

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News –July 15, 2019
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

(S. Royalton) Things are finally blasting off. Melons are undersized and have smaller leaves than normal. They are setting lots of fruit that look to be very small, but on time for the end of the month if not before. Corn finally stretching out, pockets of N deficiency in numerous places. Chilean should bring them around. Sweet spuds under covers look good, the ones not under are very small for this time of year. Markets have been strong last 5 weeks.

(E. Middlebury) Bumper year for overwintered onions (Bridger and Electric red). Guess they like a cold wet spring. Still question their value as we have been maintaining them since we seeded them third week of July 2018. Some growers had asked if that was too early and if that timing would lead to excessive bolting, but it was not an issue for us. Less bolting than previous years. We choose that seeding date because we had the time. Customers are buying them up because no one else has local onions, but they are not overly appreciative like they would be for an early tomato or cucumber.

(Rochester) (Rochester) Prelude raspberries ripened up this week and it's always nice to open up the farm for the season. Our Green Laser and Bird Gard distress callers are in place and seem to be keeping the bird losses down although nothing discourages cedar wax wings entirely. The blueberry crop looks good but seems to be sizing up a little late. Mummy berry is more widespread than usual, no doubt encouraged by the wet conditions. We have done a fairly thorough job of collecting the mummified berries in an effort to help break the cycle for next year and intend to mulch all the affected areas late this fall to cover the mummies we miss.

(Elmore) I have not seen it so dry in a long time, trees wilting and seeds not sprouting, but when it rains, big washouts! What happened to those summer sunny days with soft gentle rains at night? Heavy crops of cherries, plums and pears. Wildflowers in the field like I have never seen

An equipment lesson for folks with 100+ hp tractors: if you have a rear flat make sure you don't use "tire grease" to put the tire back on! The torque ratio on big tires will cause the tire to spin on the rim and tear off the tube stem! Happened to us three times before figured this out. Solution is to use dish soap or Murphy's soap is available in semisoft version in a can. You need a lubricant that dries up and grips the tire later so "tire grease" is not the answer. This principle is demonstrated in big tractor-pull competitions: they r

In our flowers, heat and humidity encouraged powdery mildew on early, tunnel-planted Ranunculus. Sprayed to control it and will remove the corms to prevent spread. Will let this area rest before planting anything new. In the same bed poppies, sweet peas, and edible blooms are healthy and productive.

Got a late planting of greenhouse-started dahlias in the ground first week of July, and healthy new growth indicates we will get nice production! In the other bed are bare-root dahlias, many with gangly growth from growing inside the winter storage box. I hope for root stock for next season, if not many blooms.

Six months of deep snow protected many perennials making for earlier than expected harvests. Annual flowers are looking great, but due to other projects got planted late, pushing harvests out further than planned. Time crunches also delayed timely staking, which led to crop loss during several heavy rainfalls.

There are still so many infrastructure projects to complete. In process currently, we have a wash pack house with a new radiant slab, but no walls, hardwired electric, and plumbing. A walk-in cooler has yet to be constructed and we're planning more high tunnels. We look forward to the time in our lives when we look back and laugh at these first years getting set up on the land.

(Argyle NY) We are hot and dry after several months of cold and wet! Having all the systems in place has helped us float through it. Crops are doing average or above average. Tomatoes in our high tunnel just starting, cucurbits abundant. Over-wintered onions are exceptionally large with NO bolting at all (first time). We lost 50% of them in the outside beds for unknown reasons (as did others in our area) but survival in the low tunnel was nearly 100%. Walla-Wallas did great and the yellows (Keepsake, Forum) and red (Electric, not available any more) all selling well, mostly at \$2 each. So the 14x100 tunnel with about 3500 onions grosses about \$6000, which extrapolates to over \$185,000 per acre! It's a system worth perfecting!

Irrigation is going full tilt, insect pressure is minimal except for leaf hoppers and flea beetles. We are spraying Pyganic and Surround on the potatoes and the crop looks good. We use close

Final seedings of fall storage crops are going in, with row-covers on all direct seeded crops to aid germination by holding in moisture during hot, sunny days. Flaming will be critical on the carrots, and tarping has had its pros and cons this year as we work on that new system.

UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC

Ann Hazelrigg

Blueberry: Mummy berry fungus is obvious on unripe cut berries. Look for a white star-shaped pattern on inside of fruit. Best to harvest and destroy infected fruit. Drops can produce fruiting bodies for up to 2 years. Exobasidium leaf and fruit spot diagnosed on two different blueberry samples. This fungus disease can also infect azalea and rhododendrons.

In blueberry the pathogen causes light green leaf spots that can be thickened and reddish. Circular spots (1/4 inch) may be sunken and red-tinged on fruit and become apparent when fruit starts to ripen. The spots on berries can occasionally show sparse white fungal growth. Infected berries are unmarketable. Increasing air flow through pruning and a single late-dormant

August 21, 3-6 pm. Postharvest Efficiency, Profitability and Food Safety, Footprint Farm, Starksboro VT. Cost: \$30 farmers, \$40 others

<https://nofavt.org/events/preview-event-veggie-wash-pack-getting-you-down-dial-best-practices-improve-your-postharvest>

August 22, 1-4 pm. Human Urine as Fertilizer. Whetstone Valley Farm, Brattleboro. Rich Earth Institute has been testing urine to fertilize hay for several years, researching best methods to reduce ammonia loss during application, and interviewing farmers to assess the feasibility of urine fertilization. For more info: info@ricearthinstitute.org or Tatiana Schreiber (802) 387-2781.

August 29, 3:30-5:30 pm. Pest and Disease Walk for Commercial Growers with Ann Hazelrigg. Hurricane Flats Farm, S. Royalton VT. Cost: \$20 farmers, \$30 others

<https://nofavt.org/events/pest-disease-walk-commercial-growers>

September 25, 3-6 pm. Custom-built wash/pack shed, tunnel tomatoes, living walkways and more at Mighty Food Farm, Shaftsbury VT. VVBGA members free, \$10 others.

October 1, 3-6:30 pm, Improving Soil Health: Mixed Vegetables and Cut Flowers at Elmer Farm, E. Middlebury VT. Farmers: free; Non-farmers: \$15 to cover cost of dinner.

<https://nofavt.org/events/exploring-practices-policies-improving-soil-health-series-middlebury>

October 16, 3-6 pm. Tunnel crops, wash/pack shed retrofit in old barn and more at Deep Meadow Farm, Windsor VT. VVBGA members free, \$10 others.

November 6, 2-5 pm. Off the grid, small-scale diversified vegetables and reduced tillage at Small Axe Farm, Barnet VT. VVBGA members free, \$10 others.