



## WINE GRAPE INFORMATION FOR PENNSYLVANIA AND THE REGION

From Penn State Cooperative Extension

<http://pawinegrape.com/>

October 8, 2013

### Table of Contents

1. The Story of Eastern Wines by Hudson Cattell
2. Balancing Vines in the East: SCRI Research led by Dr. Tony Wolf
3. Upcoming meetings – Grapes of Delight in NJ, Penn State Pesticide Safety Course (core and category credits), Vineyard and Winery Contracts Webinar, Grapes in New England
4. 2014 Viticulture and Enology Regional Events Calendar (preliminary draft)

**The Complete Story about Eastern Wines from the Only Person Who can Tell It:** I have a hard time remembering what happened yesterday, but thankfully that is not a problem for Hudson Cattell, the former publisher of *Wine East* magazine who has, for the past four decades, been the institutional memory for the eastern U.S. wine industry. Almost everyone knows Hudson, because he has made it his business to know everyone connected to making wine during this time. In recent years he has been much recognized and rewarded for his contributions to our wine industry yet I have never met a more humble person in my life. Hudson has left a legacy and a gift for everyone working or interested in Eastern wine, something that only he could have given to us. ***Wines of Eastern North America: From Prohibition to the Present and A History and Desk Reference*** (\$45, Cornell University Press). Hudson allowed me to read an advance copy of his tome and it is, as one would expect, uniquely magnificent for its thoroughness and personal content. I have only been around for a dozen or so years, a fraction of the time he has been covering this beat, but I have heard many of the stories about Fournier, Frank, Wagner, Shaulis, Taylor and many, many others, and also the heavyweight bout between vinifera and hybrids, which some may argue continues to this day, Hudson brings it all together under one cover. The book is written in Hudson's journalistic style, which readers will recognize from *Wine East*, but generously interspersed among all the factoids and data are wonderful quotes, stories and remembrances that only he could conjure up for us. But for a nerdy viticulturist like me, the best part of all may be the extensive desk reference (appendices) that cover topics such as the origins of Eastern wine grapes, and how French hybrids were developed and named. While reading the book I often found myself thinking, "where in the world did he get this information?" or "it's amazing that he knew all of these people." I cannot fail to mention Hudson's long time partner in travel and writing, Linda Jones McKee, to whom this book is dedicated, much of the information presented in the book was gathered while working as a team. This is great stuff and you simply can't get it anywhere else. If you are a professional in the Eastern wine industry, I would consider this mandatory reading. Cornell University Press will release the book for sale on December 19<sup>th</sup>. You can order an advance copy of on the CUP website (click [HERE](#)). When checking out, use promo code CAU6 to receive a 25% discount off of the \$45 cover price. The book will be available in stores and amazon towards the end of January.

**Balancing Eastern Vines:** Eastern grape growers are among the most determined and creative I have ever known, given a wide range of challenging conditions from frost and freeze to diseases and hurricanes, it isn't easy to produce consistently high quality wines. As is often the case in the wine industry, research follows innovation in the vineyard, which isn't to imply that this is not a good system. Growers often try new methods and products and develop their own sense of what does or doesn't work, but eventually someone needs to validate these empirical observations. Growers are constantly debating the relative merits of rootstocks, vine spacing, crop yields, floor management practices and a host of other critical viticultural topics. [Dr. Tony Wolf](#), viticulturist at Virginia Tech undertook a massive multi-disciplinary and multi-regional endeavor beginning in 2010 to examine methods to achieve vine balance under diverse conditions in the East, matching grape varieties to these same diverse conditions, developing tools and resources to implement recommended practices, and finally, an assessment of how all of this translates into consumer preference and awareness. It's all very complicated but after three years of coordinating a myriad of research projects a treasure trove of data and results are coming out of the project. These results may not always match what growers see in their vineyards, but they are food for thought and can provide guiding principles for viticulture in the region. I am fascinated, for example, under *Objective 1: Develop applied means of achieving vine balance under variable conditions* (wow, this is the Holy Grail of Eastern viticulture) by the impact of under trellis cover crop on vine size and nitrogen (measured as YAN), the dramatic effects of root restriction on vine size, and the over-time effects of Riparia Gloire, 420A and 101-14. This project covers a very broad swath of standard Eastern viticulture but the one part that is missing that I would like to learn more about is the impact of site selection on vine behavior and wine quality since I believe that choosing the best site is the best remedy for many of the difficult environmental conditions our vineyards live in, as opposed to many viticultural methods that are designed to compensate for site deficiencies (e.g. soils that are too fertile and/or moist). Maybe this work will get done in the future. One outcome of the project will be a vineyard mapping and rating system that will allow any piece of land to be evaluated for its wine production potential. It's important to remember that in viticulture no one size fits all, and that wine growers have different goals and use very different sites and vineyards to service these goals, for example the relatively flat bench of Lake Erie to the very steep rocky terrain of northern Virginia. At a medium to high level of wine quality expectation, this project addresses many of the needs of wine vineyards across the region. Dr. Wolf and his research assistant, Tremain Hatch, recently wrote an excellent summary of their project in *Wine East* titled [Improving Eastern Wine Profitability](#). I encourage all viticulturists to examine their research and see what parts of it can find useful application in your vineyard. The team's (Wolf, Hatch, Hickey, and Giese) [vine balance in Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (2011) presentation contains photos and data from their research projects. They will hit the road in February to bring their project results and recommendations to winter meetings in Virginia, New York, Ohio and North Carolina (look for these on the PWGN regional events calendar below).

The other BIG USDA-SCRI research project in the East is the [Northern Grapes Project](#) led by Dr. Tim Martinson at Cornell University. For the past 2 years, NGP has featured webinars about growing and making wine in cold climates. They just released the [schedule for the webinar series](#) for the upcoming year. For producers in cold places, this is very valuable information!

**The Other Vintage Story (the Cornell Version):** In my last newsletter I offered my personal observations of the 2013 vintage. These are qualitative remarks based on my experience in vineyards and talking with wine growers. Fortunately, the viticulture and enology teams at Cornell University in western NY, Long Island, the Finger Lakes and Hudson River Valley provide quantitative data gathered and analyzed in each region that provide a statistical framework for the vintage. While it is NY conditions, they can be extrapolated to other areas and provide a valuable historical database for the region. Only Cornell with its vast resources can accomplish this kind of service, and we should all be grateful that they share it with everyone. In the final [Veraison to Harvest #10](#), extension enologist Chris Gerling summarizes the vintage and takes a stab at defining what might be considered “normal” for our recent spate of roller coaster vintages. Here’s one of his conclusions... *I have a positive spin on the new normal perfectly suited for the NY wine industry, however, and it goes like this: despite challenging conditions throughout the 2013 season, we have come to expect clean fruit and great wines. Less-than-perfect weather may be an old normal for us, but exceptional wine from pretty much every season – as well as a continuously rising quality baseline – does not surprise me in the least. And that’s the new normal I support.* Also in this VTH - the juice growers along the Erie shore knew early in the season that they were sitting on a whopper of a crop and, unlike most wine grapes, juice grape buyers adhere to strict ripeness requirements or else loads of fruit can be rejected at the receiving yard. Research viticulturist Dr. Terry Bates has been developing yield assessment and crop adjustment technology for many years and it got put to the test this year. Dr. Tim Martinson, editor of VTH, reports that mechanical thinning played a major role in helping growers to meet quality parameters, harvest early and still bring in record yields. At the Vinification and Brewing Lab, the enology research team made about 300 separate lots of experimental wines in 2013. This is an impressive number in support of viticulture and research experiments across the state! And, it’s certainly one reason why New York state wineries lead the region in quality and consumer respect and recognition.

**Upcoming Meetings:** The primary mission of the [Penn State Pesticide Education Program](#) is to provide training for applicators and users about pest management alternatives, including the safe, proper, and legal use of pesticides. Responsible decision-making protects pesticide users, the public, plants, animals, and the environment. The Pesticide Education team is partnering with the Penn State Horticulture Team to offer the second annual short course series for a New Generation of Horticulturists. Concurrent sessions for English and Spanish speaking orchard employees will be offered during the three-hour program and a Certificate of Participation will be awarded. The course will focus on pesticide toxicity and exposure reduction and the new OSHA requirements requiring a change from Material Safety Data Sheets to the Safety Data Sheets, which will provide more detailed information about chemicals. Presenters will also share a new integrated pest management (IPM) pocket guide that will help employees to identify tree fruit (not grape) disorders, pests, and beneficial insects they may see when working in the field. Pesticide applicators and also those who may become applicators in the future are encouraged to attend. There is no fee, but pre-registration is encouraged. **\*3 core and 3 category credits** are available for pesticide applicators, pending PDA approval. In addition to receiving Pesticide Recertification credits, the workshop meets the regulatory employee training requirements under OSHA’s HazCom 2012. Completion of this training is required by Dec 13, 2013.

Date: Wednesday, 13 November; Time: 1:30 to 4:30 PM; Place: [Penn State Extension in Adams County](#) (Gettysburg). For more information, please contact Catherine Lara at [cyl1@psu.edu](mailto:cyl1@psu.edu) or 717-334-6271, ext. 315. Click [HERE](#) for online information and registration.

**Grapes of Delight** is a meeting hosted by the [Outer Coastal Plain Vineyard Association](#) (New Jersey) and Rutgers University that will focus on new Italian varieties of interest to Eastern winegrowers. Topics covered include the history and potential of Teroldego and Lagrein, red varieties from the Trentino-Alto Adige region of northern Italy, and experiences growing these varieties on Long Island; an examination of the USDA NE-1020 wine grape varieties and clones being tested in southern NJ, including Bordeaux varieties; and a panel discussion of a new regional proprietary wine blend called Coeur d'Est. Speakers include Marco Stefanini, a leading researcher at the Foundation Edmund Mach Istituto Agrario di San Michele All'Adige, Paolo Sabbatini, research viticulturist at Michigan State University, Larry Perrine, president of Channing Daughters Winery on the south fork of Long Island, and Dan Ward, pomology extension specialist at Rutgers. The meeting will be held at the [Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center](#) in Bridgeton, NJ on Saturday, 16 November from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The registration fee is \$90 and includes the seminar, wine tasting and lunch. Click [HERE](#) for program information, location and registration.

**Grape and Winery Contract Webinars** from the [Center for Crop Diversification](#) at the University of Kentucky. Thursday, 21 November - Grape Contracting, 2-3:15 p.m. EST - Geared toward vineyard owners and grape growers. Learn how to utilize contracts for commercial grape production. Learn about basic contracting, as well as hear from lawyers and grape buyers about the importance of contracts. Winery Contracting, 3:30-4:45 p.m. EST - Learn how to utilize contracts in the winery business. Learn about the basics of contracting, and hear from lawyers and grape growers about the importance of contracts. Vicky Scharlau, executive director from the Washington Wine Grape Growers Association and president of the National Grape and Wine Initiative is the featured speaker. Click [HERE](#) for webinar registration and information.

**Wine Grapes in New England:** The New England Fruit and Vegetable Conference and Trade Show at the Radisson Hotel in Manchester, NH is offering a day of viticulture sessions on Thursday, 19 December. Topics include: introduction to grape growing (Dr. Paolo Sabbatini, Michigan State), cultivar selection (Mark Chien), recent advances in spray technology (Dr. Andrew Landers, Cornell), site selection and design (Chien), spotted wing drosophila in vineyards (Richard Cowles, CT Exp Sta), table grapes for New England (Tim Smith, consultant), vine balance (Sabbatini), grapevine cold hardiness (Terry Bradshaw, UVM). This is one of my favorite meetings in the East, feature small farms and farmers who are mostly interested in high quality and low input agriculture. Click [HERE](#) for a full program, meeting information and registration.

The [2014 Viticulture and Enology events calendar](#) is being offered as a preliminary "save the date" resource for wine growers. January through April are the busy educational meeting months in the wine industry, with meetings, workshops, tradeshow and more every week. Pick the ones that will have the most benefit for you and your business and mark the dates, then check back for more listings and information about each event.

Mark L. Chien  
Viticulture Educator

Penn State Cooperative Extension  
College of Agricultural Sciences  
1383 Arcadia Road  
Lancaster, PA 17601  
Tel: 717.394.6851  
E: [mlc12@psu.edu](mailto:mlc12@psu.edu)  
Web: <http://pawinegrape.com/>