

**Vermont Vegetable and Berry News** January 30, 2018  
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## **TREE FRUIT GROWERS ANNUAL MEETING**

The 122nd Annual UVM Apple Program and Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association educational meeting will be held on Thursday, Feb. 15 at the American Legion Hall in Middlebury. The focus this year is on insect management in Vermont orchards including traditional pest insects and how to monitor them, trunk-boring insects, and native pollinators. There will also be presentations on FSMA, crop insurance, and cider apple research. The full agenda is at: <http://go.uvm.edu/2018applemtg>, register at: <http://go.uvm.edu/2018applereg> Early registration deadline is February 4. Questions? [Terence.Bradshaw@uvm.edu](mailto:Terence.Bradshaw@uvm.edu)

## **NOFA-VT WINTER CONFERENCE**

Join 1100 farmers, gardeners, homesteaders and organic food enthusiasts on Feb. 17-19 at UVM for a weekend of learning, inspiration, good food and great conversation. Interested in learning more about marketing or diversifying your farm with cut flowers or hemp? Sign up for a day-long intensive. Pre-registration ends Feb. 12. Questions? 802-434-4122 for full program see: <https://nofavt.org/events/winter-conference-feb-17-19-2018>

## **GROWING ALLIUMS FOR STORAGE AND LONG-TERM SALES**

Feb. 8 from 9:30-3:30, Saratoga County Extension, 50 West High St. Ballston Spa, NY. \$35 includes lunch. Topics are growing practices that lead to good storage, tips and tricks for harvest, drying and storage, and audience questions about garlic, leeks, onions, and shallots. Featuring growers Paul and Sandy Arnold, Jeff Bialis, Jean-Paul Courtens, Brian Denison, David Stern, and Leon Vehaba. See: <https://enych.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=880>

## **REPORTS FROM THE FIELD**

(Fairfax) Root crop sales are doing well. Carrots are storing well, especially where humidity is high. Starting to do heater maintenance, getting ready to fire up greenhouses in a couple of weeks. Plants are growing well on our heated slab in our basement with HPS lights. Have just lost all our snow cover, so definitely concerned for potential winter injury in strawberries if we



(Newburyport MA) Winter greens have grown very nicely, both in the greenhouses and the unheated tunnels. We are selling through them quickly. Wish I had started plugs to replant a few beds with. Tomato and celery transplants are growing rapidly for planting in the greenhouses in March. Killed six large pigs in December, but we will still sell out of sausages before the next pigs are ready for the butcher. Farmers Market sales have been VERY strong. CSA signups are running late this year. Very much looking forward to downsizing my acreage again this year. This will be my fifty-fifth year farming, and I, along with my crew, am happy about slowing down a bit more. Ready for some spring weather!

Argyle, NY (Pleasant Valley Farm) We have been amazed at the continued production of many greens out of our three high tunnels (34x144) considering all the nights below zero since mid-December. Regrowth is just starting to increase with the longer and warmer days. The lettuce took the biggest hit, but we have plants growing in the greenhouse to replace them and have seeded some in the tunnel directly. The Asian greens have been very prolific, and there are the first signs of some varieties starting to bolt, but new seedlings from early January will be ready to transplant in after them in a few weeks.

Our spinach has been one of the best crops in many winters, with over 15 varieties, all of which are doing well and we would repeat again. The diversity of the varieties has always been a good thing, with some growing better in the cold, some better with moisture variations, etc. No sign of any downy mildew but crown mites are here. Aza-Direct (neem) has always controlled them.

The soil moisture monitoring system (Watermark) has been a great tool for us to use for indicating when to irrigate, showing that we previously might have over-irrigated, especially in the spinach, which likes to be on the dry side. The parsley has not performed great with the cold, but both the curly and flat are still alive and rebounding well.

On some of the coldest nights (-15 to -18 F) we added a 4th layer of rowcover (P30) on half of one tunnel and had the Davis monitoring equip under the covers on both halves. It was interesting to show that the 4-layer area was about 1-2 degrees warmer than the 3 layers, something we would have expected. There is a lot that can be studied on temperatures in the tunnels for researchers.

Steaming the beds, done in the fall before planting, has continued to be a great benefit to us with almost no hand-weeding and all crops looking healthy and nice,

Some of the sweet potatoes that had row cover on them in the fall but were still in the ground show signs of cold damage (mostly the smallest ones have sunken spots).

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With fewer winter greens on the market (most farms have stopped production in our area) it is impossible to keep up with demand. The markets are staying very strong and we hope more growers will jump in next year as it is lucrative, with low labor.