Carol MacNeil Retiring After 40 Years as an Extension Educator

Julie Kikkert, CCE Cornell Vegetable Program

Our teammate, mentor, and friend Carol MacNeil is retiring from Cornell Cooperative Extension after 40 years of service effective October 1, 2016.

After completing a B.A. in Biology and Education from SUNY-Buffalo and her M.S. in Vegetable Crops and Soils from Cornell University, Carol was hired by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County in 1976 as a vegetable extension agent. As one of the pioneering women in this position, she gained the respect of growers, faculty, and industry colleagues through her knowledge, hard work and sincere desire to improve vegetable production on local farms.

Carol’s responsibilities grew as she became part of the Ontario-Wayne-Yates-Steuben regional team, and then as a member of the 12-county Cornell Vegetable Program. Always seeing challenges and looking for ways to help, Carol
The newsletter is a service to our enrollees and is intended for educational purposes, strengthening the relationship between our enrollees, the Cornell Vegetable Program team, and Cornell University.

We’re interested in your comments. Contact us at: CCE Cornell Vegetable Program 480 North Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14424 Email: cce-cvp@cornell.edu

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Information provided is general and educational in nature. Employees and staff of the Cornell Vegetable Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Cornell University do not endorse or recommend any specific product or service.

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Help us serve you better by telling us what you think. Email us at cce-cvp@cornell.edu or write to us at Cornell Vegetable Program, 480 North Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14424.

Over 1,000 lbs of tomatoes on our last harvest from our 2016 variety trial, September 13, 2016.

Photo: Darcy Telenko, Cornell Vegetable Program

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The next issue of VegEdge will be produced in 2 weeks, October 5, 2016. After that, we will return to our monthly format through the rest of the year and early next year.

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has led the way in many initiatives such as her recent focus on improved soil health, production and pest management of dry beans and potatoes, and improving growers’ ability to forecast and manage late blight disease.

Although we can never fill Carol’s shoes completely, her duties will be divided amongst CVP team members, with the NYS IPM program and Cornell Faculty assuming some of the research responsibilities. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Team Leader, Julie Kikkert.

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Do You Have Swede Midge? New Pest of Brassicas Often Misdiagnosed

Christy Hoepting, CCE Cornell Vegetable Program

Now is a good time to scout for swede midge

Swede midge (SM) is a tiny fly that seeks out the growing points of brassicas in which to lay its microscopic-sized eggs, which hatch into tiny larvae whose toxic saliva causes a series of abnormal growth. Only plants belonging to the brassica families are hosts to swede midge, including cultivated brassicas, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, turnips, kale, kohlrabi, etc. as well as canola and brassica weeds (e.g. Shepherd’s purse and wild mustard). With multiple generations per year that are active from May until October, a SM population can build tremendously within a single growing season, provided they have a suitable host to flourish. It’s possible that a virtually undetectable SM population this spring has exploded to cause noticeable damage by now. Unfortunately, SM damage is often misdiagnosed and farms experience economical crop losses before they realize that swede midge is the cause. Since SM larvae are currently still quite active, now is a good time to scout for SM on your farm. Also check out the side blurb on detecting SM in kohlrabi.

Do any of these symptoms look familiar?

- **Leaf puckering and crinkling** type of damage is caused by earlier SM feeding that the plant is growing out of, so you tend to see it on middle-aged leaves (Fig. 1).
- **Disfigured or blind heads (no growing point)** are also readily recognizable symptoms of SM damage (Fig. 2). In crops such as broccoli or cauliflower where the head portion of the plant is marketed, this type of injury has the most economical impact.
- **Sometimes when the growing point is damaged by SM when the plant is fairly young, it results in**

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Figure 1. Leaf puckering and crinkling caused by swede midge in broccoli (left) and cabbage (right). Photos from swede midge information for the U.S. website.

Figure 2. Swede midge feeding damage on growing tip of broccoli can cause deformed (left) or blind (right) heads. Such damage is associated with brown corky scarring. Photos: C. Hoepting

Figure 3. Swede midge feeding on growing tips of young plants can result in multiple shoots (left in broccoli) or heads (right in cabbage). Photos: J. Kikkert
multiple side shoots/heads (as with cabbage) (Fig. 3).

- Unfortunately, brassicas are naturally inclined to morph when injured, so swede midge is easily confused with other causes that cause similar types of injury. **The key is to find brown corky scarring in association with these types of injuries** (Fig. 2 right).

**Another key is to find the larvae.**

Larvae can be very tricky to find, because often the larvae are no longer present in the growing points that have the best injury symptoms. After feeding for about one month, SM larvae drop to the soil to pupate before they emerge as adults and begin another life cycle. Larvae will be feeding in the growing tips of the plant; look for swollen petioles and minor twisting, puckering and/or scarring (Fig. 4). Pluck the suspicious growing tip from the plant and begin to peel each leaf off one by one. When SM larvae are feeding, the growing tip is often moist. Larvae are often found in the leaf axils (Fig. 5). SM larvae are tiny and only 3-4 mm in size at maturity. They are nondescript (no mouthparts, legs, tail pipes, wings, etc.) and initially translucent/whitish, but become increasingly more yellow in color as they mature and get ready to drop to the soil to pupate. You may need a hand lens to see them.

**Check the broccoli and Red Russian kale for SM first.**

In our studies, we have found that broccoli and Red Russian kale tend to be infested with SM to a greater extent than other brassica crops. Alternatively, Asian brassicas such as Chinese cabbage, and winterbor kale tend to have much less SM infestation and damage.

**What to do if you have swede midge?**

The most important management strategy for controlling SM is to disrupt its life cycle. This can be done in a number of ways. First, know that where you have an infested brassica crop in the fall is where the SM are going to emerge the following spring. Thus, you want to break up their life cycle by not providing the overwintering generation with a suitable host first thing in the spring. **Far and widely spaced crop rotations work best.** Second, a SM-infested brassica crop should be destroyed as soon as possible after harvest is complete. This will prevent further buildup of the SM population, because otherwise it will thrive on all the secondary side shoots that are produced once the main harvest is completed.

**Small-scale organic growers are most at risk for economic losses from SM.**

First, organic vegetable farms tend to have a relatively small land base, sometimes less than 2 acres, which is simply not enough area for crop rotation to be effective. Second, conventional production of Cole crops allows for the use of several insecticides that are very effective in keeping SM below economically damaging levels. Unfortunately, none of the OMRI-listed insecticides that have been tested are effective against SM. Diversified vegetable farms also have multiple plantings of brassicas in close proximity from early spring to late fall and constantly have a suitable host for SM to flourish.

**Recently, the Cornell Vegetable Program has been studying swede midge population dynamics as related to management practices on small-scale organic farms.**

As part of this study, we are also investigating the feasibility of using **insect exclusion netting with very promising results.** Much more information on the results of this project and consequent new management strategies will become available over the next year.

For more information, or if you would like help confirming whether you have swede midge, contact Christy Hoepting (cah59@cornell.edu; 585-721-6953) and/or visit the SM information site for the US: [http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/ent/swedemidge/](http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/ent/swedemidge/).
DIAGNOSIS OF
SWEDE MIDGE in Kohlrabi

It is not uncommon for kohlrabi to crack/split and have ugly brown scarring (Fig. 1). Some of the splitting could certainly be caused by growth spurts or other (un)known factors. However, this type of damage may also be caused by swede midge. To know for certain requires closer inspection. Look for leaf puckering and brown corky scarring, especially along the leaf axils or petioles (Fig. 2). If possible, see if you can find the larvae. Look for a suspicious growing tip (Fig. 3); then peel back the leaves and look for the larvae (Fig. 4).

Figure 1. Cracked/disfigured and scarred kohlrabi may be caused by swede midge. Photos: C. Hoepting, CVP

Figure 2. To confirm that cracking of kohlrabi is caused by swede midge, look for more diagnostic damage of SM, including leaf puckering (left) and brown corky scarring (right). Photos: C. Hoepting, CVP

Figure 3. This kohlrabi may be infested with swede midge: brown corky scarring in leaf axil(s) (yellow circle), petioles on growing point are slightly swollen (yellow arrow), and there appears to be some scarring inside the growing point (blue arrow). Photo: C. Hoepting, CVP

Figure 4. Peel back the leaves of the suspicious growing tip and look for SM larvae. Photo: C. Hoepting, CVP
Eight sites reported this week for Western NY. European corn borer (ECB)-E was not caught at any of the reporting sites this week and ECB-Z was caught at only two sites. Corn earworm (CEW) and fall armyworm were caught at seven sites. The average FAW has increased greatly from last week primarily due to the counts from the King Ferry site. All seven CEW sites were high enough to require a 4, 5, or 6 day spray schedule (see table at bottom of post). Western bean cutworm (WBC) was caught at only one site.

Has Wildlife Damaged Your Vegetable Crop this Season?

We know wildlife has wreaked havoc in many crops, Darcy Telenko is collecting damage estimates and would appreciate your feedback. Please fill in the table below with as much information as possible if you have had damage and are willing to share. The table can be emailed Darcy at dep10@cornell.edu, faxed 716-652-5073, or mailed to CCE Cornell Vegetable Program, Attn: Darcy Telenko, 21 S. Grove Street, East Aurora, NY 14052.

Average sweet corn trap catches for all reporting sites from 5/31/16 - 9/20/16.
Weather More Favorable for Late Blight / Use the BlightPro DSS
Carol MacNeil and John Gibbons, CCE Cornell Vegetable Program

This is my last Late Blight update in VegEdge since I’ll be retiring October 1st. Many other CVP staff have expertise in LB, and some have used the BlightPro Decision Support System (DSS). Their contact information is on the back of each VegEdge issue. I have sincerely enjoyed working with you on prompt communication regarding LB outbreaks, and on better LB control with the best fungicides and the latest, most comprehensive and site specific forecast tool, BlightPro, the late blight Decision Support System (DSS). I wish you only good weather and the best of luck in the future. (C. MacNeil, CVP)

While the weather, and thus BlightPro DSS blight units, and fungicide (loss) units, returned to the summer pattern two weeks ago, recent rains and high humidity have been more favorable for late blight (LB) development in the past week. Nearly all of the weather station sites are at or over the 30 Blight Unit (BU) threshold, or will be after another day, indicating the need for a fungicide spray. Of those sites that have not reached the threshold a few have failing relative humidity (RH) sensors and are not reading accurately. The Elba RH sensor will be replaced this week. The Lyndonville, Lodi Standing Stone, and the Medina RH sensors are also failing and need replacement. For those using the full BlightPro DSS forecast, if you question the accuracy of your blight units (BU), check on the RH sensor at your weather station site. Go to your Input/Reports page and click on Weather Reports (below the Fungicide Record). If the RH doesn’t have at least several hours above 85% RH during a rain event then it’s likely failing.

There are no new reports of LB in NYS or in surrounding states or provinces in the past week.

It’s important that you learn about the BlightPro DSS forecast over the winter so you can use it on your farm next season. It’s much more accurate than going by the “seat of your pants” or the experience of the past, since no two years are ever alike. In 2016 those who followed the BlightPro DSS likely saved many sprays. In wetter years those who used the system may have sprayed more often than their neighbors, with better timing, or with longer lasting fungicides, and had better results.

Here are your options for using LB forecasting in the future, with the BlightPro Decision Support System (DSS):

- The BlightPro DSS website at: http://blight.eas.cornell.edu/blight/, watch training videos (available soon), or consult with CVP/CCE/IPM staff who’ve been trained. You must first get a username/password from one of the forecast developers, Ian Small, at ismall@ufl.edu Your varietal susceptibility and your fungicide choices are included in the calculation for the spray threshold. Overhead irrigations can also be added. Both recent blight favorability and fungicide weathering from weather station data, as well as a forecast for a spray threshold coming up in the next few days based on your field location and National Weather Service point forecasts, are provided. Text/email Alerts for your fields can be set up to give you advance warning of spray thresholds anticipated.

- The quick Critical Threshold Tool at: http://blight.eas.cornell.edu/blight/upstate for Western NY and the Finger Lakes Region. Note that only weather stations sites are considered. No username/password is needed. To use it click on the nearest weather station, then find the date of your last fungicide application in the top menu. In the left menu find the fungicide you last used and select the susceptibility of your variety. The intersection of your last spray date and the fungicide used/varietal susceptibility, is the suggested date for your next fungicide application. The numbers in red only indicate recent, more accurate weather forecast information.

- The BlightPro DSS-lite forecast on IPM’s NEWA website at: http://newa.cornell.edu/ Note that chlorothalonil is the assumed fungicide, and forecasts are only available for weather station sites. No username/password is needed. Click on Crop Pages in the top menu, then your crop, Potatoes or Tomatoes. Then Click on Tomato or Potato Disease Models. Answer the questions. Note that a forecast is given for both early blight and late blight. The first number highlighted in red for LB is the threshold for a fungicide spray. The date above it is when the next spray for LB should be applied.

- Video: How to use the BlightPro Decision Support System forecast (coming soon!). This series of short videos leads you step by step through setting up your fields and crops on the BlightPro DSS website, and demonstrates using it to make LB control decisions. You don’t need a username/password to watch the videos, but you do need a BlightPro username/password from Ian Small at ismall@ufl.edu to actually log in to the website to get set up.

Don’t forget the usablight.org website at: http://usablight.org/ There are current reports of LB confirmations by the county, state/province, instructions on how to sample, handle and ship potential LB samples, and a brief video about BlightPro DSS.
DRY BEANS
This is my last Dry Bean update in VegEdge since I’ll be retiring October 1st. My final report on the Western bean cutworm (WBC) trapping and scouting project will appear in a future issue. Marion Zuefle, NYS IPM Program, can coordinate WBC trapping in dry beans next year, as she does for sweet corn now. Julie Kikkert, CVP Processing Vegetable Specialist, will now cover dry beans in general. You can contact her at 585-394-3977 x404, or jrk2@cornell.edu. I have sincerely enjoyed working with all the members of the NYS dry bean industry, and wish you only good weather, safe harvest, and the best of luck in the future! (C. MacNeil, CVP)

While the recent rain will help to replenish soil water it will only benefit the growth and development of the very latest crops. Regrowth should be expected on dry beans that are maturing and beginning to dry down, especially since a full set of full pods is likely not present. Defoliation may be needed for regrowth as well as for escaped weeds.

Now is a good time to note the weeds that are present in your dry bean fields. Weed seed is notably long-lived, and perennial weeds stay right where they are without a dedicated, multi-year program to clean them up. Note which weeds escaped your weed control program this year, as well as the weather conditions which contributed to it (dry surface soil after application, etc.). Make notes on the location as well as the species of perennials. In the future, when you’re planning to plant dry beans back into that field take a look at those records. If the perennials haven’t been cleaned up you may decide not to plant dry beans in that field. Your standard annual weed control program may be inadequate if you get too much or too little rainfall. Have a back-up plan, such as a post-emergence herbicide or cultivating, so you’ll have fewer escapes in the future.

FRESH MARKET FIELD NOTES
Brassica pests are in full force. Flea beetles in young greens plantings and plenty of cabbage worm complex going after kale and other plantings.

With the wetter conditions, slugs are also kicking up and a lot of damage has been seen almost overnight.

Stink bugs are also attacking peppers and tomatoes in greater numbers causing mostly cosmetic damage.

Powdery mildew on winter squash and pumpkins still should be kept at bay. With the warm and sunny conditions, a new flush of fruit has been seen coming on and there still may be enough time for mature fruit to be harvested. Keeping the canopy going a little while longer will enhance this. Having extra fruit to harvest and sell will help make up for some of the losses seen this season.

An observation on cucumbers. Where good downy mildew management was in place, cucumbers are still being harvested. In our trial with a DM resistant variety, plants are still in good shape and producing fruit with little or no sprays. DMR 264 has performed well in our small trials this season. The full report will be coming out later this fall.

POTATOES
This is my last Potato update in VegEdge since I’ll be retiring October 1st. A committee of growers, including ESPG Assoc. reps, and CCE/CVP staff, will be meeting this fall/winter to determine potato extension programming in Western NY and the Finger Lakes Region. Other CVP staff have spent time with me in potato fields, many have potato experience, and they will be answering potato questions in the interim. Their contact info is on the back of VegEdge. I have sincerely enjoyed working with all the members of the NYS potato industry, and wish you only good weather, a safe harvest, and the best of luck in the future! (C. MacNeil, CVP)

Vines are maturing and dying, and growers are harvesting. Be sure to wait until all foliage and vines are dead, brown and dry before harvest to avoid any late blight (LB) infection. Of greater concern at this time may be Pythium leak (PL) development after harvest or after marketing, due to the hot, humid weather. Harvest and handling result in bruises and skinning. The PL organism is ready to invade the broken skin. PL first causes disease, firm but watery tissue, then bacterial soft rot comes in. Development is faster with higher temperatures. Curing potatoes to heal these breaks in the skin to keep out pathogens occurs best at temperatures below 60°F, with good air movement. Recent weather has not provided such conditions. In addition, if you are washing tubers prior to storing or bagging, the high relative humidity has slowed drying time. Be sure you have new foam rollers to remove as much water as possible after washing, then be sure there’s lots of air movement to completely dry the tubers. Make sure they’re completely dry before putting into storage or bagging!

Cornell plant pathologists Keith Perry and Meg McGrath inform me that there is no public list of potato seed growers traced to blackleg Dickeya infection. To reduce the risk of this disease be sure to buy certified seed and demand a North American Certified Seed Potato Health Certificate for each seed lot to check for any blackleg detections during field or winter inspections. Accept no seed from any seed grower traced to Dickeya this year or at any time in the past. Talk to other growers to ask if they had Dickeya infection and find out where they bought their seed so you can steer clear of those growers. Luckily Dickeya is not a long lived pathogen in the soil, though it can probably last from one year to the next. Finally buy seed from multiple sources (Maine, NY, Canada, etc.) and multiple growers, to hopefully spread the risk. State seed certification agencies and researchers are working on this problem but currently there is no good way to screen for it. The pathogen can be latent, present but inactive, when the tuber or plant are at cool temperatures.

The symptoms of Potato Virus Yntn, which causes Potato Tuber Necrotic Ringspot Disease (PTNRD) on susceptible varieties are being seen on the variety Nadine on Long Island. It was a first seen in our area a few years ago on Yukon Gold, a very susceptible variety, causing up to 25% culls. From Sandy Menasha, CCE Suffolk Co, Long Island Fruit and Vegetable Update, 9/15 – To reduce the risk of PTNRD choose varieties that aren’t susceptible, if possible, and buy certified seed with North American Certified Seed Potato Health Certificate paperwork. Ideally there should be no detected PVY in the seed lot. 2% PVY in the seed can result in up to 20% infection of daughter tubers in the field, and 5% PVY in the seed can lead to as much as 50% infected daughter tubers.
Weather Charts
John Gibbons, CCE Cornell Vegetable Program

Weekly Weather Summary: 9/13 – 9/19/16

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Accumulated Growing Degree Days (AGDD)
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* Airport stations
** Data from other station/airport sites is at: [http://newa.cornell.edu/](http://newa.cornell.edu/) Weather Data, Daily Summary and Degree Days.
VegEdge is the award-winning newsletter produced by the Cornell Vegetable Program in Western New York. It provides readers with information on upcoming meetings, pesticide updates, pest management strategies, cultural practices, marketing ideas and research results from Cornell and Cornell Cooperative Extension. VegEdge is produced every few weeks, with frequency increasing leading up to and during the growing season.