



WINE GRAPE INFORMATION FOR PENNSYLVANIA AND THE REGION
From Penn State Cooperative Extension

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Daniel Roberts, viticulturist at Integrated Winegrowing in Sonoma County in California gave a superb viticulture lecture titled “Soil, Climate and Vineyard Management” on June 23rd in Lancaster. I wish I had videotaped it but since I didn’t, the best I can offer are my own notes. See attachment: [Daniel Roberts](#)

PAW Disbands: After a run of many decades, the Pennsylvania Association of Winegrowers, formerly the Southeast Grape Growers Association, will cease to exist on June 30, 2011. It’s board of directors cited changes in the organization and the wine industry, as well as the ability of the Penn State wine grape program to provide viticulture educational programs and services as reasons for the decision to terminate the organization. I regret the loss of PAW very much. Among its achievements, PAW/SEGA helped to create the Penn State Wine Grape Program, represented independent growers on issues like out-of-state fruit, hosted the annual summer vineyard walk around and its annual meeting. I have worked closely with its board and members throughout my time here to deliver educational programs and address issues of concern to wine growers across the state. The effectiveness of PAW can be seen in the health of our vineyards and the improving quality of our wines.

Wine Production Issues Survey (For Pennsylvania Winery Owners and Wine Makers Only): Penn State extension enologist Denise Gardner needs your help to identify the wine production issues that matter most to commercial winemakers. This information is critical to her strategic program planning efforts. She has developed a brief [SurveyMonkey questionnaire](#) that will help her to understand the needs of the wine industry. See attachment: [PA Wine Industry Assessment Survey](#)

Crop Management: It’s almost time to crop estimate. I think this is a really good and important year to estimate yields accurately. Because of problems in some varieties with fruit set, cluster and berry weights will probably be affected. There are far more reasons to do a statistical crop estimate than not, perhaps it can be viewed as a statistical challenge. As in 2010, the crop may be light. Wineries will appreciate knowing how much fruit to expect from their vineyards, independent and estate alike. As a grower I used the lag phase method. We are closing in on this period of berry development so it’s time to get out your paper, pencil, calculator, scale, bucket and clippers and count, weigh and calculate your harvest yields. See attachment: [Crop Estimation](#)

As you contemplate crop management please be aware that vigorous canopies in this soggy season means shade that can promote disease and undermine fruit ripening so leaf removal is probably necessary on moderate to large size

vines. East side removal to 50% cluster exposure is a good start. DeAnna D'Attilio, Alice Wise's summer intern on Long Island, reminded us that research at Cornell indicates that leaf removal 10-40 days after bloom is the most effective time to reduce accumulation of methoxyypyrazines. I'm not sure if this is a red wine year or not but it sure couldn't hurt to have at least one eye on the MPs. Weather will dictate if west side removal and/or a second (or more) east side pass is necessary. Tunneling, or interior leaf removal, especially large basal leaves, is very helpful on bigger vines. On smaller vines, lateral removal to the apical cluster node is suggested. This is probably a 2+ hedging year which gives you an idea of the issues we face. To be sure, the smaller crop due to fruit set issues will exacerbate vine vigor problems if summer rains continue. As long as you are rummaging around the fruit zone, please remove and/or separate clusters so they are not touching and evenly spaced.

Bryan Hed in Erie and other LERGP members have run the grape disease red caution flag up the pole, especially for downy, powdery and black rot. An extended bloom period and now post bloom with infection periods place both fruit and foliage at risk. While there was less rain in June, high humidity and warmth continue to provide significant infection periods – an afternoon shower can generate a 9-10 hour infection period. Growers should still be on top of their spray game with best materials, full rates, spraying every row, and thorough coverage (proper calibration, gallage and aim) and narrowing spray intervals. Bryan says, "this period is the worst timing for warm, wet weather from the disease control perspective." We are in the vicinity of a second post-bloom spray. Also, as of 6/30 CLEREL in Portland, NY had accumulated 525 GDD towards the 810 for the next flight of grape berry moth. At their pattern of accumulation, they would expect to arrive at 810 in 10-14 days. In SE PA, we could anticipate reaching 810 GDD a few days earlier. I have noticed a few Japanese beetles in vineyards, another sign that the GBM threshold is nearing.

Viticulture Research: who needs it? With the demise of the USDA Viticulture Consortium research program the face of viticulture research is changing from small scale, more local projects to ambitious, multi-disciplinary research funded by the USDA Specialty Crop Research Initiative that involve many research faculty and extension educators across institutions and borders. One can argue the relative merit and benefit of each model but the fact of the matter is if the wine industry wants the help of research to push wine quality, it needs to get behind this effort no matter what package it comes in. Our Pennsylvania Wine Marketing and Research Program, as well as other industry/state funded research and education effectively funds projects that are closely in tune with local wine industry needs. The SCRI projects address a broad swath of concerns in areas such as vine vigor or cold climate viticulture. Dr. Tony Wolf and his team were awarded the first SCRI grant in the East to serve the wine industry. This \$3,8M, four year project will tackle a broad range of viticulture topics and extends into the murky waters of the social sciences (aka marketing). The following is an abstract of the goals of the project:

The goal of this SREP is to improve the economic standing of the industry through improved grape and wine quality, reduced environmental impact, and enhanced consumer attitudes towards eastern wines. This holistic approach can be achieved through four component goals. First, practical means of achieving vine balance, and hence improved canopy microclimate and fruit quality, will be developed by assessing the impact of light and temperature on fruit composition, developing management methods to promote optimal vine balance, and better defining vine balance metrics. Second, research-based recommendations for optimal variety and site matching will be developed through evaluation of new winegrape cultivars and the further development of GIS site selection tools. Third, regional sales will be improved through enhanced understanding of consumer attitudes, assessed via survey and modeling tools exploring customer segment identification, satisfaction, reaction to promotional models, and drivers of purchase decisions. Finally, the broad dissemination of research-based resources, derived from this work and elsewhere, will be effected through the development of novel web-based materials, including the enhancement of the eXtension grape community of practice.

You can follow the projects progress at <http://www.arec.vaes.vt.edu/alson-h-smith/grapes/viticulture/research/scri-index.html>. Some grape growers in Pennsylvania may receive a survey from Tony's team in the next few weeks. It seeks to establish benchmark levels of understanding and practice in areas covered by the project. I would urge anyone who receives this web-based survey to fully participate.

Other Eastern SCRI projects or in the pipeline and I will keep you up to date on their progress as information becomes available.

Upcoming Meetings: The American Society for Enology and Viticulture Eastern Section conference in Baltimore is only three weeks away. Please sign up to attend it! The technical symposium is on grape integrated pest management. In a

year like this one, it is more relevant than ever! Go to <http://www.asev-es.org/> for information and registration. Please visit the Events Calendar on the [Pennsylvania Wine Grape Network website](#) for more summer events. Check out the Exchange page as well for buy/sell items.

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