



GRAPE CULTIVARS FOR YOUR HOME GARDEN

B.C. STRIK

There are essentially three types of grapes available in Oregon:

- American (*Vitis labrusca*), including Concord and Niagara;
- European (*V. vinifera*), which are the predominant commercial wine cultivars (varieties) in Oregon; and
- French-American hybrids, which were developed from crosses of European with American species.

Many of the American cultivars, also called "labrusca" types, have a strong, characteristic "foxy" (musty) flavor and aroma. Therefore, these cultivars are mainly used for juice rather than wine. However, many people like the foxy flavor and enjoy eating fresh fruit from these cultivars. Labrusca types were developed mainly in the eastern United States and may be hardy to -10°F .

European grape cultivars differ from American cultivars in fruit characteristics, vine growth habit, and climate adaptation. European types, or vinifera, have tight clusters of grapes that are usually thin skinned with a winelike flavor. Vinifera require at least 160, but preferably 200 or more, frost-free days to mature fruit. Plants are likely to be damaged below temperatures of 0°F .

Vinifera cultivars require more heat units for fruit maturation than labrusca types. In general, vinifera can be grown well in areas with more than 1900 degree days or heat units.

(Calculate heat units by subtracting 50°F from the average of the daily high and low temperature. Add these values for the period of April 1 to October 31. Don't use negative values).

However, don't grow some of the late-maturing vinifera cultivars, such as Cabernet Sauvignon, unless you live in a warm region. Oregon is a cool climate area for wine grape production, as are many areas of France and Germany. Although grapes may be harvested as late as mid-October to achieve the desired maturity, the warm days, yet cool nights, produce grapes of excellent quality. Oregon is becoming world-renowned for the production of excellent Pinot noir wines.

French-American hybrids have some characteristics of both American and European types, depending on parentage.

There's currently no large commercial production of table grapes in Oregon. However, you can grow many table grape cultivars successfully in the home garden.

Grapes are self-fertile, so you need to grow only one cultivar for fruit production. However, you may prefer growing several. You can select various cultivars best suited for eating fresh, for juice, or wine production.

It's important to choose a cultivar that will mature in your area. In addition, selecting a good planting site, proper training, and pruning are essential for the production of quality fruit. Purchase plants from a reputable nursery or propagate from cuttings (see EC 1305 for more information).

The following list is intended to serve as a guide when you choose grape cultivars; most have been tested in Oregon, but not all may be available at local nurseries. The descriptions

are brief, including some comments on fruit quality; note that performance varies greatly with location and pruning method.

The cultivars are divided into table grapes and wine grapes. However, some are suitable for more than one purpose. (The letters in parentheses after the cultivar name indicate: *A*, American type; *E*, European; *H*, French-American hybrid.)

TABLE GRAPES

Red

Caco (A). Mid- to late-season. Fruit medium-sized, red. Fruit has a slipskin (the pulp slides easily out of the skin). Berry skin is tough. Clusters compact. Flavor is medium-sweet and foxy. Fruit keeps well in cold storage and is good for juice. Plants are hardy.

Canadice (A). Early season. Fruit medium, red, and seedless, borne on compact clusters. Slipskin is moderately tender. Fruit can be stored for relatively long periods and is good for raisins. Plants are hardy, resistant to phylloxera, and very productive.

Catawba (A). Late season (grow only on the warmest sites). Fruit large, round, coppery-red. Flavor is slightly foxy, aromatic, and winelike. Fruit can be used for home wine production. Plants are moderately hardy.

Delaware (A). Early to mid-season. Fruit small, round, red. Clusters small. Flavor is good fresh, but fruit is also good for wine. Plants are susceptible to powdery mildew and require a well-drained soil.

Bernadine C. Strik, Extension horticulture specialist, Oregon State University.



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Einset seedless (E). Early. Fruit medium, oval-shaped, red, seedless. Fruit resists cracking and doesn't have a slipskin. Clusters loose, but well-filled. Flavor is fruity with a mild labrusca and strawberry character. Fruit stores well. Plants are hardy with good productivity.

Flame seedless (E). Early. Fruit small to medium, round, red, seedless. Clusters medium and loose. Flesh is firm and crisp. Excellent flavor for dessert grape. Susceptible to powdery mildew. Plants are very productive when cane-pruned.

Moored (A). Early. Fruit medium, red. Clusters medium and compact. Flesh has foxy flavor of typical labrusca. Acceptable for fresh consumption. Plants are hardy.

Suffolk red (A). Early to midseason (ripens a few weeks before Concord). Fruit medium, red, seedless. Clusters loose. Good to excellent for fresh consumption. Plants are moderately hardy.

Utah Giant (E). Midseason. Fruit large, round, blotchy red. Clusters large and loose. Flesh is firm and crisp. The fruit is like that of Tokay and is suitable only for dessert. Plants are very susceptible to powdery mildew.

Vanessa seedless (A). Early to midseason (10–14 days before Concord). Fruit medium, oval, red, seedless. Clusters compact. Flesh is crisp with a good flavor (not labrusca type). Plants are moderately hardy (hardier than Interlaken, Lakemont, and Himrod).

White/yellow

Aurore (H). Early. Fruit medium, golden. Clusters long and loose. Flesh soft and juicy with sweet, slightly foxy flavor. Fruit makes a light, delicate wine, but of foxy flavor. Good for dessert. Vines vigorous and productive if cane-pruned. Hardy.

Fiesta (E). Midseason. Fruit small to medium, white, firm, seedless. Clusters loose and large. Fruit is good for raisins as skin is tender and flavor is good. Plants should be cane-pruned for maximum yield.

Golden Muscat (H). Mid- to late-season. Fruit medium to large, yellow-green. Flavor is of the characteristic muscat type. Slipskin is slightly tough. Flesh juicy, soft, sweet, aromatic. Good dessert grape.

Himrod (H). Early. Fruit small, greenish-yellow, translucent, seedless. Non-slipskin is tender. Clusters long and loose. Fruit is excellent fresh and for raisins. Plants are moderately hardy and productive.

Interlaken (H). Early. Fruit small, greenish-white, seedless, non-slipskin. Smaller, more compact cluster than Himrod. Excellent flavor with a hint of firmness and good quality for fresh and raisins. Plants are vigorous with moderate productivity. Vines should be cane-pruned for maximum productivity.

Lakemont (H). Late-season. Fruit small to medium, seedless, yellow-green. Non-slipskin, tender fruit borne on compact clusters. Fruit is

What if you find a cultivar (variety) that's not on this list?

Find out some of the plant growth and fruit characteristics:

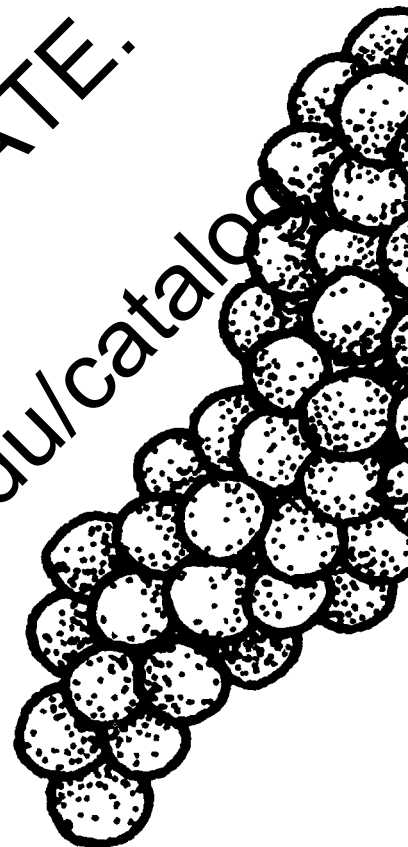
- What color is the fruit?
Is the fruit best suited for fresh consumption, juice, or wine?
- When does the fruit mature (if it's late-maturing, it may not mature properly in your area)?
- Is it a European, American, or French-American hybrid (European and hybrids should usually be cane-pruned)?

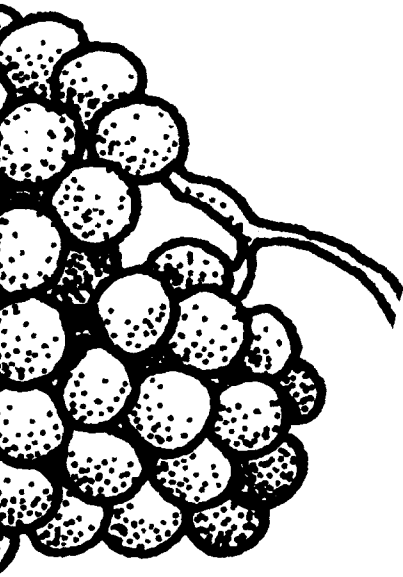
Remember: If you purchase a cultivar that's not on this list, it has probably not been extensively tested in Oregon. It's best to *try* a plant in your garden first, to see if it grows well, if the fruit matures, and if you like it.

juicy, sweet, moderately acidic, which masks the sweetness. Plants are less hardy than Himrod, but more hardy than Interlaken. Productivity is good.

Niagara (A). Late-season (few days before Concord). Fruit large, green-white. Clusters are large and compact. Flavor is sweet with the foxy characteristic of the labrusca type. Fruit can be eaten fresh or used for juice and wine. Plants are hardy and moderately productive.

Perlette (E). Midseason. Fruit medium, white to yellowish, translucent, seedless. Clusters are large and very compact. Skin is thin and tender. Flesh crisp and juicy. Flavor mild, but distinctive. Vines are vigorous and





should be spur-pruned on cordons. Thinning of berries within each cluster is recommended. Fruit attracts yellowjackets. Plants are susceptible to powdery mildew.

Remaily seedless (H). Mid- to late-season. Fruit medium, oval, light green, seedless. Clusters are large. Non-slip-skin, slightly tough berry that's resistant to cracking. Fruit has a good flavor with good storage potential. Plants are very vigorous and must be cluster-thinned. Resistant to *Botrytis cinerea*.

Seneca (H). Early. Fruit medium, yellow-green, becoming translucent golden. Clusters are loose. Skin is thin and tender. Fruit is aromatic with a sweet, spicy flavor. Excellent for fresh. Plants are susceptible to powdery mildew. Vines are vigorous, productive, and require cane-pruning.

Blue/Black

Alden (A). Late. Fruit large, oval, reddish-black, non-slip-skin. Clusters large and loose. Flesh juicy, meaty, tender, pleasing aroma. Quality fair. Vines are vigorous, productive (tends to overbear), and moderately hardy. Bunch thinning required to improve fruit quality.

Bath (A). Midseason. Fruit medium, black. Clusters medium, compact. Flesh tender, juicy, sweet, very little foxy flavor. Quality is fair.

Vines are vigorous, very productive (tends to overbear), and fairly hardy.

Bluestar (A). Mid-season. Fruit medium, blue. Clusters medium large and tight. Flavor mildly foxy, pleasant. Good for fresh consumption. Vine tends to overproduce unless properly pruned.

Buffalo (A). Mid-season. Fruit medium to large, reddish-black, heavily bloomed. Clusters medium to large and well-filled. Slip-skin, tough and thick. Flesh is greenish, translucent, medium juicy, tender, sweet, not aromatic, tart with pleasing flavor. Quality good. Seed size is medium. Vines are vigorous, productive, and hardy.

Campbell Early (A). Early. Fruit large, blue-purple. Large clusters. Fruit similar in flavor to Concord. Moderately vigorous, hardy, highly productive vine.

Concord (A). Late season. Fruit medium to large, blue. Flavor is foxy and sweet when ripe. Excellent for juice, good for wine and fresh. Plants are vigorous and hardy. Fruit seldom matures adequately in western Oregon.

Elizabeth (A). Early. Fruit medium, blue. Flavor is foxy (labrusca type). Good grape for juice or fresh. An excellent Concord-type grape.

Fredonia (A). Early. Fruit large, black. Clusters are medium and compact. Skin is thick and tough. Fruit has a Concord-like flavor. Quality is good. Plants are vigorous, hardy, and fairly productive.

Glenora (A). Midseason. Fruit medium, blue-black, seedless. Clusters large, moderately compact. Non-slip, tender skin. Flavor delicate. Fruit does not store well, but is excellent fresh and for raisins. Vines are vigorous, moderately winter-hardy, and phylloxera-resistant.

McCampbell (A). Early. Bud sport of Fredonia and is thus very similar, except clusters are 3 to 4 times larger.

New York Muscat (A). Early to midseason. Fruit medium, reddish-black with heavy bloom (dusty covering on grapes). Clusters short and well-filled. Muscat flavor, spicy. Vines are moderately vigorous and productive. Moderately hardy.

Schuyler (H). Early. Fruit medium, blue, soft fruit. Clusters are medium, long, and well-filled. Skin is tough and astringent. Flavor is sweet, bland, and juicy. Vines are moderately hardy, vigorous, and very productive.

Van Buren (A). Early. Fruit medium, black, slip-skin. Clusters are medium and well-filled. Flesh is juicy, sweet and foxy. Quality of unfermented juice is similar to Concord. Fruit has poor keeping quality. Good for dessert and juice. Plants are fairly vigorous, hardy, and moderately productive.

Venus (A). Early. Fruit medium, blue-black, seedless. Flavor varies from a hint of muscat to slightly foxy. Vines are vigorous, hardy, and very productive. May require bunch thinning to improve fruit quality.

WINE GRAPES

The main wine grape cultivars grown in Oregon are: Pinot noir, Chardonnay, White Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Cabernet Sauvignon, Muller-Thurgau, and Sauvignon blanc. Harvest typically begins in late September to early October and ends near the end of October or when fall rains arrive.

You can grow many of these cultivars well in your home garden, provided you properly prune, train, and otherwise care for them. Late-maturing cultivars such as Cabernet Sauvignon should only be grown on properly selected, warm sites. Most cultivars are susceptible to powdery mildew.

Chardonnay. White. Clusters are small to medium and well-filled. Berries are small, usually with one seed. Flesh is soft and juicy. Skin is tough and translucent. Ripe fruit is susceptible to spoilage by mold or rot once fall rains begin. Cane-pruning is recommended. One of the earliest cultivars to begin growth in spring, so it's susceptible to frost damage on cool sites. Well-drained soils best.

Avoid high nitrogen fertilization—it promotes poor fruit set, fruit rot, and delays maturity. Fruit makes a table wine of high quality with a distinctive flavor.

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Cabernet Sauvignon. Red. Clusters are medium, long, and usually loose. Berries are small, black, with a whitish bloom. Ripens late (around the last week of October). Plants are vigorous with low to moderate productivity. Relatively low incidence of fruit rot.

Gewurztraminer. Reddish-brown. Clusters are small to medium and compact. Berries are small with firm pulp and rather thick, tough skins. Flavor is characteristically spicy. One of earliest cultivars to mature. Time of harvest is very important: It lacks varietal character if picked too early, and it lacks acid if picked too late. Cane-pruning is recommended.

Prefers deep, fertile soils. Excess nitrogen fertilization causes poor set and delays maturity. Early growth in spring increases susceptibility to frost damage. Produces a distinctive white varietal table wine with a spicy, aromatic, muscatlike aroma. The wine matures rapidly and does not retain quality for long.

Marechal Foch (Foch). Red. French-American hybrid. Clusters are small and rather loose. Berries are small, blue-black. Fruit ripens early (4 weeks before Concord). Wine is of good quality, but with a slight honeylike taste. Plants are very vigorous with low to moderate productivity.

Muller-Thurgau. White. Clusters are small to medium and compact. Berries are small. Ripens early. Vines produce heavily. Wine has a distinctive character and a fine balance of acidity, flavor, and aroma. Wine is not as good as Riesling, but this cultivar can be grown in areas where Riesling doesn't often mature. Vines grow best on fertile soils that are not dry or calcareous. Vigor is low to moderate.

Pinot gris. White. Clusters are medium and compact. Berries are gray-blue, small to medium in size. Ripens early and produces a white wine with a distinctive, complex flavor. Grows on most types of well-drained soils and has drought tolerance.

Pinot noir. Red. Clusters are small and compact. Berries are small, blue-black, with large, numerous seeds. Fruit ripens early (around October 1) and, if picked at the proper maturity, produces a wine with excellent aroma, flavor, and a soft finish. Bunches rot quickly if damaged by birds or insects. Wine vigor is moderate, yields are low to moderate. Plants grow best in well-drained, deeper soils.

Sauvignon blanc. White. Clusters are small to medium and compact. Berries are medium to large. Ripens mid- to late-season. Must be fully ripe to achieve a true varietal character in the wine. Early growth in spring may increase susceptibility to frost damage.

Mature fruit are quite susceptible to bunch rot. Deep fertile soils tend to produce excessive growth and poor crops. Plants grow best in sandy loams.

White Riesling. White. Clusters small. Berries small to medium, greenish-yellow, with brown speckles. Skin is fairly thick and moderately tough. Flavor is somewhat aromatic. Ripens late, but often produces a good quality wine when picked at less than optimum maturity. Vines are moderately vigorous. Bunches are susceptible to Botrytis bunch rot.

FOR FURTHER READING

The publication listed below, and the one you're holding, are available from Publications Orders, Agricultural Communications, Oregon State University, Administrative Services A422, Corvallis, OR 97331-2119.

EC 1305, *Growing Grapes in Your Home Garden*, by Bernadine C. Strik, Oregon State University Extension Service publication (Corvallis, reprinted April 1993). \$1.50

This publication replaces FS 101. Trade-name cultivars are listed as illustrations only. The OSU Extension Service does not endorse any listed cultivar or intend any discrimination against others not listed.

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