

WINE GRAPE INFORMATION FOR PENNSYLVANIA AND THE REGION

From Penn State Cooperative Extension

Note: The Soils Workshop in May has been postponed until July 20-21. Please mark these dates on your calendar! Sorry for any inconvenience.

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1. Cold Weather and Grapevines

You have probably heard that vineyards in VA and NC and around the midwest (the damage in TX according to my colleague Ed Hellman was severe) have been damaged by the recent cold weather. So far, from what I have seen vines in SE PA have not broken bud yet and seem to be unscathed. However, we have had a most unusual winter beginning with unseasonably warm weather into January followed by some very cold (into the single digits) temperatures in late Jan/Feb. Because vines were deacclimating from their winter cold hardy condition and many had pushed sap during the warm spike three weeks ago there is concern about damage to permanent vine tissue. Temperatures in Lancaster dropped as low as 26 in Lancaster but in higher elevations the temperature was certainly lower and while we didn't have green tissue exposed there might be injury to older vine parts. We will probably have to wait until summer to find out the extent of any damage that has occurred. My colleague at Virginia Tech, Dr. Tony Wolf has written an excellent assessment of the cold effects in his Mar/Apr Viticulture Notes which you can read at

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/news/periodicals/viticulture/07marapr/07marapr.html> . Since pruning is completed we just have to hope that bud numbers will suffice to carry a normal crop this year. We are hoping for the best here and wish the same for our colleagues to the south but this demonstrates once again the need to take all possible precautions, passive and active, to thwart the chances of cold injury to vines. Again, I urge all growers with at least five years of production history to consider getting crop insurance for the vineyard. *I'd like to thank Dr. Wolf for sharing his report with growers in Pennsylvania.*

2. Disease Workshop Report (attachment)

We received an excellent update on grape disease control from Dr. Jim Travis and his plant path team including Dr. Noemi Halbrendt, Bryan Hed and Brian Lehman. It was a

combination of reports on current and future research, fungal biology and specific recommendations for disease prevention and control. The meeting was punctuated by excellent questions and in-depth discussions about important topics related to grape diseases. I have attempted to summarize key points of the meeting in my notes. See attachment: Disease Workshop.

3. Spray Coverage (attachment)

This is a summary of a talk I presented at the grape disease workshop on spray coverage. If you want good control of diseases and insects using sprayed materials you must achieve good coverage. These tips might help you get there. See attachment: Spray Coverage

4. Clean Vines in Washington (attachment)

One of my dreams is to have a regional foundation plant program that produces vine materials that are certified to be free of diseases, viruses and other plant pathogens that so regularly afflict wine growers across the region. In particular leafroll virus, tomato ringspot virus, Petri diseases and crown gall need to be eliminated from our planting stock. As a conversation continues with a meeting in May at APHIS about developing a National Clean Plant Network I recently had a chance to visit the Northwest Foundation Plant Service, operated by Washington State University in Prosser, WA. I was impressed by the scope and quality of the operation and came away feeling very confident that such a facility could be developed in the Mid-Atlantic region to service our needs. I was even more impressed by the cooperation between state, federal, university to reestablish this long dormant program in Washington. It is a testimonial to the benefits of teamwork and vision. The technology and knowledge exist to set up a facility. What is needed is grass roots support to secure the funding for a foundation program that can be used to leverage industry, state and federal funds. It would be hard to underestimate the value of a source of clean vines for our industry in terms of impact on wine quality and profitability. We need to make more effort towards this goal. See attachment: Clean Vines

5. Weed Control in Vineyards (attachment)

Weeds are a reality in Eastern vineyards. For most growers herbicides are a necessary tool to control weeds but over time it may be possible to wean a vineyard from herbicides. At the vineyard development workshop two weeks ago we saw Jan Waltz's vineyard which has had no herbicides applied for the past six years and it was squeaky clean (it's clean in the summer, too). Young vines are particularly susceptible to competition for nutrients and water by aggressive weeds. In row middles broadleaf weeds can be hosts for viruses like Tomato Ringspot. Yet a diverse plant population can also help to increase the number and kinds of beneficial insects in a vineyard. So, as in most things in viticulture, there are tradeoffs and compromises to be made. The exception is new vineyards where good weed control is essential and not considered an option. Alice Wise and Andy Senesac at Cornell Cooperative Extension on Long Island offer some excellent information on the use of pre-emergence and post-emergence herbicides. These should be used very carefully and only according to the label

instructions. Be particularly careful in the choice and rates of herbicides for non-bearing vineyards. Soil and weather will have a direct impact on the efficacy of almost all herbicides. Some herbicides are restricted use only materials. Great care must be taken with all post-emergence herbicides to keep them away from new vine growth. *I'd like to thank Alice and Andy for letting me share their weed control information. See attachment: Weeds*

6. Updated Calendar of Vit-Enol Events (attachment)

Please note additional vineyard meeting in Virginia in upcoming months. The soils workshop in Lancaster has been postponed. A new date will be announced shortly. See attachment: 07 Calendar

Don't forget to register for the **Pennsylvania Wine Association annual meeting on Tuesday, April 24**. There is a terrific list of speakers including Jim Anderson from the Missouri Department of Agriculture and John Walker from Sheffey Integrated Marketing will talk about the business of wine. Jeanette Smith from VineSmith will talk about vineyard IPM and grower/winery relations. She has over 25 years of experience in vineyards and extension and is the grower liaison for Chateau Morrisette. Lorenza Conterno from Cornell will present her research on wine microbiology, a project funded by our PWMRP. It is a great opportunity to meet with your fellow wine growers, learn and enjoy good food and wine. The meeting is held at the Sheraton (formerly the Wyndham) east of Harrisburg just off of I-283. For registration and information please call the PWA office at 717-234-1844.

SW PA Wine Growers Meeting will be held on Friday, May 4th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the C.T. Miller Vineyard in Avella, PA. The day includes a vineyard and winery tour and presentations on disease and insect control, canopy management, winery sanitation and other practical topics. If you are a grower or winemaker in the SW region or considering starting a winery or vineyard this would be a very valuable meeting to attend. Please call Lee Young at the Washington County Cooperative Extension office for registration and information at 724-228-6881. Lunch will be provided.

Attachments:

[07Calendar_e.doc](#)

[SprayCoverage_e.doc](#)

[CleanVines_e.doc](#)

[DiseaseWorkshop_e.doc](#)

[Weeds_Apr07.doc](#)

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