

WINE GRAPE INFORMATION FOR PENNSYLVANIA AND THE REGION

From Penn State Cooperative Extension

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Canopy management: This is a best time of year to look at a wine grape vineyard. If the truth of a wine is in the bottle, then the truth of a vine can be seen right now after all the work of three months of fussing in the vineyard with leaves, shoots, clusters, disease, bugs, nutrition, etc has all culminated in what we see now. It was a gratifying experience to be in the vineyard of Jan and Kim Waltz in Manheim. It was an ideal place to see the principles of canopy management applied. Richard Smart, one of the founders of these important viticultural concepts came from Tasmania (via Georgia, the one at war) to share his knowledge and experience with growers. See attachment (without photos) or go to <http://winegrape.ag.psu.edu> for the story with pics.

Cold Climate Viticulture: Sometimes it is hard to connect research with direct results in the field. Grape breeding has been a strong field in the East and Midwest. If we think of workhorse varieties like Cayuga White and Traminette, it is easy to measure the impact of new varieties on the commercial wine industry. Elmer Swenson of Wisconsin and his capable successors at the University of Minnesota have developed a series of cold hard, short season varieties that have opened the door to a wine growing in a vast new area including colder parts of Pennsylvania. Thanks to Drs. Lorraine Berkett (UVM) and Becky Grube (UNH) I was able to travel to New England and taste some of the first commercial samples of these varieties. To say I was pleasantly surprised would be a serious understatement. See attachment (without photos) or go to <http://winegrape.ag.psu.edu> for story with pics.

Downy, Powdery, Botrytis, Rots and Hail

Geepers, creepers, what a summer so far. Another afternoon, another heavy thundershower in the Lancaster area. We are stuck in a low pressure cycle that doesn't seem to want to go away. These are the kind of conditions that make me appreciate the effects of rain shadows and wish we understood more about regional climate and geophysical dynamics. The only saving grace is some heat between storms that at least helps to push fruit maturity. Worst of all are some high wind and hail events that have affected many crops, including grapes. I visited one vineyard that is a total loss. If you measure the economic damage in terms of retail wine cost, it is staggering. There is not

much you can do about hail except pray and live a good, clean life. In Piedmont, growers have taken to putting up fine mesh bird nets over the fruit zone early in the season. It's a royal pain but if it is the difference between having wine and not having wine, you do it. If hail hits after veraison, the dangers of all the rot and fruit degradation organisms increases dramatically. It's a real battle to preserve wine quality. The best solution is, of course, dry weather but we have no control over that. Barring that occurrence, the usual rot control measures need to be implemented in full vigor. If damage is slight, cutting off affected berries/clusters may be a good strategy to preserve wine quality. An honest assessment of the fruit quality should be done and a decision if the wine has been too severely compromised. This is a very tough call to make and you definitely want to consult with wine makers if you are an independent vineyard. That means problems with foliar powdery mildew and downy mildew, especially as new leaves appear on "broccoli top" VSP. Some growers are running out of spray options. How many times have you hedged and sprayed this year already? That will give you an idea of the kind of year it has been. Now botrytis and all the berry threats begin to appear. Yellow jackets are always a wild card. Did you know that some of the finer mesh bird netting will exclude bees also? For DM the phosphorus acid products continue to be a good option - dilute to proper concentration to avoid burning foliage and fruit and beware of resistance issues with PAs. I hate recommending its use at any time of year but Captan has efficacy on DM and late season rots, which will probably be an issue this year if the weather does not change. Get ready to pull more leaves to get light/heat to the berries along with spray materials and aeration in the fruit zone. If you have reds that you care about and the color is uneven at almost full veraison it could not hurt to cut off pink clusters or parts of clusters. The vintage is mostly in the hands of Mother Nature now but there are small tweaks and adjustments that we can make to assure or even improve quality. It would be prudent to consider all of these the way this vintage is shaping up.

Here are some downy mildew control notes from Alice Wise and Wayne Wilcox at Cornell University that were published in mid-July:

Downy mildew protection for canopy: Proper hedging of the canopy is one of the best control strategies as it allows leaves to dry out more quickly. Thick canopies with bunched up shoots are candidates for DM infection, especially with dewy mornings. The lack of rain in July reduces but does not eliminate DM pressure. The humid, dewy mornings have stoked some infection. As 66 days restriction on mancozeb products starts to kick in, Ridomil Gold/Copper is still an option (42 day PHI). Copper products and the phosphorous acid products are both good options. Copper is a good protectant and can be tank mixed with sulfur. Advantages to the PA's are ease of use (liquids), translocation to younger and more DM susceptible foliage and post infection activity. These can also be tank mixed with sulfur. There have been a few reports of phytotoxicity from PA-sulfur tank mixes. Captan is a good protectant but does not offer post infection control. Should we get into extended wet conditions, captan has the advantage of providing good activity against most of the common non-Botrytis cluster rots that can occur under those conditions. Note that most labels have a 72 hr REI, down from 96 hrs. Ziram is another labeled protectant that offers DM control, although it is not as effective as captan. Abound and Pristine may provide decent DM protection, but are dangerous to rely on for

DM control if pressure is high, based on the increasing development of DM resistance to the strobies in other locations. (AW & WFW)

Wine Grape Production Guide Due Out This Fall - from Dr. Tony Wolf at Virginia Tech

This new book is an absolute MUST read for anyone who fancies his or herself as a commercial wine grower in the Eastern US. It is packed with excellent information for new and veteran growers alike. Please get multiple copies for yourself, vineyard manager, wine maker, etc.

NRAES is preparing to publish *Wine Grape Production Guide for Eastern North America* -- a comprehensive resource for novice and experienced growers, crop advisors, service providers, educators, communicators, and students. The book will be over 300 pages, with 174 color photos, 40 line drawings, 45+ variety descriptions, 42 tables, a key to insect and mite grape pests, and much more. For detailed information on the book and pre-printing opportunities, and to download a two-page flier and sample pages visit www.nraes.org. I call your attention to the book at this point because of the numerous requests for information about it and because NRAES offers a steep discount for pre-print orders for the book (32 to 40% discounts, depending on quantities ordered). **The pre-print ordering discount expires on 5 September 2008.** NRAES, housed at Cornell University, is an extension program sponsored by 11 Land Grant Universities. NRAES publishes practical, science- and experience-based, peer-reviewed books on a variety of subjects, including fruit and vegetable production; livestock and dairy; waste management; natural resources; landscaping; personal finance; and more.

Attachments:

What I Learned about MN Varieties in VT Vermont and NH

Richard Smart Workshop

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