Regional Updates

North Country – Clinton, Essex, northern Warren and Washington Counties:

Crops are thriving under these warm, mostly sunny conditions. Late blight has not been seen in our northern region as yet and field grown tomatoes look very good this year with little to no early blight or septoria leaf spot so far. Even powdery mildew is getting off to a slow start on pumpkins and cucumber beetles and squash bug populations have remained low as well. The soil had dried quite a bit and irrigation is in full swing. Onions are beginning to topple over but there is a lot of variability based on variety, planting time and early growing conditions. Onion thrips exploded in many fields during the recent hot weather.

Capital District – Albany, Fulton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, southern Warren and Washington Counties:

The heat of late last week and the storms early this week have provided a mixed bag for growers in the capital District. Crops are growing quickly and setting well, but we also saw Downy Mildew move in on cucurbits throughout the region. Reports of hail seem to have missed the vegetable growers for the most part, but straight-line winds have been causing some damage. Onion disease pressure is very high in some areas causing early onions to die standing up. Bacterial soft rock infection levels seem to be fairly low however. The garlic crop is about halfway dry and is looking pretty good, pumpkins are setting quite well, and solanaceous crops are doing the same. Bird damage seems to be intensifying with heavy losses in some sweet corn plantings and movement into other crops such as melons. Growers are trying different tactics such as the use of Avian and what are being called “dancing scare men”. The results of these new techniques will be reported on over the winter.

Mid-Hudson Valley- Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, and Ulster Counties:

Hot weather combined with limited precipitation continues to persist in our region, causing growers to irrigate consistently. In tomatoes, we’ve seen a couple plantings that have tomato hornworm infestations. These large, green caterpillars feed on leaves and fruit and have the capacity to defoliate plants even when populations are low. They are well camouflaged against the tomato plant and easily missed. Often hornworms feed at the top of the plant and damage will be noticed before the worms are. Stinkbugs have been seen feeding in several tomato plantings causing “cloudy spot.” This condition leads to yellow blotches on mature fruit, rendering them unmarketable. There have been no new reports of Late blight in the area. However, we’ve seen a number of tomato plantings with other serious issues such as Tomato Spot Wilt Virus which we don’t often see and early blight which we see all too much. High temperatures have slowed ripening of tomatoes. See Steve Reiners article in this newsletter “Why aren’t my tomatoes Ripening?”
Why Aren't My Tomatoes Ripening?

With all of the hot weather we have experienced this summer, growers were expecting their tomatoes to ripen very quickly. Unfortunately, just the opposite is happening. Ripening seems very slow, almost like what we see in the autumn when temperatures are much cooler.

So what’s happening? It takes six to eight weeks from the time of pollination until tomato fruit reach full maturity. The length of time depends on the variety grown and of course, the weather conditions. The optimum temperature for ripening tomatoes is 70 to 75°F. When temperatures exceed 85 to 90°F, the ripening process slows significantly or even stops. At these temperatures, lycopene and carotenoids, pigments responsible for giving the fruit their typical orange to red appearance cannot be produced. As a result, the fruit can stay in a mature green phase for quite some time.

Light conditions have very little to do with ripening. Tomatoes do not require light to ripen and in fact, fruit exposed to direct sunlight will heat to levels that inhibit pigment synthesis. Direct sun can also lead to sunscald of fruit. Do not remove leaves in an effort to ripen fruit. Also, soil fertility doesn’t play much of a role. We do know that high levels of magnesium and low levels of potassium can lead to conditions like blotchy or uneven ripening or yellow shoulder disorder. But the slowness to ripen is not likely due to soil conditions and adding additional fertilizer will do nothing to quicken ripening.

If you absolutely cannot wait, some growers will remove fruit that are showing the first color changes. These fruit, in the a mature green or later phase, could be stored at room temperature (70-75°F) in the dark. A more enclosed environment would be best as ethylene gas, released from fruit as they ripen, will stimulate other fruit to ripen. If temperatures remain high outdoors, these picked fruit will ripen more quickly, perhaps by as much as five days. As far as flavor, the greener fruit should develop flavor and color similar to what you would get if field ripened. The key is picking them when they are showing the first signs of ripening (no earlier) and keeping them at room temperature. Do not refrigerate, as this will absolutely destroy their flavor.

- Steve Reiners, Cornell University

Center Rot in Onions

This disease is caused by a bacterial pathogen and will typically lead to discoloration and collapse of one or more inner leaves. The disease will progress down the symptomatic leaf and into the corresponding scale within the bulb, subsequently leading to a rot of the affected tissue. Incidence does not appear high at this point, but watch for infected bulbs on your grading lines which will give off moisture and may cause storage issues.

[Image: Center rot of onion, caused by Pantoea ananatis, leads to the collapse of one or more inner leaves and rotting of the corresponding scale within the onion bulb. Photos: KB]
August in High Tunnels

Here are some common sights in high tunnel tomatoes this time of year:

It’s not unusual to find blossom blast (where flowers die before setting fruit) this time of year in high tunnels. The most common cause is a spike in temperatures over 95 degrees or so. Tunnels without good ventilation can quickly become too hot on a clear, sunny day. Roll up sides, large doors at both ends left open and gable end vents are all ways to help moderate temperatures in tunnels. Gable end vents are especially important in larger tunnels to allow excess heat to escape passively rather than build up to damaging levels.

Manganese (Mn) deficiencies can also contribute to blossom blast. The best way to determine Mn levels is with a foliar nutrient test. Contact Amy Ivy, Crystal Stewart or Teresa Rusinek to learn more about this method of monitoring high tunnel crop nutrient levels. A deficiency in Mn usually causes mild marginal leaf burn of the recently fully expanded leaves, often about four feet from the ground in indeterminate varieties.

Magnesium (Mg) deficiencies are very common in high tunnel tomatoes from July on and are of little concern. The oldest, lowest leaves are affected and turn yellow between the veins. Usually the plant has enough Mg to function, but it is moved from those lower leaves up to where it’s needed. It is good to learn to recognize these symptoms in order to eliminate other more serious problems from your diagnosis.

The first signs of leaf mold are easy to confuse with Mg deficiency. Leaf mold (Passalora fulva or Fulvia fulva) is a fungal disease found almost exclusively in high tunnels. The first signs are bright yellow spots scattered across the leaves of the entire plant. Turn the leaf over to see the brown undersides of these spots to confirm. The yellow patches of Mg deficiency are not brown on the underside.

- ADI
Timber rot: occasional disease of high tunnel tomatoes

Every year we see scattered incidence of Timber Rot, or *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum*. This is the same disease which causes white mold on beans and a variety of other crops. Timber rot is more prevalent in the high tunnel than the field, but it can occur in either location. Generally symptoms appear as plants scattered throughout the field or tunnel dying from the base, with branches or the entire plant wilting and the stems developing necrotic areas.

If you cut or peel open the stem in the dying area, you will find hard, black sclerotia. These are the reproductive structures of the disease, and should be carefully removed along with infected plants. Sclerotia can persist in the soil for years, waiting for a suitable host to again germinate. By removing them, you reduce future problems. Doing this job with a garbage bag or tote is a good idea. Throw the plants away rather than composting, as a cool compost pile will not kill sclerotia and you could spread them to another field with your compost.

Beyond destroying infected plants additional control is generally not warranted, especially in the tunnel. If this is a perennial, serious problem, the inoculum may have already built up in the tunnel and may need to be encouraged to germinate when the host is not present or the tunnel may need to be moved. –CLS

Sclerotia in infected tomato stem. Image below: CLS

Don’t Forget about Hudson Valley Farmlink

Looking for more land?
Looking to sell/lease/rent land?
Set up a profile at:
www.hudsonvalleyfarmlandfinder.org

and make that match!

Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Website

For event announcements and registrations, previous issues of our newsletters and more, please visit the Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Team’s website at http://enyh.cce.cornell.edu/. We hope you bookmark it on your computer and begin using it as your ‘go to’ website for production and marketing information.

Email or call any of the educators with questions or comments on the website – we want to make it work for YOU!
Tomato Blossom Drop

Over the past couple weeks I have seen some plantings of field tomatoes that are experiencing blossom drop (also known as flower abortion). This phenomenon is commonly seen in fruiting vegetables like tomatoes and peppers and occurs when a flower blooms, but does not set fruit. Plant blossoms will subsequently dry up and drop off, resulting in fewer fruit and reduced yields.

There are several factors that may lead to blossom drop. Temperature extremes, including daytime temps above 85 °F, nighttime temps above 70 °F, or nighttime temps below 55 °F may all cause blossom drop. Humidity can also play a role in blossom drop. Pollen grains may not release properly if the relative humidity is greater than 70% for an extended period of time, resulting in flower abortion. Other factors that may lead to blossom drop include low or high soil moisture, low levels of nitrogen fertilizer, and damage from insects or disease.

Finally, blossom drop may simply be the result of a particularly heavy fruit set. A single plant can only bear so much fruit at one time and those fruit will compete for the limited resources supplied by that plant. Plants may abort new blossoms to ensure proper development and ripening of fruits that have already begun to fill out or ripen. In this case, new blossoms will resume setting fruit following the first harvest. Growers may also choose to remove deformed or otherwise unmarketable fruits to encourage fruit setting in newly formed blossoms.

– KB

Strength of the Dollar and Exports – Where are we headed?

The U.S. exchange rate has appreciated in recent months, and global economic and political conditions suggest a continuation of this trend. In the February 2015 Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Trade, the USDA lowered its agricultural trade surplus forecast for 2015 to $22.5 billion, the lowest since 2007, in part because of the rising dollar. While exchange rates are critical to U.S. competitiveness abroad, they are less important for some U.S. agricultural products that are differentiated from competitors by their quality, their innate characteristics, or the efficiency with which they are supplied to foreign consumers.

We knew that it would only be a matter of time before Cucurbit Downy Mildew made its way into the region and on Friday of last week we received pictures of cucumbers from Schuylerie County that appeared to have without doubt symptoms of Downy mildew. It is now very important to make sure that you include a fungicide with some translaminar or systemic activity even if downy has not been found on your farm. All stages of cucumbers in particular should be protected.

Overview: Epidemic spread likely in NY / southern Canada and the Carolina coast. Transport events move near the sources or to the east or northeast. Favorable conditions today near the SC coast and in the far eastern Great Lakes generate the greatest risk to cucurbits early this week. However, slightly favorable to mixed conditions are expected during many other transport events.

Here is the forecast for the beginning of this week: August 3, 2015: **HIGH Risk for NY except the southeast, southern Quebec, southern and eastern SC, far southeast NC.** Moderate Risk for cucurbits in southern GA, the FL peninsula, northeast OH, southern ON, and PA except the southeast. Low Risk in central and eastern MI, southern IN, southwest OH, northern KY, southeast VA, and far northeast NC. Minimal Risk to cucurbits otherwise.

August 4, 2015: Moderate Risk to cucurbits in central and southern FL, southwest NC, northern TN, KY, southern IL, southern IN, eastern MI, northern PA, western and central NY, and southern Quebec. Low Risk in southern and eastern LA, southwest MS, southern GA, the eastern Carolinas, northeast TN, east VA, eastern MD, DE, eastern PA, NJ, eastern NY, Long Island, southern New England, southern VT, and southern NH. Minimal Risk to cucurbits otherwise.

To view the weekly forecasts for yourself or sign up for CDM reports, [Click here](http://cdm.ipmpipe.org/)

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**WEEKLY VEGETABLE UPDATE**

**DOWNY MILDEW HAS BEEN FOUND IN Eastern NY!**
Downy Mildew Control

Here is an article we ran earlier in the season about controlling Downy Mildew from Dr. Margaret Tuttle McGrath, Cornell University, Long Island Horticultural Research and Extension Center:

Manage downy mildew by planting resistant varieties, monitoring disease occurrence and weather forecasts, inspecting crops for symptoms weekly, and applying broad-spectrum protective fungicides before detection and systemic narrow-spectrum fungicides when downy mildew occurs early in crop production.

Most cucumber varieties and a few melons have resistance to downy mildew. Although with the new race of CDM, cucumber varieties do not exhibit the very high level of resistance that they did to previous races, resistant varieties are still a valuable component of downy mildew management.

This disease has become more difficult to manage due to fungicides (in particular Presidio and Previcur Flex) not performing as well as they have in the past likely because of fungicide resistance. Below are fungicides remaining on the list for growers to consider. All should be used tank-mixed with a protectant fungicide (mancozeb or chlorothalonil) and in an alternating program to manage development of resistance to additional fungicides.

- **Ranman.** Can be applied at most 6 times. Alternate with other fungicides such that no more than 50% of the applications are Ranman. Ranman can be applied 3 times consecutively but these need to be followed by 3 applications of other fungicides. Use with an organosilicone surfactant.
- **Curzate or Tanos.** These have some curative activity (up to 2 days under cool temperatures) but limited residual activity (about 3-5 days). They can be a good choice when it was not possible to apply fungicide at the start of a high risk period when temperature is below 80 F. Both must be tank-mixed with a protectant. Apply another targeted fungicide 3-5 days later. Apply no more than 4 times in a season (6-9 for Curzate depending on rate); no consecutive applications of Tanos are permitted. REI is 12 hr. PHI is 3 days.
- **Forum.** Apply no more than 3 times in a season with no more than 2 consecutive applications. REI is 12 hr. PHI is 0 day.
- **Gavel (now labeled for use on all cucurbits).** This is the only product that consists of a targeted fungicide and a protectant fungicide (mancozeb). Apply no more than 8 times in a season. Some cantaloupe varieties are sensitive to Gavel. Workers must be notified that a dermal sensitizer was applied both orally and by posting at entrance to treated area for 4 days. REI is 48 hr. PHI is 5 days.

Phosphorous acid fungicides are labeled but are not as effective inherently as for other downy mildews. Note that Ridomil and QoI fungicides have not been recommended for several years because of resistance.

Organic fungicides labeled for managing downy mildew in cucurbit crops: Several different types of organic fungicides are labeled for managing downy mildew in cucurbit crops. See the list below. Timing of applications is critical. Fungicides affect pathogens before infection. There is a latent period of about one week between infection and symptom appearance. Thus symptoms present at the time of the first application, plus those appearing a few days afterwards, will not be affected by the fungicide. The cucurbit downy mildew forecast web site is an important tool for determining when first infection likely will occur and thus when fungicide application is warranted.

- **Actinovate AG.** 0.0371% Streptomyces lydicus strain WYEC 108. For best results with applications to foliage, label indicates to use a non-ionic spreader-sticker. OMRI-listed. EPA Reg. No. 73314-1. Monsanto BioAg (formerly Natural Industries, Inc.).
- **BacStop.** 2.0% thyme, 2.0% clove & clove oil, 1.5% cinnamon, 1.0% peppermint & peppermint oil, and 1.0% garlic oil. Recommended used with EF400 for these and some other diseases. Exempt from EPA registration. USAgriTech, Inc.
- **Companion.** 0.03% Bacillus subtilis strain GB03. EPA Reg. No. 71065-3. Growth Products, Ltd.
- **Copper.** Several formulations available.
- **Double Nickel 55 LC and WDG.** Bacillus amyloliquefaciens strain D747, 98.8% and 25%, respectively. OMRI-listed. EPA Reg No. 70051-107 and 108, respectively. Certis USA, LLC.
- **EF400.** 8.2% clove, 8.1% rosemary, and 6.7% peppermint. Exempt from EPA registration. No Ag Label. USAgriTech, Inc.
- **MilStop.** 85% potassium bicarbonate. OMRI-listed. EPA Reg. No. 70870-1-68539. BioWorks, Inc.
- **Organocide.** 5% sesame oil. Labeled broadly for several fungal diseases and insects. OMRI-listed. Exempt from EPA registration. No Ag Label. Organic Laboratories, Inc.
- **OxiDate.** 27% hydrogen dioxide. OMRI-listed. EPA Reg. No. 70299-2. BioSafe Systems, LLC.
WEEKLY VEGETABLE UPDATE

Downy Mildew Control, continued from last page


◊ **Serenade Max and Serenade ASO.** 14.6% *Bacillus subtilis* strain QST 713. Bayer CropScience (formerly AgraQuest).


◊ **Sonata.** 1.38% *Bacillus pumilus* strain QST 2808. OMRI-listed. EPA Reg. No. 69592-13. Bayer CropScience (formerly AgraQuest).

◊ **Trilogy.** 70% clarified hydrophobic extract of neem oil. OMRI-listed. EPA Reg. No. 70051-2. Certis USA, LLC. (use before flowers open as it is toxic to bees)

◊ **Zonix biofungicide.** 8.5% Rhamnolipid Biosurfactant. OMRI-listed. EPA Reg. No. 264-1160. PropTera, LLC.

Please Note: The specific directions on fungicide labels must be adhered to -- they supersede these recommendations, if there is a conflict. Before purchase, make sure product is registered in your state and approved by your certifier. Any reference to commercial products, trade or brand names is for information only; no endorsement is intended.

### Calendar of Events

**August 6th– Thursday, High Tunnel Tomato Production Twilight Meeting:** 5– 6:30 PM
Join Cornell vegetable specialists along with our gracious host Susan Decker at Blue Star Farm, 545 County Route 26A, Stuyvesant, NY 12173. Topics: Water Quality Considerations and Alkalinity Testing Demonstration (Bring a 200ml water sample in a clean plastic or glass bottle labeled with your farm name and contact) – Soil Best Management Practices/ Foliar Nutrient Testing - Pruning and Disease Management. There is no charge for this program. For more information contact Teresa Rusinek 845 389-3562 or email tr28@cornell.edu

**August 19th, Wednesday, — Limiting Bird Damage in Fruit: State-of-the-Art Pest Management Tactics (A Vertebrate Damage Management Workshop), 4H Training Center, 556 Middleline Rd, Ballston Spa, NY 12020.** This comprehensive class will feature results and speakers from a multi-year, multi-state project that looked at several different fruit crops. Registration details to follow.

**August 20th, Thursday, Tomato Variety and Disease Twilight Meeting for Commercial Farmers at the Hudson Valley Farm Hub, 1875 Hurley Mountain Road, Hurley, NY 12443. 5:30– 7:00 pm.** Join Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Vegetable specialists and Margaret McGrath from the Cornell LI Research Extension Center to tour the tomato disease resistance trial at the Farm Hub. Help us evaluate 10 new tomato varieties being developed by Cornell University plant breeder Dr. Martha Mutschler. We will tour the variety trial, taste tomatoes, and discuss tomato diseases and management. 1.5 DEC pesticide applicator credits have been applied for. Registration is not required and there is no fee for this program. This meeting will be held rain or shine. For more information, please contact Teresa Rusinek at 845-389-3562 or tr28@cornell.edu

**Sept. 3rd– Thursday-Eastern NY Soil Health Field Day–Building Better Soils With Cover Crops**
Cornell Cooperative Extension in partnership with USDA NRCS, NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee, the Watershed Agricultural Council, and Schoharie Valley Farms will be hosting a Soil Health Field Day – at Fox Creek Park, 495 N Main Street (State Rt. 30), Schoharie NY. The event will be held rain or shine under tents and pavilions, from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM with registration beginning at 9:30 AM. The program of speakers, demonstrations, and cover crop plots is designed for all farms including livestock, dairy, row crop and vegetable farms. Pre-registration is required by August 26th by calling 315-866-7920 or visiting www.cnydfc.cce.cornell.edu. Please indicate if you require special accommodations when you register. Cost for the day is $15 per person and includes lunch. The keynote presentation by national renowned NRCS soil health expert, Ray Archuleta, a dynamic speaker who will address the important role of cover crops in soil health.
Affordable Food Safety Plan

Get a basic food safety plan on your farm for $80 and two hours of your time
Decrease your marketplace liability by increasing your knowledge of food safety

If your farm does any wholesaling, or you’re looking to decrease the amount of time and money you spend on distribution and you’re looking for wholesale accounts, developing a food safety plan is essential. The plan itself will help you gain access to markets which would otherwise not buy your products, and is the key document needed when considering Good Agricultural Practices (GAPS) certification.

Most wholesale buyers are very interested in and concerned with food safety. The larger buyers require GAPS plans, and many of the smaller ones require a food safety plan. The industry is quickly changing now such that within a few years it is anticipated that GAPS certification will become far more pervasive for wholesale buyers, and the minimum of having a food safety plan may even be a prerequisite for entering into certain farmers markets!

In an effort to help more farms get a customized and sensible food safety plan written down and prepare for their future marketing, we are offering a flat-rate assistance program. This is essentially an economy-model plan that is customized to your farm and will help you increase the quality and safety of your product. The fee for the basic food safety plan assistance program is $80. This is broken down into two parts:

◊ 2 hour on-site consultation to review field operations, packing house, storage, and transport
◊ Drafting of customized plan and relevant record and procedure sheets mailed or sent by email after the consultation

If further assistance is required to prepare you for a GAPS or other food safety audit (SQF, Global GAP, BRC, etc.) we will be available to help you. Please contact Erik Schellenberg at 845-344-1234 or jkochosc@cornell.edu

Sweet Corn Pest Trap Catches
(Last Week ending 7/27/15, This Week ending 8/3/15)

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2015 Weather Table—The weather information contained in this chart is compiled using the data collected by Network for Environment and Weather Applications (NEWA) weather stations and is available for free for all to use. For more information about NEWA and a list of sites, please visit http://newa.cornell.edu/ This site has information not only on weather, but insect and disease forecasting tools that are free to use.

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<td>Montgomery</td>
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<td>0.66</td>
<td>17.61</td>
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<td>1330.5</td>
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<td>12.92</td>
<td>7.27</td>
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<td>Peru</td>
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<td>1500.6</td>
<td>1459.0</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>15.94</td>
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<td>Red Hook</td>
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<td>1770.5</td>
<td>1703.6</td>
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<td>15.19</td>
<td>11.433</td>
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<td>11.02</td>
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<td>N. Adams, MA</td>
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<td>1386.0</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>15.14</td>
<td>18.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danbury, CT</td>
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<td>1692.6</td>
<td>1552.2</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>16.31</td>
<td>19.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Na1: The Fishkill site is new for 2015 so there is no historical data to report.
Na2: The Guilderland weather station was not properly reporting precipitation data in 2014 so no data will be shown for this site.
*: Precipitation data for this site did not began until May of 2014.

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