

WINE GRAPE INFORMATION FOR PENNSYLVANIA AND THE REGION

From Penn State Cooperative Extension

Table of Contents

1. Upcoming Meetings: Farm Safety Day and New Grower Workshops in VA and PA
2. Harvest Update
3. Vintage 2012: The Future of Wine in PA Needs YOUR Support
4. Laser Planting in 2008? Call Me.
5. An Important New Book: Winter Injury to Grapevines and Methods of Protection
6. Harvest in Ontario: Three Great Wineries
7. NEW ITEM: Grape Exchange on the Wine Grape Network Web Site
8. Counterfeit Wines: Do you own a bottle labeled Th.J?

Farm safety is something a lot of wine grape growers take for granted, mostly because they didn't grow up on a farm. But there is a reason why farming is one of the most dangerous occupations in the country. As a farm manager, we never compromised on safety, holding weekly safety meetings with the crew and always reviewing and improving our practices. It's just not worth having an accident of any kind. It's all about preventative knowledge and training. I encourage all growers to review and improve their safety measures on the farm. One way to start doing that is to attend a Farm Safety Day in Wakefield, PA (southern Lancaster County) THIS Saturday, October 6 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. While the focus is on farm safety for kids, anyone who comes will learn a lot about:

- managing ag emergencies
- cpr
- tractor rescue and safety
- pto safety
- chemicals and poisons
- hidden hazards/confined spaces
- fire and burn prevention/safety
- ...lots more

The class is free. Call Judy Monk to register at 717-529-2816. It will be held at the Fire Station in Wakefield.

New Grower Workshops: November 14-15 in Southwest VA and November 16 at FREC in Biglerville, PA (attachment)

Dr. Tony Wolf (VA Tech), Fritz Westover (TX A&M) and Mark Chien (Penn State) are offering a one-day workshop for beginner and prospective wine grape growers at the Penn State Fruit Research and Extension Center in Biglerville, Pennsylvania (Adams County). This course offers an overview of commercial wine grape vineyard

development into the second year including vineyard economics and grape marketing, equipment needs, the basics of site selection and preparation, planting and new vine care. With the information you gain from this workshop you are prepared to make a decision about whether or not to plant a vineyard. It provides a foundation upon which you can build your vineyard project if you decide to proceed. Much more learning and experience is needed before the first vine is planted. Tony and Fritz have many years of research and extension experience with wine grapes in the region. Mark Chien offers a commercial grape growing perspective from his experience as a vineyard manager on Long Island and Oregon.

The format will be classroom lecture so come prepared to take notes. All presentations will be included on a CD. A recommended reading list is suggested below. We will have some time to spend in the research vineyard at the station.

The cost of the seminar is \$125. This includes lunch, breaks and workshop CD and handouts. Registration and information is available at <http://winegrape.ag.psu.edu/>.

What: New Grower Workshop
When: Friday, November 16, 2007
Place: Fruit Research and Extension Center, Biglerville, PA
Time: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Cost: \$125

SW Virginia Grape Grower's Conference. For those further south interested in wine growing - the Southwest Virginia Wine Grape Growers Conference on November 14-15 at the Quality Inn at the Roanoke Airport will cover new vineyard development topics. This will be team-led by VA Tech extension educators and includes a visit to a local vineyard. For more information please contact Jon Vest at 540-772-7524.

Harvest Update

Wine growers live for vintages like this. The sunny and dry days during the critical post-veraison period are what make the vintage. We got off to a bumpy start in April which is always a bit disturbing and had the typical wet, humid summer but then September arrived and so did the blue sky and sun. As a grower I always felt that no matter how rotten the first 2/3rds of the season were if the last third got its act together we had a shot at fine wines. Not that we are out of the woods, yet. Remember 2001? I'm definitely knocking on wood now. A hard frost on October 6 and 7 knocked the leaves off and forced the harvest. And we are still in the "er" months which means that storms are always a possibility. With late whites and reds still hanging out there we need a few more weeks of sun to get it all safely into the barn. But so far the reports and what I have seen in the field are very impressive. It's such a luxury to pick on ripeness rather than disease or other problems. So in a rare year like this I hope your palate is finely tuned towards full grape maturity and that you are letting all the potential goodness develop in the berries. This is not a defined state but rather a moving target that each wine maker

has to define. In any case, it takes experience and, if the wine maker and grower aren't the same person, lots of communication and tasting.

It is not as if we have been completely devoid of threats. Birds and bees are present but not in numbers of the past and complaints have been minimal. Disease levels are somewhat dependent on your rainfall amounts this summer and the quality of your disease control program. I'm learning that we seem to have rain patterns that, if consistent and predictable, make some sites preferable to others. Some day we have to understand this in choosing our best vineyard locations. Downy and powdery are likely to be the problem this season. Oddly, because of relatively poor set in many varieties due, I believe, to the bumpy weather at bloom, I've seen very little botrytis or even the secondary harvest rots. The vineyards smell good, which is always a comfort. I have seen some shriveling, I think mostly due to dessication but in a few cases it may be the odd malady of berry shrivel that has become increasingly problematic in many vineyard regions. The berry reaches 10-15 brix and simply stops all physiological processes - acid stays high, sugar low and they taste yucky. No one yet seems to know what causes it and researchers are working on the problem. It can affect a vine in one season and not the next. It can affect only a part of a vine. There is no pedicel necrosis, nor is it thought to be related to Bunch Stem Necrosis or sunburn. The only solution for now is to pick around the shriveled berries/clusters.

I have seen nutrient deficiencies, in some cases brought about by mild to moderate water stress. If you have leaves that are yellow with burnt margins then you have a problem and need to figure out how to address it. It may be that the crop load on the vine is too heavy for the amount of available water and canopy size. If this is the case you are compromising both fruit quality and cold hardiness potential. Here is where vine balance is so critical in every year - not just the wet, cool ones. Potassium deficiency seems to be the most prevalent problem in vines which is partly stress induced but you should take petiole tests next year just to check levels in the vines. Flag and make a record of those vine(s) that exhibit problems in the fall and address them next season. Dr. Mardi Longbottom gives some very helpful comments about vine nutritional requirements in the Oct07 Viticulture Notes from VA Tech, although I tend to prefer a cautious approach to nitrogen application. Dr. Tony Wolf comments on the appearance of increasing amounts of chronic vine problems such as viruses (ToRSV, leafroll), fungal trunk diseases (Petri, Bot canker) and other issues like winter injury, crown gall, grapevine yellows etc. that are cumulative in their destructive effects on vines as they get older. Old vines make fine wines but we have to get them to the point where they can be old. These vines need to be intensely managed or replaced at some point. Again, we are striving for uniformity in vineyard blocks and vines. Tony also published the spray program used at the Winchester AREC research vineyard which was very effective this year. If you had problems with disease, look at this spray program. Yes, it was a drier than normal year but understanding their selection and materials and rates will help you to better protect your assets next season.

The comments about early varieties like Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from Pinnacle Ridge and Chaddsford are exciting. There is merit to these earlier ripening varieties although

site suitability is still absolutely critical. It is clear, too, that the quality of viticulture makes a huge difference. If you want proof, just visit either of the two vineyards. But ultimately it is Mother Nature who determines the outcome and the final quality and this year it is very good. Conscientious disease control allowed the fruit to go the distance without being hampered by botrytis or secondary rots. The physiological breakdown that we often experience in wetter harvests did not happen, possibly due to the control recommendations from Dr. Jim Travis' pathology group but certainly enhanced by the good weather. Vigilance is necessary in the vineyard and the cellar even in the best vintages and certainly as this vintage proceeds.

Even though harvest is going full tilt it isn't too early to be thinking about post-harvest activities that might include: late season disease control, weed control, fertilizer application (foliar boron if there was deficiency this year), hilling up, nets off, equipment care, grape invoices delivered and visiting the wineries for an assessment of wines and the vintage. If you are planning to plant vinifera varieties/clones/rootstocks that are hard to find you will want to place your order this fall with the nurseries for 2009. This would also include popular hybrid varieties like Vidal Blanc.

Good luck with the balance of the vintage. All we need is another month of sunshine and ripe Cabernet Sauvignon.

Vintage 2012: The Future of Wine in Pennsylvania

Did you see on TV? Or hear about it on the radio? Let's make no mistake about it, this is a critical turning point for this wine industry. A few people have put a lot of effort into developing a plan that will help assure the future of wine growing in Pennsylvania. The effort was led by David Othmer of Haywagon Vineyard in Chester County, others participating in the core committee are Lee Miller, Fran O'Brien, Stephen Menke and Mark Chien in close cooperation with PWA and PAW. The plan asks for a 10 cent per gallon on all wines sold in Pennsylvania in the form of a redirect of funds from PLCB revenues to the state general fund. The rationale is that according to a recent MKF Research study the Pennsylvania wine industry contributes over \$661M in total economic impact to the commonwealth. With a modest investment from the state in viticulture and enology research and extension education and grape and wine marketing and promotion that the wine industry will double its impact by 2012. It's a good deal for all participants. A press conference and roll-out was held in the East Portico at the Capitol on Tuesday. The plan now needs to gain traction and support in the legislature through grass-roots efforts from everyone with a stake in the future and success of the wine industry. Many people have worked hard to promote the welfare of ALL Pennsylvania vineyards and wineries, particularly those who serve on boards of PWA, PAW, PWMRP and so many other low profile but essential groups that work in partnership with others to make ours a viable wine industry. But we need to do more if we are to keep up with aggressive expansion efforts in neighboring states, most notably Virginia, New York and Ohio. We are falling behind. If you believe in a unified and distinct wine community in Pennsylvania then you will get actively involved to make Vintage 2012 a success. A .pdf

copy of Vintage 2012 and the MKF Economic Impact Study are on the Wine Grape Network web site - <http://winegrape.ag.psu.edu/> . I would encourage you to read and react to both documents...then contact David Othmer or me or anyone else involved in 2012 for more information about how you can help!

Laser Planting: If you are planning to plant wine grapes in April/May, 2008 and wish to have a laser planting service do the work, please contact me with information about your planting plans. I am trying to coordinate the laser planting services for next spring. The sooner I know the better. Thank you

A New Book: Winter Injury to Grapevines and Methods of Protection

Edited by Tom Zabadal (MI State Univ) and co-authored by Tom Zabadal, Tim Martinson and Martin Goffinet (Cornell), Imed Dami (Ohio State) and Mark Chien (PSU) this book is a synthesis over 100 years of collective research and knowledge about the problem of winter injury. It is the closest thing I know of to a definitive text on the topic. Given the problems that vineyards have experienced over the past five years, including the Easter Freeze this spring, winter injury and cold hardiness continues to be an important topic for all growers to understand and practice. While we had series of mild winters from 1995-2003, recent winter injury events clearly indicate that we cannot rely on climate change to help get our tender varieties through the winter. In fact, winter injury may be the single most important limiting factor to high quality wine production, sustainability and profitability in Eastern North America. Because it is so unpredictable and random in its effects growers often do not pay close enough attention to managing it. But its severity can be managed if proper steps are taken. This book gives an excellent overview and explanation of how to understand, recognize, manage and recover from winter injury. While I had a minimal role in the development of the book, Tom Zabadal and his staff at MSUE were outstanding in pulling it all together. Dr. Martinson, Goffinet and Dami provided much of the critical information needed to make this book as contemporary and relevant as possible. I think every serious wine grower from Quebec to Georgia would benefit from reading this. The book is MSUE Extension Bulletin E2930 and can be ordered at <http://www.emdc.msue.msu.edu/viewitem.cfm?INVKEY=E2930>. The cost is \$15.

Ontario

I recently spent 2 days in the Niagara Peninsula where I visited three wineries: Les Clos Jordanne, Tawse and Hidden Bench. In the wine industry, quality is a very palpable thing and each of these wineries exude it from every aspect of the business - from farming to wine in the glass. The focus here is on great Pinot Noir and Chardonnay and, to a lesser extent but no less passionate, Bordeaux varieties and Riesling. With 12,000 acres of vinifera grapes in Ontario there is a real commitment to a wine industry. The climate in Ontario may be even more challenging than ours but the determination and results surpass our efforts. I always learn a lot when I go there and I would encourage

serious wine growers to make your own pilgrimage. You can read my notes and view some photographs at the Wine Grape Network Web Site - <http://winegrape.ag.psu.edu/>

Grape Exchange

This is a little late in arriving but if you have wine grapes to sell or need to buy check out the Grape Exchange tab on the Wine Grape Network Web Site. To enter information just click the "submit information" button and fill out the form. We'll post it as soon as possible. <http://winegrape.ag.psu.edu/>

Grapes for Sale: Peconic Bay Vineyards, Long Island

10 tons clone 124 at 4 tons per acre. 21+ Brix 3.4 PH.

10 tons clone 76 at 4 tons per acre 21+ Brix 3.4 PH

It should be noted that we will be using grapes from both clone blocks for our best wines; we simply have more than we can use.

We have 1 ton bins and a reliable trucker and while these grapes are worth the maximum the market will yield- we realize it is late and we will also discount generously on truckload orders- so if multiple growers can pool purchases on a 2-3 stop delivery- they will do quite well for themselves.

Price Per Ton: \$2,250 per ton, 10+ tons \$2,000 per ton. Truckload (about 20 tons) \$1,800 per ton.

MERLOT FOR SALE (Peconic Bay Winery voted Best Merlot in NY at the 2006 New York Wine & Food Classic.)

20 tons Clone 3 Pristine Condition (3.5 Tons Per Acre 1,089 Vines Per Acre (6.4 Lbs Per Plant)

Last Reading on 9/21 - Brix 21, PH 3.36, Fruit Zone de-leafed early, crop reduced early and netted early.

5 Tons or less-\$2,100, 10+ tons-\$2,000 per ton., 19 + tons-\$1,850. per ton.

We are well accustomed to catering to long distance purchases.

Grapes picked in the afternoon and evening will be on the crush pad early in the morning.

Matthew C. Gillies
Peconic Bay Winery
631-734-7361

The Most Expensive Wine: Th.J

If you have a break in harvest activities I read a very interesting article in the New Yorker magazine recently about expensive wine fraud. It is a side of our industry that most of us never experience or even think about but it is nevertheless intriguing. Tracking down counterfeit bottles of wine signed Th.J reads like a good detective novel. It is a shady

side of our occupation that exists very far from the vineyards and, hopefully, may eventually be a problem for us (just kidding)..(I think)!

The Jefferson Bottles by Patrick R. Keefe -

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/09/03/070903fa_fact_keefe

Note: to find items associated with this newsletter on The Wine Grape Network web site please go to <http://winegrape.ag.psu.edu/> and click on Wine Grape Information E-Newsletter and go to October 2, 2007. It might take 1-2 days for the items to post. Thanks for your patience.

Attachments:

[2007 New Grape Grower Workshop in Biglerville.pdf](#)

[Vintage 2012_PWA.pdf](#)

[MKF PA Impact Study Oct 2006.pdf](#)

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