



# Nebraska VineLines

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Lincoln | EXTENSION

**University of Nebraska Viticulture Program**

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Fall Vineyard Management and Interesting Videos  
Now that the grapes are harvested and, in many cases, already fermented and in the barrel, time to take a deep breath and relax a bit. These have been interesting times in all of our lives and of course the grape and wine industry has certainly been impacted as a result. See the Press Release below for comments on yields, harvest challenges and wine quality. However, there are some things to keep in mind and some important vineyard management practices to consider.

**First, let's talk about irrigation.** In most years, much of Nebraska doesn't need irrigation after harvest, but this isn't a normal year. Much of Nebraska is in a drought or near-drought status, so our usual precipitation has been lacking. Generally, at this time of year we recommend curtailing fertilizing, especially nitrogen (N), and watering to avoid encouraging soft new growth that would be vulnerable to cold temperature damage. This year, however, especially on well-drained soils, supplemental watering is going to be necessary to allow normal translocation and storage of nutrients. Remember that early growth following bud-break next growing season is almost totally dependent upon carbohydrates/food stored in the perennial wood of the vine, notably trunks, cordons and roots.

**Secondly**, if not already accomplished, **vineyard clean-up** and hygiene need to be addressed. It is imperative to remove sources of inoculum that can encourage diseases and insects that can damage next year's growth and ultimately the crop. "Mummies" (berries not harvested and drying on the vine or ground) and dead leaves may be repositories

for spores that can cause black rot, the mildews and Phomopsis. In addition, dead or damaged parts of the vine should be removed and if not already destroyed, along with any leftover prunings that can be overwintering sites for insects such as the apple twig borer (aka, grape cane borer). Control by sprays is not feasible at this time of the year, but destroying the prunings will eliminate their cozy "snug as a bug" overwintering home.

**Other important considerations** include, but are not limited to, conducting cover crop management, trellis repairs and soil tests. This can also be a good time to control woody perennials such as poison ivy, Virginia creeper, tree seedlings and other invasives. If using systemic products such as glyphosate, it is important to apply to leaves and stems before they senesce. Since Glyphosate is systemic, it can be translocated to the below-ground parts of the target weed species, but care should be exercised to prevent contact with the grapevines, since glyphosate can be absorbed by leaves and bark and can move in the plant potentially leading to significant injury in the next growing season. Planting more vines? Although some cultivars may already be sold out, now is the time to address any replanting requirements or orders for expanded plantings. It's always a good idea to reach out to the nurseries that supply the vines you wish to plant to determine availability and perhaps to reserve some for planting in 2022.

## VIDEOS THAT YOU MAY ENJOY

As alluded to earlier, many things had to change during this ongoing pandemic, including working remotely and stay at home orders. This led to modifications to our usual University of Nebraska

Viticulture Program (UNVP) summer field days and tailgates, so we have produced several videos that you can access on our web page <http://viticulture.unl.edu> They include a stroll through our very successful High Tunnel Table Grape project, discussion of our crop reduction project and a harvest video featuring machine harvesting at Oak Creek Vineyards near Raymond.

Our next Nebraska VineLines will be our Holiday Issue. Stay well, be safe and be kind to yourselves and your neighbors, family and friends. Cheers!

#### **PRESS RELEASE: NEBRASKA'S GRAPE HARVEST SMALL BUT GOOD QUALITY**

Although not affected by fire and the smoke as was the California grape crop, Nebraska's 2020 grape crop was affected by a variety of weather-related events. Final tonnage estimates are roughly half of last year's (2019) crop.

Initially this year's cool spring set the pollination period back by 2-3 weeks.

A late spring frost in parts of the state affected Nebraska vineyards and where frost damage occurred, yields automatically became half a crop due to freezing of the primary primary fruiting cluster.

Grapes have small flowers which are susceptible to extreme weather conditions, including wind, cold temperatures and rain. High winds during two weeks in June occurred right when most of the crop was trying to pollinate and additional yield reductions occurred then as well.

Nebraska Wineries and Grape Growers Association president, Mick McDowell of Miletta Vista Winery, St. Paul, NE stated that while we missed the frost event at Miletta, most of our grapes were trying to pollinate right when those two weeks of high winds and high temperatures hit us in June. He continued, that while some grape varieties fared better than others, he noticed a 60% reduction in pollination success in his Edelweiss crop, which translated to a 60% loss in yield. In addition, the majority of his yields were 30% to 50% small than typical.

Edelweiss was named by the association as their signature white grape November 2019 and Nebraska winemakers have won seven (7) Best of Show awards with Edelweiss in the last 15 years. Including a 2020 Best of Show win by Prairie Creek Winery of Central City, NE at a California competition with their 2019 Edelweiss.

Although there appears to be enough Edelweiss on hand, McDowell said, there could be shortages in some winery locations within the state.

While the number of 2020 gallons produced is half that of previous years, it appears that the quality of the 2020 Nebraska grape crop was good and wine makers are optimistic about the 2020 vintage. Richard Hilske, Cellar 426, Ashland said that his yields and those of growers he relies on also came in 30-50% lower than expected. Richard received Double Gold on some of his 2019 vintages and is also optimistic about the quality of the 2020 wines, Richard said that the flavor profiles for the grapes that came in this year seemed to have deeper qualities which will shine through the 2020 vintage. With better disease control in 2020, it seemed as if more grapes reached a full maturity and ripeness said Dr. Paul, Read, UNL Viticultural professor. He continued that growers seemed to take advantage of the drier spring, applying fungus controls through the most vulnerable periods of development. Then the Nebraska grapes were better able to use the hot dry summer conditions for an increased quality of the fruit that was harvested, Read said. The 2020 vintages are far from bottled, but with the improvements Nebraska wine makers have made in the last 10 years, McDowell and Read are hoping for another banner year for Nebraska's 2020 vintage.

#### **EPA ANNOUNCEMENT:**

EPA Announces 2020 Dicamba Registration Decision. Read more at this link: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-2020-dicamba-registration-decision>

#### **Webinar Announcement from Penn State**

Eastern Viticulture and Enology Forum

#### ***A webinar series from Penn State and Cornell for Eastern Growers and Winemakers.***

Cornell and Penn State Extension are teaming up to create the Eastern Viticulture and Enology Forum – a monthly webinar series that will bring you the latest in research results in viticulture and enology, with a focus on concepts that underlie the practical aspects of growing grapes and making wine. Webinars will occur once per month in November 2020, December 2020, and January 2021, and twice per month in February, March, and April 2021. Webinars will start at 3 PM EST and will run about an hour-long each. Please see below for details regarding, and registration for, the first webinar in the series. The remainder of speakers, topics, and dates in the webinar series will be announced in the near future.

We invite your participation in this virtual learning opportunity.

With sincerity and gratitude,  
Tim Martinson and Cain Hickey, organizers

**The first webinar of the series is:**

Sources and Sinks: How viticultural practices modify vine productivity and balance.

**To be covered:** Leaves (sources) capture CO<sub>2</sub> from the air and allocate it to different parts of the vine (sinks) to support canopy growth, fruit development and ripening, and the transition to dormancy and regrowth in the spring. Most viticultural practices – pruning, shoot thinning, cluster thinning, hedging, cluster zone leaf removal – alter the relative strength of sources and sinks to achieve production and quality goals. In this webinar, Tim Martinson will review a comparison of five source/sink manipulation treatments on crop yield components, shoot growth, pruning weights, and return crop the

following year. Cain Hickey will discuss how under-row cover crops and pruning and training strategies alter crop yield, fruit composition, and vine balance.

**Presenters:** Tim Martinson, Senior Extension Associate, Cornell University and Cain Hickey, Viticulture Extension Educator, Pennsylvania State Extension

**When:** Wednesday, November 18, 2020 (3:00 PM - 4:00 PM ET)

**To register:**

[https://cornell.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYlce-grDkqGdMVro-XkEu7cW--Eu\\_Dgz](https://cornell.zoom.us/j/9123456789).

Webinars are offered at no charge, but registration is required. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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## Reminder Calendar:

**NOTE: Due to the pandemic, any or all events may be postponed or canceled. Please contact the organizers for further information.**

**November 18, 2020**, Cornell/Penn State Webinar Series begins, see above.

**July 25-29, 2021**, International Cool Climate Wine Symposium -CCOVI at Brock University –St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. **The 2020 event was postponed to next year.** Details: <http://iccws2020.ca/>

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