

June 27, 2020

Pest Alerts... PAY ATTENTION to **Onion thrips**- avoid letting these get out of hand; Misshapen **garlic scapes?**- could be **Anthraxnose** (see below); lower yellow leaves on garlic could be **Fusarium**- pull and check for rot on the basal plate- these should be scrapped; **Cercospora leaf spot** continues on beets; **Potato leafhoppers** very busy on **Snap Beans, Potatoes**, and now young **Egg-plant**- can really slow down young plants trying to get going- avoid letting **hopper burn** get started, and if you are seeing a lot of nymphs on the undersides of leaves, burn is on the way; **tarnished plant bugs** are now very much out and about- they feed in terminals of potatoes and others; **Gold Flecking** on tomato fruits seen in high tunnel potted tomatoes (see below); **Caterpillars** are out on **Brassicas**- check for worms on youngest leaves, don't let 'em take you by surprise; **striped cucumber beetles** are now causing bacterial wilt of cucumber, probably summer squashes, too; **Rhizoctonia bottom rot** seen on **lettuce**- brown or rusty lesions at the base of plants- upright lettuces less susceptible; potato sprout emergence problems with our potato growers- could be drought + herbicide interaction... unknown; **Corn worms**- **European corn borer** trap catches peaking many places, and so, therefore, is egg laying... don't overlook your **Dahlias**! **HEY: WATER DEEPLY!**

The Latest COVID-19 Resources: <https://web.uri.edu/coopext/coronavirus-resources/>

--> Need to discuss? Got something you need looked at? URI Extension: 401-874-2967/andy_radin@uri.edu, hfaubert@uri.edu

Being seen around New England: Anthrac-

Does your garlic have it, too? Let us know, please. Heather Faubert actually diagnosed this on a RI farm just about exactly two years ago to the day. A grower in Coventry sent photos the other day of what looks exactly like what Heather saw, and also just like what all of our vegetable crops extension colleagues around New England and New York are sending around. Why the sudden common occurrence? Who can say. Key points: 1) it attacks the scapes (making them unmarketable) and bulbils; 2) it has **no effect on bulbils**. If your scapes emerged looking distorted and then had orange patches of spores, you've got it. It turns out that oddly enough, this same pathogen is what causes anthracnose of celery- also known as Celery Leaf Curl. I see that on almost everyone's celery every year, though there's a crop growing in a high tunnel this year that, so far, hasn't shown any signs of it. If you see this disease and you grow garlic as well, are you seeing it on both crops? Many would like to know. (Photos thanks to Julie Macomber Pierson of Macomber's Blueberry Farm in Coventry.)



★ **STAR FARMER: Hocus Pocus Farm, Seekonk** ★

Our **first star farmer for 2020** is the re-energized operation known as **Hocus Pocus Farm**. Started in 2016 by Sophie Soloway in **Chepachet**, she picked up her tomato stakes and moved out to the multi-operational Osamequin Farm in Seekonk, MA. While keeping her small scale farming endeavor going, she was also working away at her R.N. degree at CCRI. Now that she has completed it and is working as a nurse, she has reduced her involvement and invited two women with diverse farm experiences to largely operate it in its second year at the new location.



Sylo Cermak and **Sasha Wolfe** are working very hard on the one acre patch that they are renting at Osamequin. Living in nearby Providence, they make the commute out across the border to tend their very healthy looking crops. They know a lot more about what they are doing than they let on... their experiences on other farms shows in the thought they give to each of the vegetable and flower crops they grow. It's all very impressive.

They had originally planned on a 40-share CSA, but as is so common in this truly incomparable year of 2020, demand for shares was intense and so they decided to expand to allow 60.

That's kind of a risky thing to do in your first production year on your own but they are up to the task and



Sasha and Sylo are using heavy plastic tarps to prepare ground, and they are very effective in current conditions.

they probably have a lot of excited shareholders. There are several other farm operations at Osamequin, so insect pests are shared all around. They have been diligently using row covers and applying materials for control where absolutely necessary. It looks like they will have conquered most of their serious weed problems by next year.

Here's to their great success in Year One!



Report from Middletown: Heat, CPB, and Prostrate Pigweed at Garman Farm

The last two weeks have marked the hottest and driest run we can ever remember for mid to late June, and we hope that it is not a sign of what lies ahead this summer. We have not seen rain on Aquidneck Island for a solid thirteen days, so we are juggling irrigation across our five acres. Do any of you find that drip under plastic needs extra attention in the heat? We've noticed that ours tends to twist up or shrink, and it seems like we are always yanking it from the ends to make sure it stays in place.

The blast of hot weather was not the greatest climate for peas to come as they flowered. English peas (Green Arrow) gave up the ghost early, despite steady irrigation. For some reason, Sugar Snaps seemed less troubled by the temperatures, and we are picking those as fast as we can. Heat-loving crops are in their glory, with sweet potatoes ready to run and watermelon creeping across the mulch. And it has been terrific weather for cultivating and reducing weeds. Everything looks pretty clean right now, although we still struggle with purslane, pigweed, and prostrate pigweed (*Amaranthus blitoides*), which came in on an unfortunate load of compost two years ago and has taken off with vigor.

Pests: striped cucumber beetles finally made a late appearance yesterday (26 June). Cabbage moth pressure remains high, but flea beetles are almost nowhere to be seen at the moment. Colorado Potato Beetles are out in droves; we use the UMass scouting sheet to evaluate the spray threshold, and we finally hit it this week. We are alternating Entrust with our last stock of Trident to try to manage resistance. We are seeing their egg masses on everything (potatoes, eggplant, husk to-

matoes, even tomatoes) but the only damage so far has been on potatoes.

Finally, a lesson for us on intercropping cash crops and cover crops. We do double rows of potatoes on plastic, necessitating a three-foot spacing between beds. We didn't like all that bare soil and we had some buckwheat around, so we sowed that between the beds. It looked great but of course by last week it had outgrown the potatoes, so down it came, just before flowering. It looks like the roots will give us some mulch for a little while, anyway. Live and learn. Hope everyone is hanging in there, and that the thunderstorms predicted for this afternoon are not severe.



Your Input is Welcome

Please submit updates from your farm— a paragraph or two in an email is all it takes. Also, please submit suggestions for articles, meeting topics, and research needs from us at URI.

Gold Flecking on Tomatoes



This condition shows up every year at some point on some fruits in high tunnels. While this kind of disorder could possibly be caused by thrips feeding, it turns out that it usually isn't. Jerry Brust, IPM Vegetable Specialist at UMD, did a nice little write-up on this a few years ago. I will freely paraphrase his piece here.

Number one cause, according to his research and others, is high temperatures: >88° daytime and >68° nighttime. We've certainly had that inside of tunnels recently.

Second most common is feeding of thrips or two-spotted spider mites. There's no evidence of feeding by either of these on the foliage in this particular tunnel. (Photo thanks to Jake McNamarra, recent graduate of URI and former Coastal Fellow research assistant working with me in 2019.) The condition is induced on the fruit by foliar feeding— they don't actually feed directly on the fruit.

The actual flecking is calcium salt crystals that form in the fruits' epidermal cells. The third possible cause is related to this: excessive calcium and phosphorus. This wouldn't happen in field tomatoes, and there's less chance even in tunnel tomatoes grown directly in the soil. But these tomatoes happen to be growing

in pots, and so they are dependent on regular nutrient applications. It's possible that since I recently advised the grower to increase calcium because a fair amount of blossom end rot was being seen, this combined with the high temperatures may have brought this on. Needless to say, I have advised them to back down on the calcium!

New Disease: ToBRFV

Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus



This virus affects both tomatoes and peppers. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has put out a document on Quarantine Measures if it unfortunately arrives on your farm. It is a virus similar to Tobacco Mosaic Virus and Tomato Mosaic Virus and is

spread in the same way, which is through mechanical contact: tools and workers hands that break the leaf tissue cells.

While there are numerous tomato varieties that are tolerant to the other two viruses, none are known to tolerate ToBRFV. It's thought

that the virus can remain viable in soil, plant debris, and on stakes for quite a long time. There is also a report of spread by bumblebee pollinators, but not by aphids, leafhoppers, or whiteflies. Root-to-root transmission is also possible. It is apparently widespread in Mexico, and was in greenhouses in Arizona and California in 2018 and 2019, but was eradicated in both cases. It has not been found in Canada.

Could it wind up here? Plant materials do get transported great distances. Fruits reaching these parts could be infected, and who knows what could happen from there? So be worried, but don't be very worried.

