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(Westminster West) Finally received a decent rain! Good timing as our spring was getting mighty low. Although it might be a bit too late to change the yields in the winter squash fields, it will help the pumpkins size up. Already almost ripe orange pumpkins and almost ripe winter squashes are out there in the fields. Spider mites rampaging thru the raspberry tunnel, sprayed M-Pede and pyganic mix and killed most but quickly the population bounces back. Picking some really nice fall raspberries though. Tunnel tomatoes still doing well; good prices and market. The buckwheat cover crops grew from seeding to bloom without a single rain, amazing! Late storage onions looking really nice and large, started selling the early sweet and yellow varieties. Mums and asters are growing fast and we actually see a bit of early color and will probably start delivering some next week. Awaiting delivery of our NRCS-funded high tunnel next week, something to keep us busy before fall harvest begins.

(Plymouth) Our crops are loving this hot and relatively dry summer. Good thing we hydro-fractured our well 2 years ago; we've been needing to irrigate, and don't mind doing it, because it's a better scenario than the past 2 drenching summers. Lettuce is struggling in the heat, and bolting. Hoping that 'Webb's Wonderful' will head up in spite of the heat. Heirloom tomatoes in greenhouse have been ripening with abandon. Super crop of peppers in the greenhouse as well, with many turning red. Eggplant is a disappointment, as bugs took the young plants down early on. Broccoli in the field continues to make huge side shoots. Planted the starts out in April and reaping the benefits of that: strong, sturdy plants and few bugs. Harvested almost all of the garlic already. Onions sizing up nicely, and the 'White Wing' is huge and marketable now. Drowning in cucurbits! Growing weird cucumbers: Poona Keera from India, and Richmond Green Apple from Australia. Both are available from Fedco seeds. Tasty and very interesting.

(Hinesburg) I am a 99% positive that we have late blight again in our new tomato field. I gambled with the drier weather that I might not need to apply copper. Next year I will not make the same mistake.

(Warren) Fall cole crops are all in and looking good. Fall cabbage planted June 15th has been receiving some serious root pruning in order to check its growth. Potatoes dying back a little early due to leaf hoppers. Summer carrots succumbed to Alternaria. Fall planting is Bolero which has always been bulletproof for us. Onions from Florida which nearly died from the cold snap the middle of May are looking really good considering.

At a local organic farm some weeds had over taken a Parsnip planting so two women went in to do battle for two hours. After they were done one took a shower and the other took a bike ride. The one that didn't shower ended up in the emergency room with severe rashes all over her arms and legs! She has been on medication for two weeks and the scars look serious. Apparently, parsnip plants can turn on this particular toxin under heat and water stress. This event occurred at the height of the heat, humidity and drought we were in about three weeks ago. Yesterday we hand weeded our parsnips with no problem whatsoever. However, we did it first thing in the cool morning air and washed all our exposed hands and arms immediately after we were done. Man, it's the first 60 years of farming that are the hardest; then I hear it gets easier!

(Monkton) Garlic harvest complete and the crop drying in our old dairy barn is a pretty sight. We've continued to grow out the 10 distinct varieties trialed in a national SARE study several years ago (read the study at www.bignewsforgarlic.com) The porcelains like Music and Howard Prussack's excellent German White, various rocamboles, and Silverwhite, a silverskin, seem to do especially well here.

Late blight on tomato has recently been confirmed by the Plant Diagnostic Clinic on samples from Lamoille and Caledonia counties at several locations. Now is the time to protect crops with fungicides to get them through the rest of the growing season. Labeled materials are listed at:

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