

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News June 2, 2020
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(Craftsbury) We have proceeded with our Spring work to date as though this was a typical year. Losing ourselves in pruning, weeding, fertilizing and mowing on the hillside has allowed us some distance from deciding if and how we can have a blueberry season. The contents of the AAF&M's "Pick-Your-Own Restart Plan" has re-focused our attention. At this point, we are not likely to open as a PYO this year. To meet the letter of the plan will incur additional unanticipated costs (containers, shift to cashless, wifi, washing stations, signage) and need for more workers to supervise guests in field and around check in and out. Our traditional family-centered farm will need to assume a more uncomfortable relationship to guests re: masks, children, eating and social distancing in field, etc. Rather we will seek some collaboration(s) with organizations which are willing to harvest and sell and distribute in the region. We can do this for a year,

(Newbury) A very light spotty frost last night with no damage after spitting snow on Sunday pm. Asparagus going gangbusters after early spears were frosted. Potatoes and new asparagus starting to appear.

(Plainfield) Last year was my first year in 15 years or so with heavy mummy berry loss I had a half crop of berries (some due to SWD, maybe 10 to 15 gallons of loss). I asked pickers to pick up the mummy berries, instead of weeding or spreading mulch in trade for berries as I usually do. They picked up about 15 gallons of mummified berries, reducing the population on the ground.

This spring when the forsythia bloomed I scouted for the apothocea. I handpicked the first ones I saw, and then we physically disturbed a couple of times. I planned to spray urea (50%) 4.6 lbs. per gallon, but time got away from us. Now the apothocea are done (on May 29) and 3 days ago I went scouting for the conidia, just before the heat wave, over 90 degrees for several days, looking for the second stage infection. I found 2 or 3 oak leafed pattern brown leaves. This morning I took a long slow walk through the berries and hand-picked everything that seemed suspicious. (I am trying to avoid fungicides except lime-sulfur.)

The plants look beautiful, flowers are bountiful. I found a quart of suspicious leaves and I saw the white powdery conidia fungus on 2 or 3 of them; most did not have that white powder visible to my naked eye. I picked the flowers nearest the browned leaves and hope that I am knocking it back. I will look again after this rain that is forecast. It has been super dry and hot for the last 10 days or so. Completely unlike last year when it was cold and wet during this same period and I got completely hammered by mummy berry.

(Starksboro) Fiercely busy plant sales. Mighty dry, but consoling myself with the thought that the crops are all still small and have less water need. Wishfully thinking that we'll break this dry pattern by time the plants get bigger. Used the impetus of the Pandemic to pivot to online sales. H2a workers were 4 weeks late due to paperwork snafu. Fortunately, spring was late as well, but then it hit like a ton of bricks last week. They're reinventing the Farmer' Market. We'll see how that goes. I've cut back on some crops because some institutions are closed. Taking a chance on others, hoping things will be somewhat normal from August through October. Once again, we'll see.

(Elmore) Our snow melted two weeks ago, then last week it was 94 degrees on our hill. The flowering crabs love it, the spinach hates it and is curling up in our high tunnel. No vegetable seeds have sprouted outdoors yet. Currants are loaded with baby fruits and peach trees in high tunnel have hundreds of peaches on them! Young propagated cuttings are looking good as they like the heat as long as they have moisture.

We are not all

The report from the lower Hudson valley is that most, if not all, early strawberries were lost that night. We are also in transition of our tunnels to summer crops later than usual because of the cool temperatures. Field production of greens like arugula, spinach, salad mix and head lettuce are in high production, but head lettuce is lagging in sales, which we feel is due to a change in

LATEST GUIDANCE ON PYO AN

The VT Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets has posted PYO guidance dated June 1 and

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/covid-19-information/covid-19-general-information-news>