



## Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – July 3, 2023

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

### REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Cambridge) The frost was pretty bad here the night of May 17, at 28F for about four hours. The blueberries were mid-bloom at the time and I had no idea if any were going to survive. Presently the bushes are covered in berries which are getting nice and big with all this rain. The 2 acre field is on a hillside so perhaps that helped. We just have a few fruit trees but the pear trees are covered in fruit for the first time in 3 years. The apple trees are generally pretty good too, with the exception of the Cortland.

(Hinesburg) For the freeze in May, we had 26 degrees F. Hardy outdoor crops were all under row cover and unaffected. It was sunny the afternoon before, and we closed up the hoop houses a few hours earlier than we normally would, and added two layers of Ag 19 row cover. We had pole beans in one hoop house that had started climbing the trellis, so it was impractical to use row cover on them. The temp in the bean house (no row cover) was 28 F. The beans were heavily damaged. Tomatoes, cukes, and peppers in hoop houses under two layers of row cover stayed up around 44 degrees and were not affected. Beans have since bounced back and look like nothing ever happened.

Not many applicants for farm crew positions, but we are fully staffed with great people. Sales have been good. Farmstand sales were slow in April compared to last year but have improved. We've been able to maintain our CSA numbers from 2020, 2021, and 2022. We have to do more marketing than we did a couple years ago, but surprisingly we've been able to maintain the COVID spike in sales pretty well. I'm always grateful for the CSA and Farmstand this time of year when there are lots of options on the market and we notice a sudden decrease in sales to restaurants and coops.

We worked on a new wash/pack room all winter. The project dragged on into the busy spring and created a bit of chaos because we didn't have a cooler when the CSA and farmstand opened. It's been a huge improvement in efficiency, food safety, and reduced stress on packing days. Not sure how we ever did it in our former space.

No leek moth on garlic this year. More aphids than ever. Lots of cucumber beetles and squash bugs.

(Dummerston) Vegetable crops survived the deep freeze in May with minimal damage under row covers, though the neighboring orchard did not fare well. Crops are a bit behind due to the cold spring and lots of cool cloudy days in June. Cucumbers and squash are just starting to trickle in.

One good thing so far this year is that there are very few insect pests. Flea beetles are nowhere to be seen. I've seen only the occasional cabbage looper, and some stiped cucumber beetle but not too many. Even mosquitoes and black fly populations seem low. In May, hordes of small flies

Using two new OMRI approved spreader stickers, Kinetic and Xena. We had to find an alternative to Nu Film! The heavy pine tar component was ruining spray tank walls and delivery hoses, etc. These materials are much better, but cannot be left in the sprayer over night because the natural polymer component comes out of solution and then it looks like wet toilet paper floating around in your spray tank next morning

Not looking forward to having Allium Leaf Miner in our leeks this fall. The organic recommendation of Entrust and Mpede doesn't give me much intuitive confidence. Thinking we may just grow half the crop on my son's conventional land so we are sure we will have a crop at the important winter markets. Being next to the ocean, covering 1.5 acres with insect net just isn't an option.

Farmer markets are great and crowds are strong. Gave up on our debit card CSA system and returned to credit cards. We were luring members in with 10% discount. Now we only lose 2.6% with our credit card Square reader. Financially we haven't skipped a beat and there are lot less headaches over CSA funding efforts. The worst thing about the debit card was that 40% of CSA members either lost their cards or week after week forgot to bring them to one of our markets, which took up too much time helping them checkout!

Greenhouse tomatoes growing well but uneven ripening happening we can't figure out.

(Argyle NY) The May freeze didn't affect us because the low here was 30 degrees and we were running far enough behind to not have really tender plants outside. In our 3 tunnels I turned on the heaters about 4 am and skated through.

Our decision to slow down to 2 acres was a good one in terms of lack of a labor pool. Last year we had 3 full time and 3 part time people and moved to just 3 part time this year. Not exactly what we wanted but it's working out and the decision to change marketing from farmers markets to online sales has also made it easier to purchase large amounts of bulk items and focus on the weekly products.

Further streamlining is ahead but it all takes time to think it through and watching that the decisions we've made are good ones. It's never just one thing but many small decisions that make it a good year.

The cool weather of June made strawberry and greens growing a breeze

## **VERMONT WEEKLY PEST SCOUTING REPORTS**

If you missed these on the VVBGA listserv, the Vermont Entomology and Participatory Action Research Team compiles weekly reports on major insect pests and diseases found throughout the state, and the region. All reports are posted at <https://blog.uvm.edu/vepart-scouting/>

# **POLLINATOR SUPPORT REPORT**

As the summer heat approaches we wanted to remind you of a few resources: Managing Humidity and Condensation in Coolers at <http://go.uvm.edu/humidity> and Ventilation in Greenhouses and High Tunnels at <http://go.uvm.edu/tunnelventilation>

## UPCOMING ON-FARM EVENTS

July 18, 4-6 pm. [VVBGA workshop](#). Burnt Rock Farm, Huntington VT. This certified organic farm specializes in winter storage crops and summer greenhouse crops. The workshop will focus on specialized equipment for vegetable production, especially for accurate fertilizer application, and water management.

July 21, 9 am-4 pm. [Northeast Mechanical Weed Control Field Day](#). Hall Brook Farm, Thorndike, ME. Tool demonstrations for small to large vegetable and field crop production: hand tools, walk-behind tractors, tool carriers, and tractor-mounted equipment. Presentations and panel discussions from farmers and researchers.

July 26, 3-5 pm. [VVBGA workshop](#). UVM Horticultural Research Farm, S. Burlington, VT. Problem pests on vegetable and berry farms. Join entomologists Vic Izzo and Scott Lewins to discuss strategies to deal with Swede midge, Colorado potato beetle, leek moth, wire worm, and more.

July 27, 4-6 pm. NOFA-VT workshop on [Soil Health for Vegetable Growers](#), Flywheel Farm, Woodbury, VT. This diversified fruit and vegetable farm will share management techniques, tools, and how to stay adaptive while balancing soil health and productivity goals.

July 30, 10-noon. NOFA-VT workshop on [No-Till Vegetable Production](#). Breadseed Farm, Craftsbury, VT. Learn about setting up no-till beds, incorporating perennial hedgerows, growing in high tunnels, finding markets, and growing intensively on a small scale! Gardeners, homesteaders, and small commercial growers will find value in this workshop.

August 5, 4-6 pm. Workshop on [Pollinator Habitat](#). Luna Bleu Farm, South Royalton, VT. Join NOFA-VT, University of Vermont Extension, and Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association for this hands-on workshop to increase your understanding of wild pollinators and practices that support them in diversified agricultural landscapes using flowering cover crops, habitat blocks, mowing, pest control, and pollinator monitoring.

August 9, 3-5 pm. [VVBGA workshop](#). Small Axe Farm, Barnet, VT. Topics: Reducing erosion on a steep slope, managing pests with wild habitat, intensive no-till production. This small, organic market garden grows a diversity of crops using no-till practices to promote soil health and prevent erosion, nurturing the natural habitat around the farm to reduce pest pressure on crops.

August 20, 10-noon. NOFA-VT workshop on [Intro to Seed Saving](#), Kindle Farm School, Townshend, VT. Learn how to collect, clean, and store seeds. Get hands-on practice harvesting, threshing, and winnowing seeds. Applicable for gardeners, homesteaders, and small-scale farmers just getting started with seed saving.

September 20, 4-6 pm. [VVBGA workshop](#). Evening Song Farm, Shrewsbury, VT. Topics: No till organic growing, reducing erosion on a slope, fall tunnel plantings. This diversified organic farm uses mulches, fabrics, cover crops, and no-till to reduce soil loss and improve soil health. The farm also produces crops year-round in the tunnels, and this workshop will feature the transition of summer to fall crops.