

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – June 3, 2013
Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension
(802) 257-7967 ext. 303, vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu
www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Plainfield NH) Rain, snow and now 90 degree heat; beats tornadoes, I guess. Flea beetles are a problem for all of us, and transplanting with rowcovers and wild temp fluctuations has been challenging, although everything except eggplant seems to be tolerating the heat well. However they were in the ground and covered 10 days before the snows of winter returned.

Strawberries are past full bloom and this heat will hustle the crop along, I am hoping the fruit is too small at this point to sunscald as we haven't been trying to evaporatively cool. Lots of winter-kill in the blueberries so we are devoting a lot of time to them improving mulch and weed control. Raspberry crop is OK, at least until the SWD makes its appearance. Biggest concern here is uncovered basil under remay. It had been under row cover for over two weeks, so I am sure there was some temp stress, but I am seeing symptoms that look a little bit like downy mildew. Will know a lot more in the next few days. I hope the 2013 basil season isn't over for us.

(Abington CT) The much needed rain has brought wonderful new growth to the crops. Flea beetles have caused some damage to greens, but tiny slugs have devastated the Tokyo Bekena. Row cover helps and I will avoid the Bekena until I have better slug control. Imported cabbage worms and loopers are already out and causing damage on the small amount of broccoli and kale that I couldn't cover, they are few enough plants that hand picking is easy. Working with draft horses and oxen have been very enjoyable and easy on the ground, the compaction is so much less where I have used only animals. So far tractor use has been limited to transplanting and heavier disc. Our new Iva sprayer arrives tomorrow, we look forward to using Quantum Growth for the remediation of a couple acres of old corn ground, the soil seems dead and microbes and a cover crop should help prep it for future vegetables.

(Shaftsbury) The cold set some things back and took out some melons under remay. There is a slight yellowish green cast to a lot of crops; hoping some hot/drier weather might change that. Sprayed Serenade on strawberry blooms; this seems to be the year to test if that works against strawberry Botrytis later in this month. A few red fruit on berries, and waxwings just arrived. Bought a Penn's Creek boom sprayer this season to replace my 15 year old mist blower. It is really nice! The 300 gallon tank is a bit big for our scale, but a good design, easy to use and calibrate, and best of all the agitator in the tank is "like turbo charged" so it can mix Su(,)ropnderthat.

(Cabot) The 5 inches of rain we've had in the last week making field prep difficult. Heat was great though. Things are growing. I love pelleted parsnip seed.

(Weare NH) Tunnel is full of tomatoes, eggplants and cukes; still working bugs out of irrigation. Transplanting almost finished until fall crops go in. Tried out a straw chopper this past weekend for mulching in between rows, jury is still out on that exercise. Reseeding root crops that never germinated on first round. Growth seems to be a bit behind the past few seasons, except for the weeds. Will be bringing less variety to the first farmers market than I would like, but hopefully the following weeks will see that increase to a more reasonable level.

(S. Royalton) We grow lots of vegetable plants to sell to gardeners. This weather has really thrown off sales since our biggest outlet is Saturday farmers' market and a few days of weekend sales at the farm. People just are not inspired

I have been eyeing one field for a long time and went for it; finally will be ready to build beds and mulch tomorrow, then we will set out 4500 plugs of winter squash. Feels good to shift gears from the greenhouses out to the fields this time of year and the staff looks forward to it.

(New Haven) Fields are wet, recent storm did not help. Planting is still in progress but by hand. Roots, sweet corn, tomatoes and peppers doing well.

(Barnet) We're finally getting the last of the transplants in while keeping a wary eye on the nightly temps. Market and farm stand sales are improving as customers are racing to get gardens in and replace frosted transplants that they purchased last week. This year the moving tunnel is really showing its advantage. The tomatoes are skinny and struggling in our old tunnels, but in the moving tunnel the tomatoes are unstoppable. Strawberries in the moving tunnel are neck and neck with the ones in the field so we won't bother with that experiment again. Sales of plants have been excellent this year although not so much at our farmers' market. Evidently, every new farm has read that growing starts is a quick way to success so there are numerous vendors with some starts to peddle. All this does affect our bottom line and we need to reevaluate our marketing plans at the farmers' market.

(Burlington) I am liking the plant density on beets using our new (to us) Stanhay seeder and pelleted seed. Tried it last year with naked beet seed and lousy results, but the pellets have upped the precision nicely, and appear to have led to stands that are neither too thick nor too sparse. Seeing quite a bit of early insect pressure, though I am hoping that the Swede midge are inexplicably late in our Brassicas. Will be working on a few more organic Swede midge control trials this summer, investigating the reputed systemic action of neem products and stimulating plant defense responses. Hoping to stay ahead of the little buggers with a good rotation as well.

(Salisbury NH) A week of rainy cool weather, then snow. We hauled flats of eggplant, peppers, from the unheated hoop house back to our house. Then two days of almost 100 degrees. Held off putting transplants in the ground as we felt they would just get fried. Waiting for shade cloth to arrive. Spinach in hoop house just about t