

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – June 29, 2016
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Waterbury) The Leek Moth has made it to Waterbury. We spotted a few in our Leek Moth trap this week but have seen very little evidence of them or damage from them in our garlic fields. Hopefully we will harvest the garlic before the second flight in July/August. Garlic is looking good otherwise, needing lots of water with these dry conditions.

(Huntington) Bearing in mind Vermont's pending Required Ag Practices rule, which calls for plans to reduce phosphorus application when soil tests above 20 ppm, we did some fertilizer tweaking in fields that are near that level, putting down only 15#/acre of OMRI-approved phosphate (roughly the plant P uptake rate). This was not anything scientific, but in the fields where soil tests showed 15-24 ppm P I saw distinctly slower early spring growth than I would have expected, with one variety of kale even showing telltale signs of P deficiency over the last few weeks. My goal when we purchased our land 8 years ago was to get the soil P levels up to around 40 ppm (the cut-over river-bottom hay land in our valley that we use was all around 2-4 ppm when we got on it), but the RAPs have me concerned that shooting for the lower, somewhat arbitrary 20 ppm level of soil P as a cutoff could be dangerous for heavier-feeding, early-planted vegetable crops in our short growing season, especially during a year with below-average April/May soil temps. And especially so with OMRI-approved P sources because they aren't as readily available in cold soil as super-phosphate. I'd like to see (and participate in) some fertility trials to determine if 20 ppm P is actually sufficient in our region for high-value vegetable crops in early spring (especially when using organic P sources) - before new regulations cap our ability to provide what the plants need to grow profitably.

(Fairfax) Trying the weed-mat material that Brookdale Fruit Farm sells. Using it between plastic in peppers and in asparagus. Use ground staples to keep it down. So far am really liking the weed mat and it is pretty reasonable at 16 cents a foot for a 4 ft. wide roll. Trevor at Brookdale says we should get 4 or 5 years use out of it. We shall see. Also trying ProTek netting on onions to prevent leek moth. Used hoops and should be able to leave it on till the onions mature.

(Elmore) Vegetables and weeds growing fast; trees growing slow. The most winter damage we have ever had on potted trees, will have to develop a new system. Even though it was so mild the lack of snow really did them in. Most trees in the ground are fine, good fruit set on blueberries and cherries. So hot and so dry; I don't ever remember it like this the whole month of June. We had to invest in an irrigation system with timers otherwise nothing can stand it. Our mailman says he is used to the desert and 130 degrees, so this does not seem too bad. Let's hope it does not get like that around here. Someone said this heat really is good for appreciating the shade of trees. Stay cool. Remember we are all in this for love and to be kind to each other, and to learn a few good things along the way.

(Charlotte) We had a terrible strawberry season because of the cedar waxwings. We will be using netting next year. We planted more strawberries, black raspberries, and fall raspberries and are starting to prep fields for next year plantings. Blueberries and black raspberry crops are coming along nicely, but we need some rain.

(Westminster West) Until last night's rain we received only ¼ inch of rain in June! Lucky we have spent 35 years building up the organic matter so dry spells don't affect us much. Been pumping water thru drips 14 hours a day until the weather breaks. When I started farming here 44 years ago we didn't have any irrigation. We used to get regular rains and maybe a severe dry spell in July or August, but never lost a crop. Now, I couldn't think about not having irrigation.

Garlic! Best looking crop in years and harvest should begin in a few weeks. No weeds as payback for no rain I guess. Onions and other alliums (2 acres) also look outstanding. Have thrips though, hard to kill 'em all. On the white plastic mulch same number of thrips as the black, though so far the black mulch onions are way ahead in growth. In years past by end of season no difference in crop. Weed pressure is nil due to the lack of rain and hard-working crew! Winter squash (2 acres) still under remay, probably leave it on until next week. No cucumber beetles seen here yet, only a few squash bugs, and none on the crop.

Growing sweet potatoes for the first time this year, yes, late to the party. Tunnel toms coming in now, nice! Tunnel raspberries earlier than ever and huge! Learning to give much more water to everything we grow now. Field of yellow sweet clover in full bloom, planted last fall, bees are loving it! Pickling scapes by the score now, and a big shout out to Paul Harlow for letting us use his awesome commercial kitchen to knock out jars of them!

(Hampton NY) The planting in the new garden is finally complete. The plants that were established before the heat wave are doing really well. The late transplants are struggling and require sips of water every day. We could really use some rain. We have no bugs or disease yet in the new garden. The old garden is struggling since I have been focusing the bulk of my time/energy in the new garden; the weeds are thick, the cucumber beetles and squash bugs are thriving and powdery mildew is starting on some patty pan squash. I plan on spraying fungicide tonight, and sprayed pyrethrum last evening. Peppers in both gardens are doing great and I hope to have some for market this week. I haven't figured out if it's the chickens, cut worm or bunnies that are eating the green bean plants and nibbling on the cantaloupe plants.

(Ange-Gardien, Quebec) Good thing about drought: make you realize how important organic matter is in your soil. I do have to work on that. I will be looking to ideas and "how to" establish cover crop between plastic ro

UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC
Ann Hazelrigg

Lots of hot dry weather with wind. If you see leaf edge dieback, that is typical of dry conditions.
Check e

Potato virus Y noted in potatoes. This virus comes in on seed stock and causes blackening of the veins and can be moved by aphids. The disease can also cause rings of dead areas on potato tubers. Yukon gold is especially susceptible. If infected, harvest early to avoid tuber infection. https://ag.umass.edu/sites/ag.umass.edu/files/newsletters/february_19_2015_vegetable_notes.pdf Tortoise beetle damage seen in high tunnel tomatoes. The sort of look like little turtles and chew r