

**VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY GROWER NEWS** – August 1, 2022

Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension

<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/horticulture/commercial>

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**REPORTS FROM THE FIELD**

(E. Wallingford) We had some hail damage last week. The hail was larger than 3/4 inch. Some of the hail remained on top of our bird netting but no damage was done to netting. It did bruise ripe blueberries and marked the green fruit. Squash and cukes are marked as well. No signs of SWD. Fruit is large despite dry weather and we're having a great turn out for PYO. Some of our blueberries are the size of a quarter!

(Newbury) Very little potato beetle infestation this year. However earwigs by the score are taking up residence in my cauliflower.

(Guildhall) Our fields are fields are river bottom sand, so we could always use more rain, but thankfully we've been catching thunderstorms and aren't anywhere near as dry as most of New

(Huntington) In April-July, we've had 4.6", 3.6", 5.5", and 5.6" of rain, with only one driveway

Raspberries seem to really be suffering. Smaller berries and go from ripe to shriveled quickly. Maybe the fall raspberries will fare better. Peas have been done for about a week. I really like Super Sugar Snap peas. Very sweet and people can eat them raw - pod and all or shell them if they want. Best of both worlds. New rows started (Knight peas) that hopefully can survive the heat er.

Where we know we will run out of water, we grow winter squash and early onions and shallots. Winter squash was watered early, and the foliage is massive which creates its own microclimate, helping to sustain the crop across the finish line without additional water. Onions are coming in now, so their water needs are over.

We bought a MegaNet inline sprinkler system eight years ago and this year upgraded the base delivery lines with the new technology that doesn't waste water or pressure because of loose fittings. It cost \$1000 but worth every penny for performance and less headaches. For tips on the system, call Zoie at Brookdale Fruit Farm.

The deer population in our town has easily doubled in the last five years! We are using half doses of Hinder and Neptune's Harvest fish fertilizer to keep them off the sweet potato vines, and it works on other vegetables too.

Learned a hard lesson last year. Had a spray tank with BT and copper leftover from a spraying five days previous. When I went out to spray another Brassica field, I figured it was going to be the same mix so just add more water and Dipel and off I went! Well that cocktail of benign spray material became a toxic brew and I messed up two acres of cauliflower and broccoli which were injured and then got host of diseases. I blamed the problems on other issues like the wet season, staying in the cold frames too long, etc. Well this year I did it one more time, just to teach me the folly of being lazy about tank cleanup.

Farmers' markets are on fire down here near coastal vacation land. We are getting 10-15% higher prices at city markets than at our hometown stand, and very few complaints. Labor is a challenge as we continue losing help to bigger businesses like supermarkets that starting folks at \$22 an hour around here. Glad we cut back acreage by 15% because of fuel and fertilizer costs, but even now can't get it all done in the day to day.

## **LEAF ANALYSIS IS IMPORTANT TO GUIDE BERRY FERTILIZATION**

Leaf, or tissue analysis tells you what nutrients your berry crop is actually taking up from the soil. Samples cost \$28 analyzed through Dairy One in NY. <https://dairyone.com/services/forage-laboratory-services/plant-tissue-analysis/>.

Strawberries: Sample the first fully expanded leaves after renovation or within the first 6 weeks after harvest. Raspberries: Sample non-fruiting canes between August 1 and 20. Blueberries: Sample between July 1 and August 30. Collect at least 30 healthy undamaged leaves that are well exposed to light and represent the average condition of the planting. Remove petioles and put leaves in a dry paper bag or perforated plastic bag and immediately label with name of the area the sample represents.

## **RESOURCES FROM THE UVM AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING TEAM**

Andy Chamberlin and Chris Callahan

Our website <https://go.uvm.edu/ageng> is full of post-harvest (wash/pack), protected culture (greenhouse and high tunnel) and

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## **SUMMER POLLINATOR REPORT**

Laura Johnson, UVM Extension pollinator support specialist

Summer and winter squash bloom observations were conducted between dawn and late morning. By noon, squash flowers are closed, closing, or wilting. Blossom visits were dominated by three bees during the month of June; honeybees (*Apis mellifera*), squash bees (