



# Nebraska VineLines

UNIVERSITY OF  
Nebraska Lincoln EXTENSION

University of Nebraska Viticulture Program

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December 2023  
Issue XXVI - 7

## VINTAGE 2023: THE HAY IS IN THE BARN (WINE IS IN THE TANKS)!

With the 2023 vintage now in the rear-view mirror, and by many reports it has been a good to very good year for Nebraska's grape and wine industry, now is the time to relax and enjoy the fruits of your labors, right? Whoa! Not so fast! Although there is much to celebrate, there's still work to be done. Obviously, follow-up with the myriad chores related to ongoing fermentations, perhaps barrel aging, and bottling are important tasks, along with marketing your great wines, but let's not forget the vines that got you to this point.



## IMPORTANT VINEYARD CONSIDERATIONS:

- Irrigation. As we are well aware, much of Nebraska is in various stages of drought. This means that the root zones may be dry, therefore irrigation to make sure that the vine roots are in good health to survive the winter and will have moisture to draw on as growth resumes in the spring. This is especially important for vineyards on sandy or excessively well-drained soils.
- Vineyard Hygiene. I know, I know. I harp on this every year, but remember a clean vineyard is a potentially healthy

vineyard. ("Cleanliness is next to godliness")?

- Remove and destroy prunings. This should already have been done, but better late than never. Why? Our old friend, the apple twig borer (aka grape vine borer) overwinters in dead vines that have been pruned off as part of normal winter/spring pruning practices. If prunings are left in or near the vineyard, the overwintering borer adults will emerge in the spring and re-infest the new growth, leading to broken canes and potential yield losses.
- Clean up mummies and debris. If clusters were left on the vines, or dropped on the vineyard floor – often a practice to eliminate "green" wine flavors from under-ripe fruit – they should be removed and destroyed, since they can be a source of inoculum for several fungal diseases such as Black Rot, Phomopsis, Botrytis and the mildews.
- Check trellises. Are there posts or wires that need repairs or replacement?
- While you are walking the vine rows, take note of any vines that need special or corrective pruning. Also, are there vines that need replacement?
- Ordering vines for replacements and/or new plantings. Vine nurseries are rapidly approaching the "sold-out" stage for many cultivars, so this is an important consideration.



What will 2024 bring? Will Nebraska wines again be in the forefront of award-winning wines at major competitions? Will there be late frost problems? Are we ready for another great vintage year? Be sure to have equipment repairs taken care of, plans for

**Items for your Calendar:**

**February 19, 2024,** NWGGA Annual Meeting, Graduate Hotel, Lincoln, NE, Contact Alyssa Brodersen at [alyssa@nebraskawines.org](mailto:alyssa@nebraskawines.org) for more information.

**February 19-20, 2024,** Ohio Grape + Wine Conference, Embassy suites Columbus/Dublin, Ohio. Contact Christy Eckstein for further information, Phone: 614-381-0412 Fax: 614-466-7754 [christy.eckstein@agri.ohio.gov](mailto:christy.eckstein@agri.ohio.gov).

**March 12-14, 2024** Eastern Winery Exposition, , Oncenter, Syracuse, NY , information about registration <https://easternwineryexposition.com/registration-2024/>

**May 17-18, 2024,** TOAST Nebraska, Stinson Park, Omaha, NE

pruning and harvest labor and equipment in place, and plants and needed equipment ordered so that you are ready for another great year in 2024.

Meanwhile, your University of Nebraska Viticulture Program personnel (Paul Read, Steve Gamet, Ben Loseke and Diane Nolan) wish you all a Happy Holiday Season and a prosperous New Year! We can hardly wait for the next great Nebraska wines to be released as we celebrate the holidays.



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