Utah State University
DigitalCommons@USU

All Archived Publications | Archived USU Extension Publications

1-1-2001

Grape Expectations

Dennis Hinkamp
Utah State University

Warning: The information in this series may be obsolete. It is presented here for historical purposes only. For the most up to date information please visit The Utah State University Cooperative Extension Office

Recommended Citation
Hinkamp, Dennis, "Grape Expectations" (2001). *All Archived Publications.* Paper 954.
http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_histall/954

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Archived USU Extension Publications at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Archived Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact becky.thoms@usu.edu.

Utah State University Extension
electronic publishing

GARDEN NOTES

GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

By Dennis Hinkamp

October 2001 Fall-41

Though Utah is about as likely to be described as wine country as Kansas is of being called mountainous, grapes can be a colorful addition to your garden.

The basic three types of grapes are American, European and what is known as a hybrid or cross between American and European, says Jerry Goodspeed, Utah State University Extension horticulturist. American grapes, as a general rule, are hardier than European types.

One major difference between the two types is the way the skin slips off the pulp on American grapes, he explains. Generally, American grapes have a soft flesh with a distinctive, strong flavor. Concords are the most popular American grape grown in Utah. Concord grapes make great juice and, along the Wasatch front, they normally reach maturity each year. A few European grapes are grown in Utah in the warmer locations, but they generally require a longer, hotter summer to completely mature.

Most of the best wine and table grapes come from European grapes, Goodspeed says. The European variety Thompson Seedless is probably the best known table grape. Others include Tokay, Black Monukka, Flame Seedless and Emperor.

"I usually recommend American or hybrid type grapes for our area because European types do not produce fruit most years in northern Utah," he says. "In fact, many of them die back to the ground during severe winters.

"Although not as well known, many sweet, crisp American types make great table grapes," he says. They probably are't the size of some of their more famous cousins; but, in my opinion, they are every bit as good. A few of these include Lakemont, Interlaken Seedless, Himrod and Suffolk Red."

Grapes can be decorative, Goodspeed says. Considered to be a vine, they need to grow up a trellis or other support. If that is not available, they grow along the ground until they find a telephone pole, garage, fence or old Chevy to support them. They can be aggressive plants that can grow more than six feet some years.

Grapes are normally planted in the spring when a large selection is available from the garden centers, he says. They should be planted next to a trellis or fence where they can be trained to grow. Consider using something other than a chain link fence as a support for grapes.

If they wind their way through the links, they become nearly impossible to prune.

When growing grapes, the first three years are mostly dedicated to establishing the trunk and height of the plant, Goodspeed says. After growing the vines the first year, train one of the canes (branches) upward to become the main trunk, then remove all the other canes. Once the main trunk is established, allow the side canes to grow.

"Grapes are normally produced on the year-old canes," he explains. "The buds along the canes produce fruit and new vegetative growth. If left unpruned, grape plants could grow from one county to another; however, the further away the fruit gets from the trunk, the poorer the quality. It is best to prune grapes back in the spring."

Once established, grapes require little extra attention, Goodspeed says. A deep watering every week or two is usually sufficient, and normally they require little, if any, extra fertilizer. In fact, sometimes the best grapes are somewhat neglected. Simply leave them alone to grow and produce fruit.

There are few diseases that attack grapes in our area, he says. The biggest problem is powdery mildew, which looks like white powder on the leaves that causes them to turn brown early and drop off. Keep the foliage dry to reduce the likelihood of this disease. There are also some registered fungicides available at local nurseries or garden centers that can control this disease.

The other major disease in our area is iron chlorosis, Goodspeed says. Aggravated by over-watering and heavy clay soils, this disease turns the leaf blades yellow, while the veins remain green. The best way to control iron chlorosis is to properly manage the water. Allow the soil time to dry between watering, and plant grapes where there is good drainage.

Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions.

Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person other wise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities.

This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work. Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jack M. Payne, Vice President and Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Utah State University. (EP/10/2001/DF)