



Grape Varieties for Utah

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Grapes are an excellent addition to the home garden. They are grown across many countries and are used for wine, juice, raisins, table fruit, jam and jellies. Selecting an appropriate variety for your climate and for the desired use is critical for success. This fact sheet introduces the different types of grapes and provides suggestions of grape varieties that can be grown in Utah. The companion factsheets, Grape Management and Grape Training and Trellising Basics provide additional information about home 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 wine-making. American grapes are mostly slip-skin, meaning the skin separates easily from the fruit. Some popular varieties include ‘Concord’, ‘Delaware’, and ‘Niagara’. European grapes (*V. vinifera*) are the most widely grown types worldwide, and are prized for wine production and as table grapes. However, the vines are only marginally cold hardy, and therefore not well adapted to the high elevation and northern areas of the state. The skins do not separate from the fruit. Some well-known varieties include ‘Thompson Seedless’ and ‘Chardonnay’. French/American hybrids were developed to improve hardiness and insect/disease resistance of European types. 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 wine making. Hardiness varies by cultivar, but in general they are moderately hardy. Some popular varieties include ‘Frontenac’ and ‘De Chaunac’. Muscadine grapes (*V. rotundifolia*) are typically grown in the Southeastern U.S. Due to their cold sensitivity and requirement for a long growing season, they are not well-suited for most areas of Utah.

Recommended Varieties

The length of your growing season impacts which varieties 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, 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 varieties. The table below lists several grape varieties that will grow under most conditions in Utah. The list was compiled from varieties tested at the Utah State University Botanical Center, Kaysville, Utah; in Grand Junction, Colorado; in the Four Corner’s region of New Mexico and in Southwest Idaho. Hardiness and maturation times are listed but are affected by different micro-climates, cultural practices, and crop load. Even the hardiest European grape varieties will most likely suffer occasional winter injury. Seedless grapes ideal for fresh eating are listed separately from varieties that are typically used for juice and wine and are seeded.

Cultivar	¹	Location Tested ²	Color	Zone	Days to Maturity	Harvest Time ³	Other Considerations
Table Grape: American							
Niagara ^{J W}	SL	U, I	White	5	120+	E / M	Very sweet with strong <i>V. labrusca</i> flavor.
Concord ^{J W}	S	I	Black	4	130+	E / M	Popular home-garden cultivar, cold hardy.
Delaware ^{J W}	SL	I	Red	5	130+	E / M	Small berries & clusters. Mild foxy flavor.
Eidelweiss ^{J W}	S	U, O	Green	4	130+	E / M	Good disease resistance. Hardy to -30F.
Steuben ^{J W}	SL	U, I	Black	5	130+	E / M	Likes warm and long growing season.
Catawba ^{J W}	SL	U, I	Red	5	150+	L	Late ripening, requires long season.
Table Grape: French/American Hybrids							
Faith	SL	U	Blue	5	120+	E	Non slip-skin, med. size berries/clusters. Can have uneven set & seed traces.
Joy	SL	U	Blue	5	120+	E	Non slip-skin. Very thinned skin. Small berries & clusters. High yield. Soft texture.
Mars	SL	U	Blue	5	120+	E	High yield & vigorous growth. Very disease resistant.
Somerset	SL	U	Red	4	120+	E	Small orange-red berries. Excellent table grape. Fruit ripens mid to late August.
Reliance	SL	U, I	Pink	5	120+	E	Large clusters and medium-sized berries. Prone to fruit cracking in wet conditions.
Venus ^J	SL	U	Blue	5	120+	E	Reliable producer. Tightly packed clusters.
Valiant ^J	S	U	Blue	3	120+	E	Claims of up to -50F. Susceptible to mildew diseases. Excellent juice and jam.
Canadice ^{J W}	SL	U, I	Red	5	120+	E	Med. clusters with small, slip-skin berries.
Interlaken Seedless ^{J W R}	SL	U, I	White	5	120+	E	Medium sized clusters with small berries.
Vanessa ^{J W R}	SL	U	Red	4	120+	E	Fairly reliable yield. Small clusters, excellent quality, med. berries.
Himrod ^{J R}	SL	U, I	White	6	120+	E	Large clusters and excellent flavor.
Gratitude	SL	U	Green	5	130+	M	Excellent crisp texture, med. berries. Moderate productivity.
Neptune	SL	U	Green	5	130+	M	Large loose clusters. Low vine vigor.
Einset Seedless	SL		Red	5	130+	M	Medium-sized clusters and berries. Not slip-skin. Unique flavor.
Concord Seedless ^J	SL	U, I	Red	5	130+	M	Similar in flavor/texture to Concord with smaller clusters/berries. Slip-skin.
Jupiter ^{J W R}	SL	U	Blue	5	130+	M	Mild foxy flavor. Crisp texture. Large berries, clusters & yield. Some seed traces.
Swenson Red ^{J W}	S	U	Red	4	130+	M	Excellent taste, very hardy.

^J Also suitable for Juice ^W Also suitable for Wine ^R Also suitable for Raisin ^T Also suitable for Table

¹ S: Seeded SL: Seedless

² U: Utah, I: Idaho, NM: New Mexico, C: Colorado, O: Oregon

³ E: Early (Late Summer) , M: Middle (Early Fall), L: Late (Late Fall)

Cultivar	¹	Location Tested ²	Color	Zone	Days to Maturity	Harvest Time ³	Other Considerations
<u>Wine Grape: New Cold-Hardy Hybrids</u>							
Marquette	S	C	Red	4	110+	E	From U of MN. VERY early bud break & harvest. High sugar & acidity at harvest.
Arandell	S	C	Red	5	130+	E	From Cornell. Blueberry aroma.
Aromella	S	C	White	5	130+	E	From Cornell. Muscat aroma/flavor.
Frontenac gris	S	C	White	3	130+	E	Grey mutation of Frontenac used to make white wines.
La Crescent	S	C	White	3	130+	E	From U of MN. Not as cold hardy as Frontenac. Makes aromatic, floral wine.
Frontenac	S	C	Red	3	140+	M	From U of MN. Vigorous & productive. High sugar & acidity at harvest. Resistant to downy mildew and Botrytis bunch rot.
<u>Wine Grape: French/American Hybrids</u>							
Kay Gray ^{TJ}	S	U	Green	4	120+	E	Generally used for blending. Disease resistant.
Regent ^J	S	NM	Red	5	120+	E	Thick skin w/ high tannins. Good yields. Resistant to disease. Red stained flesh.
Leon Millot	S	NM	Red	5	120+	E	Early ripening makes it a good option for short growing seasons, nice color wine.
Seyval Blanc	S	NM	Green	5	120+	E	High acidity.
De Chaunac	S	U, I	Bluish Black	5	130+	M	Red wine. Very productive and vigorous vines. Cluster thinning required.
Baco Noir	S	NM	Red	5	130+	M	Good acidity and does well in cooler climates. No foxy aromas.
Chardonel	S	NM	White	5	130+	M	Similar to chardonnay, trunks may need protection in winter to avoid splitting.
Traminette ^{JT}	S	C, NM	White	5	130+	M	Wine reminiscent of Gewürztraminer; floral, spicy. Somewhat disease resistant.
Chambourcin	S	C	Red	5	150+	L	Late bud break. Highly rated red wine when fruit fully matures. Very productive vine requires cluster thinning.
<u>Wine Grape: European</u>							
Pinot Noir ^T	S	NM, I	Black	7	120+	E	Used to make pinkish-red wine.
Cabernet Franc	S	C	Red	6	150+	L	Bud breaks early, sensitive to spring frosts but still has reliable yields.
White Riesling	S	U, C	White	6	150+	L	Makes excellent quality still and sparkling wines w/ apricot or peach aromas. Tight clusters can result in bunch rot.

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Additional References

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