



WINE GRAPE INFORMATION FOR PENNSYLVANIA AND THE REGION

From Penn State Cooperative Extension

<http://pawinegrape.com/>

May 4, 2013

Table of Contents:

1. Grape and Wine Research Meeting at Penn State
2. Social Media Boot Camp at Penn State
3. Early Season IPM in Vineyards
4. Essential Viticulture Newsletters
5. Irrigation Webinar with Dr. Mark Greenspan
6. Wine in Southwest Pennsylvania

Note: While the busy winter meeting season is in the past, there are still excellent learning opportunities across the region. More seminars are being offered as on-line webinars which are easy to access and usually free. Please check the [PWGN events calendar](#) for events in your area.

Research meeting at Penn State: Pennsylvania is in the center of a very rich viticulture and enology extension and research region. We all know about the great research done at Cornell University from Long Island to Western NY, but there is also Tony Wolf's team at Virginia Tech, and Ohio State, University of Maryland, and Rutgers all contribute to the knowledge in the area. The [Pennsylvania Wine Marketing and Research Program](#) is a crop order at the PA Department of Agriculture that uses a 15 cent per gallon fee on all wine produced and sold in Pennsylvania to support research and marketing efforts that benefit all Pennsylvania wineries and its by-laws require that at least 30% of the funds be used for viticulture education and research. The wine industry members of the PWMRP board carefully allocate and stretch the \$150,000 or so in annual program funds to service many of the wine industry's needs for maximum benefit. The research committee provides funds for the [USDA NE-1020 wine grape variety trials](#) and grape pathology research at Penn State's [FREC](#) and the [Lake Erie regional grape lab](#), and for Denise's experimental wine trials. On Wednesday, 22 May, results from these projects will be presented at a research workshop in the Food Science Building at University Park (State College). Participants will be led through a wine variety trial tasting by Denise, and her student Virginia Smith will talk about her experience working at the famous [Two Hands Winery](#) in the Barossa Valley of Australia. Bryan Hed will present results from his Vapor Gard experiments and our guest speaker, [Dr. Justine Vanden Heuvel](#), the research viticulturist at NYSAES in the Finger Lakes will talk about managing yields in vineyards. This is our opportunity to learn about local research and show support for our researchers and PWMRP. Registration is \$25, it includes breakfast and lunch, and helps to cover speaker travel expenses. Click [HERE](#) for additional **program information and on-line registration** (find the red button, lower right on the page). While you are in State College, visit the [wineries](#) like Happy Valley, Mt Nittany and Seven Mountains.

Social Media Workshop at Penn State: Are we ever lucky to have [Dr. Kathy Kelley](#), ag marketing and business management specialist in horticulture at Penn State. Kathy has a great passion for her work and a fondness for wine, and she really wants to help the local wine industry. I don't pretend to understand social marketing but everything I read in trade magazines and popular wine press seems to agree that it is very important for wineries to get known and sell wine. Kathy and Sarah Cornelisse (Penn State extension associate) are hosting a two-day **Social Media Boot Camp** at Penn State's main campus, 115 Keller Building on **June 18 and 19**. Topics include Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, consumer use of social media, creating content, developing a social media strategy and measurements and analytics. There is a registration fee and [pre-registration](#) is required.

Early Season Grape IPM: The season has gotten off to a slow start due to cool weather across the region but once it warms up you can expect the shoots to grow very quickly. If shoots are out and in a holding pattern, beware of damage by grape flea beetle (also called steely beetle). While considered a nuisance pest, if large numbers are present it can cause quite a bit of bud damage and exacerbate any winter bud injury problem. A NY IPM [flea beetle fact sheet](#) and information from the [NY-PA Pest Management Guidelines for Grapes](#) will help guide your management decisions. Dr. Greg Loeb, entomologist at Cornell University recommends treatment of flea beetle and climbing cutworm if damage to bud and shoots exceeds two percent. In their recent newsletters, Dr. Mike Ellis (Ohio State Univ) and Dr. Wayne Wilcox (via Alice Wise, Cornell University) recommend early season fungicide applications for phomopsis at shoot length of 3" or less, especially if there is a lot of rain. Current dry weather will help suppress phomopsis, but continue to scout blocks with a history of phomopsis problems. In trials early season sprays have reduced later cluster infections, where rachis infections can spread to the berry stem and then to berries. Dr. Ellis says that control of the four major fungal diseases (phomopsis, powdery mildew, downy mildew and black rot) benefit from early season applications. At a temperature threshold of 50F both downy mildew and powdery mildew need very little rainfall moisture to get established on new shoots. Because rapid shoot growth is expected once the warm weather arrives, growers should be ready with their pre-bloom through post-bloom treatments, the most critical period for control according to Dr. Ellis. In the April 30 [Ohio Grape Electronic Newsletter](#) Dr. Ellis writes extensively about the identification and avoidance of fungicide resistance (especially powdery mildew and downy mildew), something ALL commercial grape growers need to understand and practice – Table 2 includes resistance prone fungicides and risk of resistance by chemical class. He also discusses critical periods for fungicide applications and offers his complete suggested guidelines for developing a fungicide spray program for grapes grown in Ohio, from dormant applications to a fourth post-bloom application. I would like to thank Dave Scurlock and Mike Ellis, Wayne Wilcox and Alice Wise, and Hans Walter-Peterson for providing much of this information.

Newsletters: Where did I get all the great information in the above grape IPM section? From the amazing viticulture extension newsletters put out by my colleagues in other wine regions. The strength of the viticulture extension and research community in the Eastern US is its collaborative nature: we work well together and share information. This is all to the benefit of wine growers from Maine to Georgia. While conditions will vary from one location to another, the fundamentals of viticulture and vineyard management are often very similar. News and information from the major viticulture extension and research programs are disseminated through regular newsletters during the growing season and all are now available by e-mail. As a grower, it is easy to feel like you are the only vineyard in

the state with a certain problem but that is almost never the case. By gathering information from other areas, it is possible to gain a much better perspective on conditions and issues that develop during a growing season. If, as they say, information is power, if you read these newsletters you will be a very powerful grape grower. I consider these newsletters to be essential resources with impeccable credentials behind each one and I recommend that you subscribe:

- *Finger Lakes Vineyard Updates* has news and information from the Finger Lakes region but is also a portal to viticulture research at the NY State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, the largest program of its kind in the East. Out of region [membership](#) cost is \$100/yr.
- *Lake Erie Regional Grape Program Electronic Crop Update* covers the vast swath of grape grown along the Erie shore in western NY and Pennsylvania and is jointly produced by Penn State and Cornell. The CLEREL research station is home to grape IPM, grape business and economics and viticulture research and the Penn State grape research lab in North East focuses on grape diseases and insect pests. An out of region [annual subscription](#) costs \$100.
- *Long Island Fruit and Vegetable Update* newsletter includes a grape section each week. If you are growing vinifera wine grapes in the East, this is an essential information resource published by Alice Wise at the Cornell horticulture research station on Long Island. It costs \$15/yr for an [on-line subscription](#).
- *Ohio Grape Electronic Newsletter* includes grape growing and wine making information, meetings, research reports from the research and extension team at Ohio State University. This information is of particular value for wine producers in the western areas of Pennsylvania including Erie County. Contact Dave Scurlock for an electronic subscription at scurlock2@osu.edu. See [archived](#) OGENs.
- *Timely Viticulture* comes from the extension shop of Dr. Joe Fiola, small fruit and viticulture specialist at the University of Maryland. Joe provides timely and very practical information according to events occurring during the growing season. Click [HERE](#) to access archives of TV and subscription information.
- *Viticulture Notes* from Dr. Tony Wolf at Virginia Tech. Viticulture news and information from Virginia, perhaps the fastest growing wine region in the East. Self-subscribe to the list-serv and find archived newsletters at [Virginia Tech Agricultural Experiment Station](#) website.
- Archived [Wine Grape Information for Pennsylvania and the Region](#) on PWGN.

Vineyard Irrigation Webinar: More vineyards are using drip irrigation and there is a paucity of irrigation scheduling and soil and plant water status monitoring systems information available to eastern wine grape growers, so we continue to rely on information for dry areas like California and Australia, which is better than none at all. [Mark Greenspan](#) is a highly respected viticulture consultant in California and has given lectures up and down the east coast. [Ranch Systems](#), a precision viticulture vendor is hosting a webinar featuring Mark as the speaker and titled *Remote Soil Moisture Monitoring: Use Water Efficiently, Control Plant Growth and Improve Fruit Quality*. The webinar is on Wednesday, 8 May from 8 to 9 a.m. PDT (11 a.m. EDT). You must [pre-register](#) and space is limited. If you use drip irrigation in your vineyard, this may be a helpful webinar and worth attending.

Wine Growing in Southwest Pennsylvania: A tour through the wine region surrounding Pittsburgh revealed a growing and maturing wine region with very diverse viticulture and varieties. It's hilly and cool in this area which makes me think of aromatic white wines. Vineyard sites vary from the unusual to

spectacular hillside and hilltops. Recent warmer winters have helped the vines survive and vineyard uniformity has improved. Training and trellis has evolved to vertical positioning in the vineyards we visited for *vinifera* and hybrid varieties. Further study of soils and local climate would greatly help the area, but vineyards are widely scattered so this is difficult to do. There is a lot experimenting with varieties, including cold hardy hybrids and wine styles cover a broad range. Lee Stivers, horticulture educator in Washington County organized a meeting at [Greendance Winery](#) that drew a nice crowd on a perfect spring day. The business is a model of value-added agriculture, along with wine production they grow tree fruits and berries and make their own pies, jams and other products. Andy Muza, horticulture educator in Erie County talked about grape berry moth and downy mildew control. Bob Pollock (Indiana County) and Eric Oesterling (retired, but still very active) brought the PSU Pesticide Education spray calibration system but were unable to adapt the fittings to the Cima sprayer. That's a problem I hope we can solve. Proper sprayer calibration is essential for the efficacy and efficiency of all pesticide materials – too much and you are wasting money, too little and effectiveness is compromised. There is an exact amount that the manufacturer has designated to achieve best results and that is what should be applied. The pest ed program is getting two additional calibrators and if you have any doubt whatsoever about your machine or methods, you should contact pest ed and set up an appointment for a visit (\$50 for the first machine, \$30 for each additional machine) – the [calibration website](#) has a demonstration video, pre-calibration checklist and a calibration request form. A team will come to your vineyard and test as many machines as they can squeeze into their time allotment.

Note: local wine makers have wondered what happened to Keystone Cooperage, an important supplier of wine barrels in the region, based in Jefferson in Washington County. According to a local wine maker, they had trouble collecting payments for their barrels, and just decided to quit the business. They continue to produce barrel staves from Pennsylvania oak and send them to [AP John](#), a cooperage in Australia. Mystery solved.

Final note: I often suggest the need for wine growers to understand and experience [benchmark wines](#). On Tuesday, 11 June, the [Virginia Vineyards Association](#) will host its annual summer technical meeting at [RdV](#) and [Glen Manor](#) vineyards, two benchmark wine producers in the Mid-Atlantic region. The theme is “steep terrain grape growing” and these are two incredibly impressive vineyard sites that are worthy of your time and attention! Topics include vineyard design and architecture, soils and erosion control, and farm safety. It is an ideal opportunity to learn from two of our best producers, taste their wines, and interact with the Virginia wine industry, probably the most interesting and fastest growing in the East. Click [HERE](#) for a full program and registration information.

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