



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

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**Daniel Roberts** is one of the best soil viticulturists in the world. He is also a pioneer in the development and use of rootstocks in the California wine industry. His company, [Integrated Winegrowing](#) has developed some of the best vineyards in the north coast counties. He has written for Practical Winery and Vineyard and was a key member of the development team for RdV Vineyards in Virginia. As a result of that experience, Daniel understands our conditions. He will give a lecture on vineyard soils and rootstocks on **June 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10 AM to Noon at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center**. I intend to follow the successful Triggs lecture model in Ontario: touring the speaker for a day so he can see our viticulture up close and then asking him to relate it to his knowledge and experience in California. It should be a very informative talk followed by a discussion. Lecture fee is \$25. Registration is attached or go to the [Pennsylvania Wine Grape Network](#) website under [EVENTS](#).

**Short Season Viticulture:** after a recent tour of vineyards in the Endless Mountains and returning from British Columbia I have been thinking about growing wine grapes in places with short growing seasons, which always presents challenges. When I was in Oregon, a major viticultural goal was to reduce the Pinot Noir season to give the fruit more opportunity to reach full maturity and make the best possible wine. With both cold and frost injury to contend with here, the challenges are multiplied and amplified. We may be in for a bit of a shrunken season because of the cool, wet and late start. So it's something worth thinking about, if not in the abstract, then certainly in a practical sense of how to get clean, ripe fruit in the fall. See attachment: Short Season Viticulture.

**Grape Exchange:** a few growers have asked me if it would be possible to place a BUY/SELL page on the updated [Pennsylvania Wine Grape Network](#) website. I have obliged by creating a "[Grape and Equipment Exchange](#)" page and you can send listings for grapes and other items that you would like to sell or purchase to me.

Note: while you are on the website, look at the EVENTS page for upcoming events around the region, including field meetings in Virginia and the summer field day in Maryland.

**Denise is Here!:** Denise Gardner has begun working as the extension enologist for Pennsylvania. It's really exciting to have her here. Denise is from Berks County and knows and understands our industry. Of course, it will take her a while to get up to speed, but already she is making plans to form an advisory committee and working with other faculty and educators at Penn State, interacting with PWA, PWMRP, wine trails and winery owners and wine makers. It is a daunting task to serve an industry as diverse and spread out as ours but she's going to help improve the quality of our wines. You can reach Denise at [dxg241@psu.edu](mailto:dxg241@psu.edu) or 814.867.0431. Her office is 217 Food Science Building. You'll find an introduction that Denise has written attached to this message (see Denise Gardner).

**Wine in British Columbia:** when we were in Oregon we made regular trips to British Columbia. At first the wines we encountered, usually from the Okanagan Valley, were serviceable but not memorable. 25 years later much has changed. There are 10,000 acres around the long, skinny lakes in this high desert climate (think Eastern Washington) and the wines can be sensational. An 8 hour drive to the northwest and you will arrive in the lovely city of Victoria, the provincial capital with a distinctly British flair, and a small, developing region called the Wine Islands that has a completely different look, feel and taste from the Okanagan. Each region has its distinctive climates, soils and wines. A tour through both areas presented a fascinating array of viticultural diversity and challenges. As usual, I took some notes and share them with you here. If you want a terrific summer vacation, these two wine areas are worth a visit!

**Comments about the season:** well, the party is over, or maybe just beginning depending on your perspective. Warm and humid weather has arrived, great for shoot growth but not so good for grape diseases. As bloom approaches, be ready with your best fungicide materials applied with outstanding coverage with particular attention to rates and rotating between classes of materials to avoid developing resistance. Moving wires and shoot positioning is all about timing and having the labor available to get the job done. Shoot thinning to proper canopy density is important every year but especially in late ones. It's hard to shoot thin and position at the same time but if the growth spurt caught you off guard you'll have to do both tasks on the same pass. As is typical in cool, wet springs, shoot growth can be highly variable. This can be attributed to many possible causes from nutrient deficiencies to mites, it's never easy to diagnose. As we head into bloom, be aware that yield management will be important in a late year. Dr. Greg English-Loeb has released his 2011 [grape insect management guide](#) which brings growers up to date on insect management strategies and new products.

**The Situation in Erie:** report from Bryan Hed, Penn State grape pathologist in Erie (5/26/11). We've accumulated 235 gdds since April 1. The forecast for the next week predicts above average temperatures that will bring us to about average in terms of heat accumulation by end of May, putting us right back on track. On the other hand, we currently record 6.66 inches of rainfall in May...nearly twice our average rainfall for May. More rain is in the forecast for Thursday and Friday (May 26 and 27), but drier weather appears to dominate from that point forward (at least in the forecast). Wind speeds will be dropping down into the single digits tonight (May 26), and will remain there for most of the next 3 days with the exception of Saturday May 28 when winds will kick up into the lower teens (mph) by mid afternoon but then fall into the single digits again by Saturday evening. Concord shoots at our location are averaging 6.5" in length, with 3.5 leaves per shoot. Vineyards farther inland will be nearing the 10-12" shoot stage very soon (if they're not there already). This is another bench mark for a pre bloom spray and it looks as if the weather will be cooperating after Friday the 27th. For juice grapes, just a shot of mancozeb may do the trick at this point. But for wine grapes and even juice vineyards that got hit hard with powdery mildew last year, this is a good opportunity to throw something in for powdery mildew (we have had at least 5 powdery mildew infection periods already within the first 6 inches of shoot growth). For powdery mildew fungicides, you can wait to use the 'big guns' until the immediate pre-bloom and post bloom sprays and go with an oil or

some other eradicant (Nutrol?...in which case be sure to use a spreader sticker), sulfur (if you're growing non-sensitive varieties), or even a low rate of fenarimol (rubigan or vintage). These are relatively inexpensive additions to the 10-12" shoot spray and with all the rain and cloudy weather we've been having, they may be a prudent addition to this application. Begin to plan on scouting your cluster stems for early powdery sporulation. So far, this weather may generate that same red flag we saw last year; powdery sporulation before bloom...especially in vineyards with lots of fruit infection in 2010. Torrential rainfall on May 23 (2.41 inches in 5 hours) left us with at least 6 hours of wetness at about 63 F. Additional rain last night (0.75 inches) generated at least 7 hours of continuous wetness at 61F *at our location*. Technically (according to the Bugaret Phomopsis model) these wetness/temperature combinations did not quite generate infection periods for Phomopsis *at our location*, but our site is a low risk site and leaf wetness sensors only provide us with an estimate of leaf wetness duration at a very specific location. Winds along the lake that persisted after both of these rainfall periods dried off our wetness sensors (and new shoots) quickly (within an hour after cessation of rainfall). However, sites at higher risk (machine pruned, near woods/water, shaded rows, lots of dead wood in the trellis (more inoculum), lots of disease last year, even vineyards farther inland with slightly larger canopies, etc...) likely experienced the necessary conditions (warmer with longer wetness periods) for an infection period, and a mancozeb spray at 3-5" shoots (I could hear airblast sprayers roaring at nearby vineyards late last week) would have provided much needed protection through this recent deluge. This spray had the added effect of reducing risk in the years to come by lowering the levels of overwintering inoculum sources. Make no mistake, this is turning out to be a very wet spring, making the threat of economically relevant early Phomopsis (and powdery mildew?) infections very real in many vineyards.

<http://agsci.psu.edu/research/centers/erie>. *This article was originally published in the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program electronic newsletter. I am grateful to LERGP and Bryan for letting me share it with you.*

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