



UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Lincoln EXTENSION

**University of Nebraska Viticulture Program**

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### **19<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL FORUM “BEST EVER”!**

A long-time attendee appeared to be commenting on the Mechanization session as it concluded on Saturday afternoon at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Forum and Trade Show, saying “This is the best ever!” When I queried him about his comment, assuming that he was commenting on the Mechanization session, he said, “No, I mean the **entire** program!” In spite of some complications in the program, this attendee’s comments seemed to reflect the sentiments of many of those attending the conference. Indeed the conference was highly successful thanks to the efforts of many, including the Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Association (NWGGA). In reviewing the surveys turned in at the end of the conference, it was obvious that the participants benefitted from the information imparted by the talented speakers, including the Trade Show and Nebraska contributors. In addition to the Mechanization session, Dan McCole’s presentations on Marketing, Stacy Adams talk about the emerging Nebraska Hops industry, Tim Martinson and Jay Hardenberg’s comments on Vine Balance (the latter from a grower’s perspective), Michael Jones’ presentations on Making Fortified and Sparkling Wines, along with Cider Making were well-received topics. Significant interest was noted regarding Ph.D. student Ben Loseke’s research on Ground Covers and Scott Dvorak’s “Using Environmental Sensors to Increase Production” presentation. Other comments reflecting the attendees satisfaction with the conference included, “Networking was a plus!” and “I really like the session structure”.

Outstanding wines were sampled at the evening wine receptions, “The Other Big Red” on Thursday and

“White Night” on Friday evening. Additionally, Nebraska wines were matched exceptionally well by Marriott’s Chef Jason Volker for the Grand Awards Banquet. We were appreciative of UNL Vice Chancellor (now UNL Chancellor) Ronnie Green’s remarks at the banquet in which he lauded the growth in a sustainable way of the Nebraska grape and wine industry. Another feature of the banquet program was the awarding of the NWGGA Pioneer Award to Jim Danielson, former UNL faculty member and previous owner of Rock Bluff Vineyards near Plattsmouth.

Plans are well underway for the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Forum and Trade Show to be held March 2-4, 2017 at the Omaha Marriott Hotel. Michigan State University’s Paolo Sabbatini will be the featured viticulture speaker and former MSU professor Stan Howell, now the lead viticulture specialist for the VESTA program, will be the speaker at the Grand Awards Banquet. This is a real “One-Two Punch”, with Paolo’s breadth and depth of viticulture knowledge and Stan’s incredibly productive career accomplishments making for a great educational program; of course Stan will bring a thoughtful historical perspective, along with his great sense of humor to the table, so it promises to be an outstanding conference. More program details will soon be available, so SAVE THE DATES, MARCH 2-4, 2017.

### **ANOTHER CHALLENGING YEAR?**

In spite of the relatively mild winter, we aren’t out of the woods yet! Our typical “roller coaster” temperature ride through the late winter and into spring has provided reason to worry about the potential damage that could occur if one or more late cold temperature events should occur. My observations so far indicate

that most cultivars in Eastern Nebraska still are in Bud Swell (E-L stage 2) or Woolly Bud (E-L stage 3). Bud break is usually considered to be E-L stage 4, Green Tip, when green leaf tissue is visible, followed by stages 5-7 (when the first leaf is separated from the shoot tip). As might be expected, relative vulnerability to cold temperature events (frosts or freezes) increases with increasing E-L stage. My colleague Joe Fiola, University of Maryland Viticulture Specialist just sent in his “Timely Tips” message to the Maryland growers a great summary of how to approach both recognition of, and dealing with, cold temperature events. Even though many of his growers are growing vinifera grapes (you can ignore his comments about the graft union), his information and recommendations are just as meaningful for Nebraska and Midwest grape growers. He also has provided some useful links that are worth reviewing as you educate yourselves about dealing with the threat of cold damage.

#### **TIMELY TIPS from Joe Fiola**

Obviously the topic of the week has been frost and freeze damage. Many locations have experienced low temperatures in the 21F to 25F range which likely resulted in some level of primary bud damage. Another event is forecast for this weekend. I have forwarded some info from viticulture specialists in the region to keep you abreast of the current thinking.

I have just pulled together a new TimelyVit to specifically address the topic, the third in an important series on understanding and assessing grapevine bud and wood damage. This NEW TimelyVit is entitled: **Understanding Grapevine Frost/Freeze Damage**. Please see below for some timely information that can hopefully be helpful to you when understanding the many facets of grapevines surviving freezing events.

Also below are the two updated predecessors in the series on **Understanding Grapevine Bud Damage and Assessing Grapevine Bud Damage** that can hopefully be helpful to you when assessing bud damage and making final pruning decisions.

#### **Understanding Grapevine Frost/Freeze Damage**

**HTML Page:**

<http://extension.umd.edu/learn/understanding-grapevine-frostfreeze-damage>

**PDF Format:**

[http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/\\_docs/articles/TVUnderstandingGrapevineFrostFreezeDamage\\_0.pdf](http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/_docs/articles/TVUnderstandingGrapevineFrostFreezeDamage_0.pdf)

#### **Understanding Grapevine Bud Damage**

**HTML Page:**

<http://extension.umd.edu/learn/understanding-grapevine-bud-damage>

**PDF Format:**

[http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/\\_docs/articles/TVUnderstandingGrapevineBudDamage\\_0.pdf](http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/_docs/articles/TVUnderstandingGrapevineBudDamage_0.pdf)

#### **Assessing Grapevine Bud Damage**

**HTML Page:**

<http://extension.umd.edu/learn/assessing-grapevine-bud-damage>

**PDF Format:**

[http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/\\_docs/articles/TVAssessingGrapevineBudDamage\\_0.pdf](http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/_docs/articles/TVAssessingGrapevineBudDamage_0.pdf)

#### **UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA RELEASES COLD-HARDY ‘ITASCA’ WHITE WINE GRAPE**



Although this grape, code numbered MN 1285, has not as yet been as widely tested as previous University of Minnesota releases (Frontenac, Frontenac Gris, La Crescent, Marquette), it may fill an important niche for Midwest winemakers. It is described as an excellent grape for production of dry white wines. Since most of the white wine grapes processed into wine by the Nebraska and Midwest wine industry are usually finished sweet to off-dry, if ‘Itasca’ proves to be successful in the vineyard, i.e. well adapted, and can indeed be vinified into a fruity and bone-dry white wine, it could become a valued addition to our industry. Your

University of Nebraska Viticulture Program is expecting to receive planting stock of 'Itasca' for trial in our research vineyards. Performance of 'Itasca' will be reported in the years to come as we develop research information about its adaptability to Nebraska conditions.

#### **WESTERN IOWA TO GET ITS OWN AVA**

Western Iowa now has its own AVA (American Viticulture Area) based upon its wind-blown soil deposits known as *Loess* soils. This loess soil must be at least 20 feet deep to qualify being in this AVA which covers approximately 12,897 square miles (8.2+ million acres) in Iowa and Missouri. These soils have developed over many centuries and stretch along the east side of the Missouri River. Nebraska has similar loess soils that are found in a band along the west side of the Missouri River. As we continue our interaction with the Western

Iowa Grape Growers Association (WIGGA), it is conceivable that an AVA can be initiated on the Nebraska side of the river. Congratulations to the WIGGA for this significant accomplishment!

#### **Patrick Laird's 2015 Presentation on Insurance**

The PowerPoint from Patrick's presentation on Grape Insurance at the 2015 Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Forum and Tradeshow will be posted on the Viticulture web site. You can access it here for now in either PowerPoint or pdf format:

<https://unl.box.com/s/j9duj1cl0t2likj93n4vli6ypphgpe4!>

Patrick expects the information to be applicable to the 2017 growing season.

#### **Reminder Calendar, Save the Dates:**

**June 11, 2016** Field Day at Bill Smutko's vineyard near Blair, NE

**July 16, 2016** Field Day on July 16 at Gary Thompson's Old Cellars Vineyard in Arapahoe, NE

**March 2-4, 2017** 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Forum and Trade Show, Omaha Marriott.



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