



Grape Varieties for Utah

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Grapes are an excellent addition to the home garden and are quickly becoming an important specialty crop in both home and farm production in Utah. Grapes are grown worldwide for wine, juice, raisins, table fruit, jams, and jellies. Selecting an appropriate variety for your climate and desired use is critical for success. This fact sheet introduces the major types of grapes and provides suggestions of grape varieties that can be grown in Utah. The companion fact sheets Grape Management and Grape Training and Trellising Basics provide additional information about grape production.

Grapes can be divided into four main groups: American, European, French/American hybrids, and muscadine. American bunch grapes (*Vitis labrusca*) as a group are the hardiest and often have greater insect and disease resistance than European types. They are primarily used for juice and jelly, with limited use in fresh eating. They have strong flavors, sometimes described as foxy or musky, and are typically considered unsuitable for commercial wine production, although some varieties are valued in specialty and hobby winemaking. The skin on American grapes separates easily from the fruit (slipskin) and is usually considered undesirable for table grapes. Some popular varieties include 'Concord', 'Delaware', and 'Niagara'. Other

American grape species are used as parents to create hybrid American grapes, as well as being used in the French/American hybrids.

European grapes (*V. vinifera*) are the most widely grown grapes worldwide and are prized for wine production and table grapes. As a group, they are marginally cold-hardy and not well adapted to high elevation and northern regions of Utah but can be reliably grown in portions of southern Utah. The skins of European grapes do not separate from the fruit (called clingskin or non-slipskin), which is often preferred for table grapes. Some well-known varieties include 'Thompson Seedless' and 'Chardonnay'.

French/American hybrids were developed to improve cold hardiness and insect and disease resistance of European types, particularly for powdery mildew fungus and the grape phylloxera insect pest. Ideally, these hybrids have the disease resistance of the American types and the fruit qualities of the European types, including a milder flavor profile more suitable to winemaking. Hardiness varies by cultivar, but in general, they are moderately hardy. Some popular varieties include 'Frontenac' and 'De Chaunac'. Skin adherence is variable on these hybrids; some are slipskin, others clingskin.

Muscadine grapes (*V. rotundifolia*), have large, round fruit with very thick skins.

Muscadines are native to, and typically grown in, the Southeastern U.S. due to their cold sensitivity and requirement for a long growing season. As such, they are not well-suited for growing in most areas of Utah. These grapes are sometimes called scuppernongs, named from a muscadine cultivar found along the Scuppernong River in North Carolina.

Recommended Cultivars (Tables 1–4)

The length of your growing season should be a basis for which cultivars you choose. Growing season length is best measured in the average number of freeze-free days (last spring freeze to first fall freeze). Check the Utah Climate Center website, www.climate.usu.edu, for freeze dates in your area. Areas with less than 130 freeze-free days should plant American-type grapes or only the earliest maturing French/American hybrids. If you live in an area of Utah with over 130 freeze-free days, your options increase with more French/American

hybrids and even the possibility of growing some European cultivars. The table below lists grape cultivars that should grow under most conditions in Utah. The list was compiled from grape trials at the Utah State University (USU) Botanical Center, Kaysville, Utah; Thanksgiving Point Institute, Lehi, Utah; Grand Junction, Colorado; Southwest Idaho, and the Four Corners region of New Mexico. Hardiness zone, maturation times, and harvest time are listed but are affected by microclimates, cultural practices, crop load, and fruit quality preferences (such as desired sugar content or pH). Even the hardiest European grape varieties will most likely suffer occasional winter injury in Utah. Suggested uses for different cultivars are given, but keep in mind that most grapes have a range of suitable uses depending on grower preferences. It is also important to note that some seedless grapes, like Jupiter for example, contain varying levels of seed remnants, but remnants are usually soft and not very noticeable.

Table 1

Recommended American Hybrid Table Grapes for Utah of Slipskin Cultivars (skin separates easily from flesh)

Cultivar	Seedless	Location tested ¹	Color	Zone	Days to maturity	Harvest time ²	Other considerations
Table Grape: American							
Beta ^J	No	T	Black	4	120+	E/M	Small, acidic berries. Also good for jelly. Very prone to iron chlorosis. Similar to Concord in flavor and yields, but ripens 3 weeks earlier. Has not been as vigorous in Utah as reported elsewhere.
Bluebell ^J	No	T	Blue	4	120+	E/M	Very susceptible to iron chlorosis. Good for jelly. Low vigor in our trials.
Niagara ^{JW}	Yes	K, T, I	White	5	120+	E/M	Very sweet with strong <i>V. labrusca</i> flavor. Very popular green grape.

Delaware ^{JW}	Yes	T, I	Red	5	130+	E/M	Small berries & clusters. Mild foxy flavor. Was difficult to establish and survival was only at 50% after 5 years. Like most American grapes, it may perform poorly overall in clay-loam soil, as at T.
Edelweiss ^{JW}	No	K, T	Green	4	130+	E/M	Good disease resistance. Very hardy, vigorous. Very prone to iron chlorosis. Has 62% survival, and produced the lowest yields at T.
Steuben ^{JW}	Yes	K, I	Black	5	130+	E/M	Likes warm and long growing season.
Catawba ^{JW}	Yes	K, I	Red	5	150+	L	Late ripening. Requires a long season.
Concord ^{JW}	No	T, I	Black	4	150+	L	Popular cold-hardy home garden cultivar. Latest ripening cultivar in the trial at T (September 22). Prone to uneven ripening. Other cultivars such as Valiant and Jupiter had higher yields in our trials.

^J Also suitable for juice ^W Also suitable for wine ^R Also suitable for raisin ^T Also suitable for table

¹K: Utah, Kaysville; T: Utah, Thanksgiving Point; I: Idaho

² E: Early-Season (Late Summer), M: Mid-season (Early Fall), L: Late-season (Late Fall)

Table 2

Recommended Early-Maturing French Hybrid Table Grapes for Utah

Cultivar	Seedless	Location tested ¹	Color	Zone	Days to maturity	Harvest time ²	Other considerations
Canadice ^{JW}	Yes	K, T, I	Red	5	120+	E	Slipskin. Compact clusters with small pink berries. Crisp and sweet.
Faith	Yes	K	Blue	5	120+	E	Clingskin. Medium-sized berries & clusters. Can have uneven set and seed traces.

Himrod ^{J R}	Yes	K, T, I	White	6	120+	E	Slipskin. Large clusters and excellent flavor. Grapes are soft and easily damaged. A reliable favorite for fresh eating. Earliest cultivar to ripen at T. (August 22).
Interlaken Seedless ^{J W R}	Yes	K, I	White	5	120+	E	Medium-sized clusters with small berries.
Joy	Yes	K	Blue	5	120+	E	Clingskin with thin skin. Small berries & clusters. High yield. Seed traces.
Mars ^{J, W}	Yes	K	Blue	5	120+	E	Slipskin. High yield & vigorous growth. Very disease-resistant. Good for jelly.
Reliance ^{J, W}	Yes	K, T, I	Pink	5	120+	E	Slipskin. Large clusters. Prone to fruit cracking in wet conditions. Iron chlorosis was noted on heavy soils. Good jelly.
Somerset Seedless	Yes	K	Red	4	120+	E	Clingskin. Small orange-red berries. Excellent table grape.
Valiant ^J	No	K, T	Blue	3	120+	E	Slipskin. Prone to mildew diseases. Excellent juice and jam. Moderate to heavy yields.
Venus ^J	Yes	K	Blue	5	120+	E	Slipskin. Reliable producer. Tightly packed clusters.

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Table 3

Recommended Later-Maturing French Hybrid and European Table Grapes for Utah

Cultivar	Seedless	Location tested ¹	Color	Zone	Days to maturity	Harvest time ²	Other considerations
Alden ^W	No	T	Black	5	130+	M	Slipskin. Very large berries. Vigorous;

							tendency to overbear. Low vigor and iron chlorosis were noted on heavy soils.
Concord Seedless ^J	Yes	K, I	Red	5	130+	M	Slipskin. Similar to Concord with smaller clusters and berries.
Einset Seedless	Yes		Red	5	130+	M	Clingskin. Medium-sized clusters and berries. Unique flavor.
Gratitude	Yes	K	Green	5	130+	M	Clingskin. Excellent crisp texture, medium berries. Moderate productivity.
Jupiter ^{J W R}	Yes	K, T	Blue	5	130+	M	Clingskin. Mild foxy flavor. Crisp texture. Large berries, clusters. Seed traces. Great for almost all uses, a clear favorite in the trial at T.
Marquis ^{R W}	Yes	T	White	5	130+	M	Slipskin. Soft seed traces. Very sweet, juicy, mild flavor. Prune clusters for better size.
Neptune	Yes	K	Green	5	130+	M	Clingskin. Large loose clusters. Low vine vigor.
Swenson Red ^{J W}	No	K, T	Red	4	130+	M	Clingskin. Excellent taste, very hardy. Seems to struggle with root rot in heavy soils.
Vanessa ^{J W R}	Yes	K	Red	4	120+	M	Clingskin. Reliable yield. Small clusters and berries, very mild flavor. Excellent fresh-eating quality.
Table Grape: European							
Thompson ^R Seedless	Yes	T	White	7	130+	M	Clingskin. Widely planted worldwide as a table and raisin grape.

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Table 4

Recommended Hybrid and European Wine Grapes for Utah

Cultivar	Seedless	Location tested ¹	Color	Zone	Days to maturity	Harvest time ²	Other considerations
Wine Grape: New Cold-Hardy Hybrids							
La Crosse	No	T	White	5	110+	E/M	From Wisconsin. Good as a varietal and for blending. Very small berries and clusters. Have noticed low vigor on heavy soils.
Marquette	No	T, C	Red	4	110+	E	From U of MN. VERY early bud break & harvest. High sugar and acidity at harvest. Small berries and tight clusters. Net early to avoid severe bird damage.
Arandell	No	C	Red	5	130+	E	From Cornell. Blueberry aroma.
Aromella	No	T, C	White	5	130+	E	From Cornell. Muscat aroma/flavor. Beautiful golden berries.
Frontenac gris	No	C	White	3	130+	E	From U of MN. Grey mutation of Frontenac.
La Crescent	No	C	White	3	130+	E	From U of MN. Used for aromatic, floral wine.
Frontenac	No	T, C	Blue	3	140+	E	From U of MN. Vigorous & productive, loose clusters. High sugar & acid at harvest. Net early to avoid severe bird damage.
Wine Grape: French/American Hybrids							
Kay Gray ^{J T}	No	K	Green	3	120+	E	Generally used for blending. Very vigorous. Small fruit clusters.
Leon Millot	No	NM	Red	5	120+	E	Early ripening makes it a good option for short growing seasons. Nice color for wine.
Regent ^J	No	NM	Red	5	120+	E	Thick skin with high tannins. Good yields. Resistant to disease. Red-stained flesh.
Seyval Blanc	No	NM	Green	5	120+	E	High acidity.

Baco Noir	No	NM	Red	5	130+	M	Good acidity and does well in cooler climates. No foxy aromas.
Chardonel	No	NM	White	5	130+	M	Similar to chardonnay, trunks may need winter protection.
De Chaunac	No	K, I	Bluish Black	5	130+	M	Used for red wine. Very productive and vigorous. Must cluster thin.
Traminette ^{J T}	No	C, NM	White	5	130+	M	Seyval blanc x Gewürztraminer cross. Wine reminiscent of Gewürztraminer; floral, spicy.
Chambourcin	No	C	Red	5	150+	L	Late bud break. Highly rated red wine when fruit fully matures. Very productive. Must cluster thin.
Wine Grape: European							
Pinot Noir ^T	No	NM, I	Blue	7	120+	E	Used to make pinkish-red wine.
Cabernet Franc	No	C	Red	6	150+	L	Bud breaks early, is sensitive to spring frosts but still has reliable yields.
White Riesling	No	K, C	White	6	150+	L	Makes excellent still and sparkling wines with apricot or peach aromas.

^J Also suitable for juice ^W Also suitable for wine ^R Also suitable for raisin ^T Also suitable for table

¹K: Utah, Kaysville; T: Utah, Thanksgiving Point; I: Idaho; NM: New Mexico; C: Colorado

² E: Early-season (late summer), M: Mid-season (early fall), L: Late-season (late fall)

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