our earliest variety is scaping. So far no signs of Allium Leaf Miner. Our tall and ready to go to seed, probably because of the dry conditions.

Taking the NE Seed Production Course. The organizers are doing a great job and I would recommend to anyone interested in learning more about seed production. growing seed is a good economic choice for our farm at this point, but perhaps if we found the right seed crop(s) it could be.

(Etna NH) Hot. Cold. Dry. Heck of a start. Lost a bunch of peppers to frost, almost lost field tomatoes the next day to heat. Greens are maintaining but not thriving with irrigation. Fingers crossed for Friday thunderstorms. Planted a trap crop of potatoes 4/28; planted cash crop of potatoes 5/22. Trap crop started popping 5/24 and were immediately swarmed by CPB. Been hand crushing and literally swatting them out of the air in flight. If the deluge continues after torching the trap crop (we planted 3 successions 1 week apart), we may resort to sacrificing a bed of eggplant. Been irrigating/fertigating the drip tape block (alliums, solanaceae) every other day, more than we have in the past, and the results are positive. Saw our first cabbage moth today; we planted a sacrificial 100' of extra tender young cabbage to lure them in (to torch them if times get tough) -

stressful at the very least. We felt very fortunate to only sustain a 20% loss of small fruit. We burned up some early sweet corn, but due to the fact our H2A workers arrived 4 weeks late we had very little transplanted out in the field, saving us the heartbreak of sourcing and replanting.

Greenhouse sales remain moderately strong. Field activities at full tilt as we try to catch up before strawberry harvest. Noticeably apparent to me over the past 20 years is how much of a role drip irrigation and field mulch play in our standard vegetable production. Ray and I have even discussed large scale drip on 6 acres of potatoes, at some time in the future. The extreme temps and increasing occurrence of drought make supplemental moisture a must, and large volumes of overhead seem less desirable, though there is still a time and place for overhead.

The crops in the field look good now, and no pests have shown up. Without the mast in the woods, we will surely be tested by deer, and there have been sightings of bear, which can be a real nuisance.

(Salisbury NH) The frost burned tips of some raspberries, but they recovered nicely. Some plants a couple feet apart had wildly different responses. One died, the other looks fine. Even clover in the lawn got hit. Blueberry cabbage, broccoli and Brussels sprouts in before the freeze and covered just to keep the constant winds from whipping plants to death. A week later we had 26 degrees. A few days later when I took the row cover off the plants looked like they had been torched. Some are adding new leaves but mostly a total loss. If they had been watered more they may have survived. Hoping to use a pump to draw from a dug well. No power so maybe solar, or batteries, or a small generator to run pump. Always something.

Many direct seeded crops have barely come up, and not with vigorous growth. Voles have been terrible this year. Every morning a couple lettuces are missing, replaced by a round hole. Peas were spotty and I wonder if voles eat the seeds or seedlings before they emerge. Replanted and still spotty results. Seeds were from 2020; also used them in the hoop house and they did fine. Continuing with no till and will be trying oats between rows. Straw is expensive and brings in weeds.

know what crops are in season. They also seem oblivious to the weather. Twenty-six degrees and
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If your farm requested a meter, we expect to install them soon. In the meantime, estimate water use by recording acres irrigated, run time, and irrigation specs (sprinkler type or drip emitter spacing). For support with estimating usage, contact me at rebecca.maden@uvm.edu

UVM EXTENSION AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING UPDATES

Andy Chamberlin and Chris Callahan

New Blog Posts and Podcast episode from UVM Extension Ag Engineering:

<https://go.uvm.edu/ffshippingcontainers> Farms have found that shipping containers are an inexpensive solution for tool storage, coolers or as a blank structural shell to be built out as a wash/pack or office space. This blog post shares several examples and lessons learned about using these as farm infrastructure.

Natural Light in the Packshed at High Meadows Farm. <https://go.uvm.edu/highmeadows> Howard Prussack of High Meadows wanted to improve his vegetable washing space. He imagined a bright and warm space instead of the dark and cool dairy barn they were working out of. With a goal of creating a fun and happy place to work, he set to work on making the investment needed to make these infrastructure upgrades a reality for the farm. This postharvest case study outlines the project and upgrades he made to his barn in a video interview, and photos of the space.

Expanding Infrastructure and Maximizing its Potential at Jericho Settlers Farm.

<https://go.uvm.edu/jerichosettlers> Mark Fasching and Christa Alexander run Jericho Settlers

with a garden and roadside stand and continually expanded to growing over 30 acres of vegetables with 18 greenhouses. As their business expanded over the years, so did their infrastructure needs. This post harvest case study highlights their expansion project(s) with photos, videos, and lessktm Uwt06(e)4(e0 g0 6005600essk)ent7aicekUIP9ece.7 376.99 Tm0 g0 G[7 37 theirs.-