Vermont Vegetable and Berry News April 20, 2010 Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension (802) 257-7967 ext.13, vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry

APRIL BERRY CHECKLIST

A dapted from the NY Berry news article by Cathy Heidenreich, Cornell University (<u>http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pp/extension/tfabp/newslett.shtml</u>)

Frost Alert! The heat wave that blanketed us in late March/early April has pushed the clock ahead in terms of small fruit growth and development, but frost free dates for much of the state are still a month away. Have your frost protection ready. For details on blueberry frost protection see http://web1.msue.msu.edu/vanburen/bbsprink.htm, for strawberry frost protection details see: http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/frosprot_straw.htm

Established berries: Pruning should be mostly finished by now for all berry crops. Finely chop brush in place or remove and burn it. Check irrigation system for problems and/or leaks. Examine trellis and fencing, make adjustments or repairs. Check sprayer for worn nozzles and replace as needed, do

Established blueberries: Take precautions to minimize early spring frost damage. The time for delayed dormant (as leaf buds begin to break) applications of lime sulfur or copper for problem locations may be passed in many areas of the state. Do not apply sulfur within 2 weeks of an oil spray or when temperatures are above 75 degrees. If you had scale insects last season apply an oil spray, with thorough coverage, during bud swell (after bud scales start to expand, but before first leaf stands out from clusters).

New blueberry plantings: Two-year old bare root or potted plants are generally the best buy. Potted plants are more expensive than bare-rooted plants but they tend to establish more quickly. If potted plants are used, check to see if they are pot bound. If so, the root ball should be cut before planting to ensure good root spread and branching. Remove the plant from the pot and lay on its side. Cut through the root ball perimeter 4-6 times, rotating the plant between each cut. Firm soil around the plants. Check plants on arrival to be sure they are in good condition; moisten as necessary. Keep bare-rooted plants in cold storage (30-32 degrees) in plastic bags if they cannot be planted immediately. Containerized plants may be kept out doors until planting; keep well watered.

Conduct preplant weed management. Layout planting, flag rows. Plant spacing should be 4-5 in-row and 10 between rows. or less in length. Wait to plant until severe freeze danger has past. Saturate peat bales and allow them to soak several days before planting. Moisten roots ½ to 1 hour before planting. Planting holes need to be more wide than deep, to allow the roots to be spread out at planting. Incorporate approx 1 gal. peat moss into planting hole soil and back fill with the soil/peat mixture. Set plants at the same depth they were planted at in the nursery. Fill hole with peat soil mix. Firm soil around plants. Irrigate immediately after planti

roots. Mulch with wood chips, sawdust or other materials. Remove at least 1/3 of top growth of newly set plant and rub off any flower buds to promote establishment and reduce transplant shock. Plant sod alleys or clean cultivate between rows.

Established raspberries: conduct spring weed control. Make delayed dormant application of lime sulfur or copper in plantings with a history of cane disease. Applications should be made on a calm day with sufficient water to soak canes completely.

particularly in warm weather. A delayed dormant application is not necessary for fall-bearing thoroughly shredded.

New red raspberry plantings: Check plants on arrival to be sure they are in good condition; moisten as necessary. Keep dormant canes at 35 degrees in plastic bags if canes cannot be planted immediately. Conduct preplant weed management. Layout planting, flag rows, plow a very shallow furrow setting dormant canes, root cuttings or plug plants into. Plant spacing should be 2- -row with 9-10 between rows. Cultivars that sucker vigorously spacing; those that produce fewer suckers should be set at spacing.

Do not allow dormant cane roots to dry out before planting. Set at same depth as canes were set in the nursery. Be sure plants are set vertically and not at an angle for best growth. Prune back to a height of oil level after new shoots emerge from soil. Delay planting of tissue

culture plug plants until all danger of spring frost is past. Apply water to transplant holes. Cover the top of the root ball with field soil to a depth of ³/₄ inch. Firm soil around plug plant.

Avoid herbicide applications or soil disturbances. After planting, a light layer of straw mulch will help reduce weeds and retain moisture. Remember mulch is applied the planting year only. Irrigate immediately after planting. Plant sod alleys or clean cultivate between rows.

PESTICIDE RULES REFRESHER FOR ALL GROWERS By Annie Macmillan, Vermont Agency of Agriculture

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS), a Federal regulation that has been in effect since 1995, applies to all commercial growers that use any pesticides--organic or conventional--in the production of agricultural plants on farms, nurseries, and greenhouses.

Commercial farms may only use agriculturally-labeled pesticides. Homeowner products (garden labeled) may not be used in a commercial operation. You will know that a product is labeled for agricultural use because it will include WPS information under the AGRICULTURAL USE REQUIREMENTS statement in the Directions for Use section of the pesticide label. Furthermore, it is illegal to use any pesticide product that has not been registered by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture. Please visit https://www.usaplants.vt.gov/ProductRegFSA/BrandSearch.aspx or call Annie Macmillan at 802-

Agency of Agriculture inspectors will be visiting organic fruit, vegetable, greenhouse and nursery operations routinely during the growing season to make sure that those applying pesticides are in compliance with the WPS. The Agency will also conduct Handler training as part of our 2010 Summer Workshop Series with Anne Macmillan and area field agents of the Agency of Agriculture. Please keep a look out for this workshop that will help you be in compliance when the State visits your farm this season. Group trainings for farmers can also be arranged by requ the St 4(rie)4(re)7(a)4-2(Anne)6(Maitr