

## Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – June 21, 2011

Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension

(802) 257-7967 ext. 303, [vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu](mailto:vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu)

<http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry>

### REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Berlin) Thank you all for offers of extra plants. We fared well only losing a round of transplants and some direct seeded stuff during the flooding. Due to the wet weather and a oddly placed family vacation we had not transplanted nearly 5 acres of sweet corn...phew! Peppers, field tomatoes and the full run of farm stand stuff. Strawberries were on high ground and are coming on strong.

(Essex) Our strawberry season started about 4 to 5 days later than last year and we lost about 6 or 7 acres from too many floods, not sure yet if the plants will recover and come back for next year but we put in some new plants this week in case they don't. It originally looked like the fields that did not get flooded were going to be great, but it seems like we are not getting the yields off them we had thought. Our first corn tasseled at about a foot and a half tall, so we are not sure what is going to happen with that corn. We put some extra fertilizer on it to try and get a better root system going. Our first pea field is doing good and we started picking the sugar snaps and snows. The English peas are only a few days away. With the few days of sun lately things are turning around!

(Warren) It's been a really good start to the season for us. Strawberries are almost ripe, hot house tomatoes are in, as are snap peas. I'm sold on saturated media tests for the high tunnels as everything looks fantastic. Wholesale demand is way up as is farm store business. Field crops are all doing well. We have to do a fair amount of sidedressing after all the rain, but we can deal with that. I believe we had lightning damage in one of our onion plots. All of the plants were gone in the center of the field with these radiating lines of nothing. The plants were about 8 inches tall and we scooped them out of the worst beds and consolidated them. Didn't seem to affect transplanted onions at all. We are going seed some nursery beds with a pinpoint seeder in a few weeks and overwinter them with those quick hoops. The idea is to pull the plants out in the spring and transplant them in the field. Anything to avoid a whole week in March of seeding onions into flats.

(Shaftsbury) Summer is setting in with leafhoppers on beans and spuds. I sprayed some Pyganic on those and it seems to be working pretty well. Thrips are heavy in onions and am using a backpack sprayer with Entrust and Pyganic to give a good soaking to drip down into the whorl. Flea beetles too! Berry picking is OK but we have a not-so-great stand of berries planted last year and the straw was filled with rye seed so it appears that we are harvesting in the prairie. First transplanted sweet corn (Bon Appetit) is in full tassel. Summer squash and zuke picking in full swing as are peas. Thinned out greenhouse raspberries and have been spreading Persimilis for spider mites this year and they look clean, except for the leafhoppers. Overall things look good but plant growth is a bit small.





(Lockport NY) Western NY is all over the map when it comes to production this season. Depending on soil type and just a matter of few miles, some fields are still flooded, others soggy, and some so dry that irrigation has been running for most of the week. Lack of sun early on and cool temperatures have slowed growth on many crops while the wild fluctuations have caused a great deal of plant stress. Lettuce has grown well while spinach crops have failed and broccoli has bolted. Sweet corn has been slow to grow and the early plantings started under plastic aren't much ahead of the bare-ground seeded. Insect pests like flea beetles, leaf hoppers, and cucumber beet

(Argyle NY) There has to be a challenging season now and then, but this Spring has been the winner. It dried out some and we planted like crazy then got huge storms and hail 2 weeks ago, which did a lot of damage on the greens and other things. However, 2 weeks later (as we learned last time we got hail), things look much better and the new lettuce and spinach are growing up. We re-seeded the one high tunnel completely with a full seeding of herbs, beans, arugula, etc. since it had been over 2 weeks and still the rains kept coming; we had planned to take the tunnel out of production, but getting a short-term seeding in seemed more important. Thank goodness for high tunnels! The strawberries that were gorgeous went down fast after the hail and rains, but still a pretty good crop, and the snow peas are doing well now. Stressed transplants are mostly in now; will hopefully bounce back. It's a great year to show farm interns that all doesn't run smooth, but diversity is saving us and markets are busier every week. (Customers even loved the Swiss chard with hail holes!) The biothrips netting from DuBois Agrinovation is working nicely on the arugula beds; you can see through it, air passes through, but flea beetles can't get it. We had a problem with a roll of Biotello being a light brownish color and see-through, which is a defect, so don't use it if you see that: weeds come through it.

(Little Compton, RI) We tried these over-wintering onion growing procedures: Started seed in August, transplanted into raised black plastic in September, hooped and row-covered in mid-October, covered with a second layer of clear plastic in early December. They overwintered fine. Mid-March removed clear plastic, April 1 took off row cover. They grew fine until three weeks ago and then they all went to seed. We were surprised and not too happy as they were not close to the size we wanted. Worried about making things worse by letting them just continue growing. We pulled them and let them dry down on top of the plastic raised beds. As an experiment, we let a row continue to grow, seed pods and all. Surprise, they are growing quite nicely. Another surprise, on onions we pulled the seed pods continued to mature! That was what we wanted to avoid. In future, we think it is best to take off the seed pods (scapes) whether you leave them in the ground or pull them up to dry. Bottom-line: farmers' market customers think they are tasty as any southern Vidalia onion, we just wish we had more weight to make all the effort financially worthwhile. Another farmer nearby grew Topcrop from Territorial Seed and he said only 10% set seed pods and the rest grew great large onions.

## UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC REPORT (Ann Hazelrigg)

A couple of tomato greenhouses have had a lot of bacterial canker. This is a nasty disease that causes splitting in tomato stems, long black cankers (sunken areas), 'firing' on leaf edges and between veins. Ripening fruit may also have a white raised birds eye spotting but I have only seen this a few times. This is typically a warm wet conditions disease but we did have some high temps and in poorly ventilated (hot) greenhouses, it can be a real problem. If you suspect the disease, cut into the stem lengthwise and look for lots of browning in the water conducting system; to be sure, send a sample to the clinic, or give a call and we can come out to do a rapid assay that tells you immediately. To manage the disease, avoid transfer of the bacteria to other plants by minimizing working in the plants and especially not going from infected houses or plants to the field or to clean greenhouses. When pruning be sure to wash hands often, sterilize cutting knives, etc. Cut off infected plants at the base and get them out of the house immediately. A few growers report good luck with Agriphage, a virus that attacks the bacteria. It is organic approved and does not cure the disease but can add some weeks to harvest. See: [http://www.omnilytics.com/products/agriphage/agriphage\\_info/agriphage\\_faq.html](http://www.omnilytics.com/products/agriphage/agriphage_info/agriphage_faq.html).

For more info on canker: [http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Tomato\\_Bacterial.htm](http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Tomato_Bacterial.htm)