



Nebraska VineLines

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University of Nebraska Viticulture Program

Editors: Dr. Paul Read, Professor of Horticulture & Viticulture and
Stephen J. Gamet, Department of Agronomy & Horticulture

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LETS GET READY FOR A GREAT 2023 VINTAGE!

As we soon will be heading into the 2023 growing season, there are a few topics to consider.

- 1) **Pruning.** If labor availability allows, it is good to delay pruning established vineyards until early or mid-March. Later pruning enables a better ability to assess the vitality of buds and canes.
- 2) When deciding which cultivars to prune first, it is a good idea to prune the hardiest cultivars first, for example Frontenac and Itasca can be pruned earlier than Vignoles and Marechal Foch.
- 3) Prune out all dead, damaged and diseased canes. Be especially vigilant in removing canes and stems that may have become infested with apple twig borer (aka grape cane borer).
- 4) If it is necessary to make sizeable cuts, it is a good idea to spray or paint large wounds with a fungicide. This could reduce the likelihood of grapevine trunk disease (GTD).
- 5) If production from mature vines has declined because of GTD, cutting trunks back to the ground may be necessary and training suckers for new trunks will be required.
- 6) Destroy all prunings; they can harbor disease spores and insects.

Disease Management.

- 1) Anthracnose – if this disease has been a problem, treatment before bud break is recommended. Symptoms appear very similar to hail damage, elliptical spots on the canes.
- 2) The “big four” of Phomopsis, Black Rot, Downy Mildew and Powdery Mildew can be

managed by timely sprays, usually just before flowering and a second spray two weeks later.

- 3) For most disease problems, follow the advice of the Midwest Pest management Guide for grapes and small fruit (available from Purdue University Extension).
- 4) Consider signing up for Driftwatch; it may help prevent problems with herbicide drift.

MORE FROM VITINORD

As promised, here are a few further notes from the VitiNord conference held in December in Burlington Vermont.

- Eric Amberg, from Grafted Grapevine Nursery, provided a presentation on “Making the decision to replant or top-work on older vines”. The key question was “Is the vineyard in good shape, free of virus, fills the trellis, not affected by trunk disease? If not, Eric says replant because top-working will only perpetuate the problem. However, if a healthy vineyard and the main goal is to change cultivars, then top-working may be a viable option.
- Jean-Benoit Deslauriers and Geena Lockett discussed “Creating Branding for Regional Wines”, using the Tidal Bay region in Nova Scotia as an example. They emphasized that creating an identity and developing stylistics were important. They also have their wines tested annually and have developed a set of rules for wines to qualify as representing the Tidal Bay region.
- As might be expected for a conference titled “VitiNord”, Skandinavian wine industries

were also discussed, with examples presented from Sweden and Denmark. Torben Tolden-Andersen from Copenhagen University commented that grape cultivars that do well in Denmark were “Solaris, Solaris and Solaris”. He indicated that although other cultivars have been trialed with mixed results, Solaris was a real winner for vineyards in Denmark. He mentioned that winter frost was not a problem, but accumulating enough heat units (GDD) to ripen grapes sufficiently was a challenge.

- An Itasca tasting was led by Drew Horton and John Thull from the University of Minnesota; for the benefit of many attendees that were not familiar with the U

of MN breeding program, Drew gave a brief synopsis of that program.

- Tom Plocher, one of the founders of VitNord and a private plant breeder (Petite Pearl, Verona) conducted a brief discussion and tasting of Crimson Pearl, including its breeding background.
- The conference concluded with a dinner featuring the grapes of the Hudson Valley (New York) in which Stephen Casscles described how grapes such as Baco Noir, Chelois and Chambourcin have gained traction as successful wine producing grapes in the Hudson Valley grape industry.”

Items for your Calendar:

February 3&4 – Nebraska Local Foods Conference

February 20&21 – Ohio Grape and Wine Conference

February 22&23 – Iowa Specialty Crops Conference

March 14-16 – Eastern Winery Exposition & Conference, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

March 28-30 - BEV-NY (Business, Enology and Viticulture)

May 12&13 - TOAST Nebraska - Stinson Park, Omaha, NE

June 7-9 – American Society for Enology and Viticulture, Eastern Section – Austin, Texas

June 26-29 – American Society for Enology and Viticulture Annual Conference, Napa, California

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



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