

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – June 30, 2015



(Craftsbury) Persistent rain and cool temperatures have slowed blueberry growth. Conversely, it has accelerated grass and weed production and challenged efforts to keep up with grooming/mowing. Sun and heat would be useful and we are anticipating a shift in the weather pattern which has kept temperatures down and precipitation up. We have a portion of our bushes which are without berries (but well leafed) this season and we wonder if this may be due to a late frost which affected a particular variety or if it is a cyclical event.

(Burlington) A good year to farm on sand. Interesting that while it seems the growing season has been cool as well as damp, the growing degree data since April 1st for our location suggest we are above the average temp. If you want to see the regional weather history, you can subscribe to the weekly New England Crop Weather reports from the National Ag Statistics Service at [http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/New\\_England/Subscribe\\_to\\_New\\_England\\_Reports/index.asp](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/New_England/Subscribe_to_New_England_Reports/index.asp) So far insects haven't been too bad; heavy rains keeping onion thrips at bay. Hoping we can also keep the leek moth and onion diseases in check, as they caused major problems last year. Other crops looking good, though we had poor germ and minor flooding in a couple of potato varieties. Fortunately our summer CSA members responded well to several thousand pounds of 2014 spuds remaining after our winter share; we put them out on the tables in June. Nice to have something bulky for them to cook early in the summer before zucchini! Both the Satina and Elba still looked good and tasted quite good. Loving our 'Manny' cucumbers we trialed in our tunnels this spring; incredible production and great flavor.

(Charlotte) We had to replant our strawberry plants that we planted in May due to all of the rain. The blueberries are doing well, but the fall raspberries are looking weak with all of this rain.

(Elmore) It is so wet that the slugs and snails are the only visitors we are having on our farm. Impossible to plant or till or mow. The upside is no watering, and all the fruit is getting nice and fat. It looks like a really good year for plums, pears, and apples and blueberries and leaf growth. Almost forgetting what sun looks like and blue skies this is why daydreaming is such an important tool here. It's been in the low 50s but I know that summer is just around the corner.

(Little Compton RI) It's water wheel season again! And all the frustrations of dealing with machinery we should have worked on in February. I did have a small revelation: after years of tearing out the 3/8ths clamp screw, which holds the wheel in place, we welded a hardened 3/8ths nut just about the hole (to give it more thread pressure) and then found some stainless steel hex screws. These screws are hardened just by the fact they are SS and they also have a little pucker that really clamps down on the bar. We also added a second screw hole for each wheel. Other big lesson from this year's drought is; oats and peas that go 50% to seed have to be plowed down. With the drought the oats got stiff and just wouldn't melt down with a good harrowing. Also, with the low moisture level in the soil the microbes must have had a hard time getting their job done. Just when I think I should sell my plows, I get a revelation like this.

