

VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY GROWER NEWS – November 1, 2021

Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension

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

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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Guildhall) We're still harvesting but anticipate finishing by the end of the first week of November. It's been a historic year for us. Highest yielding potato crop we've ever grown by a long measure. Not all the math has been done yet, but we've got about 14,000 cwt into storage already (76 trucks averaging bettering 19,000# a truck). Stand out performers have been Lehigh, Peter Wilcox, and Bel Mondo. Norwis suffered a bit quality wise, but mostly because (I think) the field they were on was 2 years out of 30-year-old hay. Some scab and some wire worm damage.

Our highest yielding area was a 12-acre field of golds that did 470 cwt to the acre, a yield that'll be a lot of years before we top (unless we irrigate). New varieties to us, NY-149 (gold) & NY-150 (Upstate Abundance) were both unremarkable in yield and tuber size. NY-150 has a chef/foody cult following and I was excited to try it, but I am disappointed to report that it tastes like a small white potato.

Harvest has been mostly smooth, with breakdowns getting turned around quickly, aside from potato trucks, which just get parked. October weather has been unusually good, thank goodness. The main thing slowing us down this harvest season is that we can't speed up unloading trucks in an antique top load barn like ours. It may only take 20 minutes to load the truck, but it will always take at least an hour to unload. And the closer to capacity the barn becomes, the slower the process of jamming spuds into hard-to-reach places.

Another interesting problem is that the yield has been so heavy that our Grimme GB1500 (circa 1989) had trouble digging 2 rows with 2 or 4 rows windrowed on top, there's just too many spuds and the harvester would lose a lot of them off the rear paddles. So, we've direct dug most of the crop, but that hasn't slowed us down much. Our crew is tired (4 people), there haven't been hardly any days off or short days this month, but they're pros and brought great attitudes to work every day. All in all, amazing year, hopefully the potatoes store well. If anyone needs NEK grown potatoes for their CSA hit us up.

(Westminster) Y gøg'j cf "cpqj gt"5 to 4 inches of rain since our last report, but most of our crops are in. Several acres of carrots left to harvest, and kale, collards, and radishes still going strong. Vj g'y gv" { gct'tgcm{ "f kf "c"pwo dgt"qp'ugxgtc'letqr u0Vj ku'ku'y g"gtctkgu'y gøg'gxgt"uqm

(Orwell VT) High tunnel summer crops just kept on producing with no frost and balmy daytime temperatures, but house by house, we planted greens for winter sales. Even though it felt we were late getting them in, our timing for harvest should work out well, with most of our salad coming on strong mid-November, and hopefully lasting through March. We experimented using the paper pot system with a tool called a zipper, that opens the soil in one direction, and covers the transplants in the other. We also finally bought a drop seeder that fits the paper pot trays, and it's amazing how much time simple efficiencies save. One effort we made to reduce vole and rodent pressure in the tunnels is a clean mow and weed whack around all edges to reduce their cozy winter habitat. We've already lost a fair amount of spinach to nibbling pressure. Now we're moving onto tightening up roll ups, closing end vents, and buttoning up for winter weather!

(Plainfield NH) It appears that cherry tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant will make it to November 1. No killer frost yet here, and the flavor of the of the few remaining fall raspberries is unbelievably sweet and flavorful. This wonderful fall has repaid us for the transgressions Mother Nature installed upon us with the drought in May/June and 16 inches of rain in July. The extended season allowed us to extract more product later into the season. A sign of climate change for sure, but there had to be a bright side.

With the farmstand closed on Columbus Day, we have focused on the deep fall CSA and with markets strong, there was plenty of demand for product, so sales were strong the past month. In between we drilled in cover crops, harvested sweet potatoes and more carrots, and did some field

PUT YOUR VVBGA SOIL HEALTH WEB SITE TO WORK

Fall is the time to get your soil health records organized! The new VVBGA soil health website will keep soil test results, amendment plans and logs all in one place! Log into <https://vvbga.org/> (same site as CAPs) and click on "soil health". Contact Becky Maden for any questions or assistance. Rebecca.Maden@uvm.edu

UPDATE FROM UVM EXTENSION AG ENGINEERING

Andy Chamberlin and Chris Callahan

We have a new video highlighting a DIY starts and germination chamber at Old Road Farm. <https://youtu.be/wUWbZwxyjf0>

A new blog post titled "Building a Better Greens Bubbler" contains information on design considerations, a wiring diagram, a video overview of building a bubbler, examples from other farmers in the Northeast, tips on how to clean a bubbler with downloadable SOP and a link to a recent SCRUB Webinar on greens bubblers. Visit: <https://go.uvm.edu/bubblers>

These programs provide technical and financial assistance to help producers and landowners make conservation improvements on their land that benefit natural resources, build resiliency, and improve farm profitability. Growers are encouraged to contact your [local Vermont NRCS field office](#) to learn more, whether you have not yet worked with NRCS or you want to take conservation to the next level on your land.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MOFA Farmer to Farmer Conference

Today thru Nov. 7. <https://www.mofga.org/farmer-resources/farmer-to-farmer-conference/>

Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training Course via Zoom

Dec. 8-9 from 12-5 pm via Zoom. Cost: \$30/attendee

This grower training course meets the regulatory requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act for farms subject to the Produce Safety Rule. All farms are welcome to attend to learn about food safety practices for growing, handling, and storing fresh produce. [Requires] a computer or tablet with microphone and camera connected to high-speed internet. Registration fee includes a course manual and certificate of course completion by the Association of Food and Drug Officials. To receive certificate, you must be engaged and present for the entire course. Registration deadline is Nov. 19, go to <https://enych.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=1586> Questions? Elisabeth Hodgdon at 518-650-5323 or eh528@cornell.edu

New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference 2021-Online Light!

December 13-17. <https://nevbga.com/nevfc/>

The program will be a streamlined version of our usual in-person content, with one morning and one afternoon session per day for one week. Tree fruit, small fruit, and vegetables will all be covered, and pesticide and certified crop advisor credits are available. \$50 registration fee gains you full access to the program and 3-months access to the recordings. Session topics include Tillage Reduction Innovations, Climate Adaptation Strategies on the Farm, Soil Health, Automation for Small Vegetable Growers, Inspirations from Away, 2 Berry Crop Sessions and 2 Tree Fruit Sessions as well as a session on Vegetable Disease and Pest Updates.

HOLD THE DATE: VVBGA ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday Jan. 25, 2022