

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – May 6, 2014
compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension

Couldn't make one of the UVM Extension produce safety workshops this spring? Check out some videos that provide basic background on produce safety, Good Agricultural Practices, and ways to reduce the risk of microbial contamination on produce. Harvest New England: Food Handling Safety (filmed on New England farms) discusses the reasons for increased outbreaks associated with fresh produce and the principles and practices to reduce the risk of microbial contamination on fresh produce). GAPs certification and audit process (NC State Extension) takes you on a mock audit. These and other videos are linked on the UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture's produce safety resources page; scroll down to 'videos':

www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture/?Page=whatwedo/producesafety/gapresources.html

If you are interested in developing a produce safety plan for your farm or are interested in getting GAPs certified for the first time, contact Ginger Nickerson at gnickers@uvm.edu, 802-505-8189. Many more resources are available at: www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture - click on On-Farm Produce Safety.

MUMMY BERRY MANAGEMENT IN BLUEBERRIES (adapted from UMass Extension)

Now is the time to prepare to manage this disease, which can lead to major losses if ignored. The first symptom is browning along the major leaf veins on newly emerging leaves which then wilt and bend into a crook. Light gray spores develop at the leaf base, and they move by wind, rain and insects to infect flowers and fruit. Infected green berries appear healthy but cutting them open reveals a white fungal growth inside. When infected berries start to ripen, they appear pinkish tan and slightly ridged and feel rubbery. They become faded, shrivel up, and fall to the ground. After the fruit skin has weathered off, the berries look like tiny black pumpkins. The fungus overwinters in these 'mummies' on the ground. In early spring, trumpet-shaped mushroom cups produced on the mummies eject windborne spore that infect young shoots, starting the cycle over. Scout fields beginning at budbreak for symptomatic tissue, which often shows up at the time forsythia blooms.

Management includes pruning bushes to open the canopy to air movement and spray penetration. Cultivate beneath plants in fall and again in early spring to disrupt overwintering inoculum. Apply a 3-4" layer of mulch material over the soil surface in early spring before mushroom cups emerge to create a physical barrier to spore release. Fungicides can be applied between budbreak and tight cluster if scouting and weather monitoring indicate risk of infection. Actinovate AG and Serenade Max are OMRI approved for organic growers. For a list of conventional materials and their efficacy, as well as a chart showing weather conditions that create the highest risk of infection, see this Michigan State extension article:

http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/managing_mummy_berry_shoot_strike_infections

SEEDCORN MAGGOT (adapted from Univ. of Minnesota)

Seed corn maggot may attack many vegetable crops including beans, corn, turnips, peas, cabbage, and cucurbits. They cause the most damage to emerging seedlings in the spring, especially if germination is retarded due to wet, cold conditions. The adult flies are attracted to rotting organic m

they can compare vegetable wash water from a single rinse to multiple rinses and/or sanitized rinses. If you are interested, please fill out this survey