

Wine Grapes Possible Here

Climatic conditions in several localities in southcentral and southeastern Pennsylvania seem quite favorable for growing wine grapes, according to studies by the Agricultural Experiment Station at Pennsylvania State University.

Carl W. Haesele, pomologist, reports his findings in a new publication entitled "Climatic Factors and the Potential for Wine Grape Production in Several Areas of Pennsylvania." Issued as Progress Report 303, it describes climatic factors in Bethlehem, Gettysburg, Lancaster, York, George School, and Philadelphia areas — as well as the prominent grape growing belt along Lake Erie in Erie County.

Dr. Haesele finds that fruit growers of Pennsylvania are taking a close look at their potential for producing wine grapes. He prepared the statewide analysis as part of his studies of wine grapes. His office is located at the Erie County Field Research Laboratory at North East, a division of Penn State.

It is evident from our analysis

that there are areas in southcentral and southern Pennsylvania which should be investigated more thoroughly in terms of suitability for growing wine grapes. Dr. Haesele states:

Interest in producing wine grapes has grown with the passage in state legislature of a bill permitting sale of table wine at the winery. The bill permits the sale of table wine at the winery provided annual wine production by a given winery does not exceed 50,000 gallons per year. Wineries are now located in Erie and Chester counties.

Copies of Progress Report 303 regarding climatic factors for wine grapes are available from county offices of the Cooperative Extension Service or from the Agricultural Marketing Room, 110 Service Building, University Park, Pa. 16802.

In general, the greatest factors to be overcome seem to be winter injury and disease. Southern Pennsylvania may have more difficulty in these respects than does the Lake Erie area. The southern counties receive more rainfall, have higher mean monthly temperatures and can expect temperatures of minus 5 degrees or lower more frequently than the shores of Lake Erie.

Progress Report 303 indicates that sites for wine grape production should have protection from cold prevailing winter winds. There should be good drainage and well drained soils. Temperatures should seldom reach minus 5 degrees Fahrenheit or lower.

The southcentral and southeastern areas of the state are superior to the Lake Erie shores with respect to "growing-degree days." This is a term used to describe heat units. All the locations described have an adequate number of growing-degree days to produce wine grapes.

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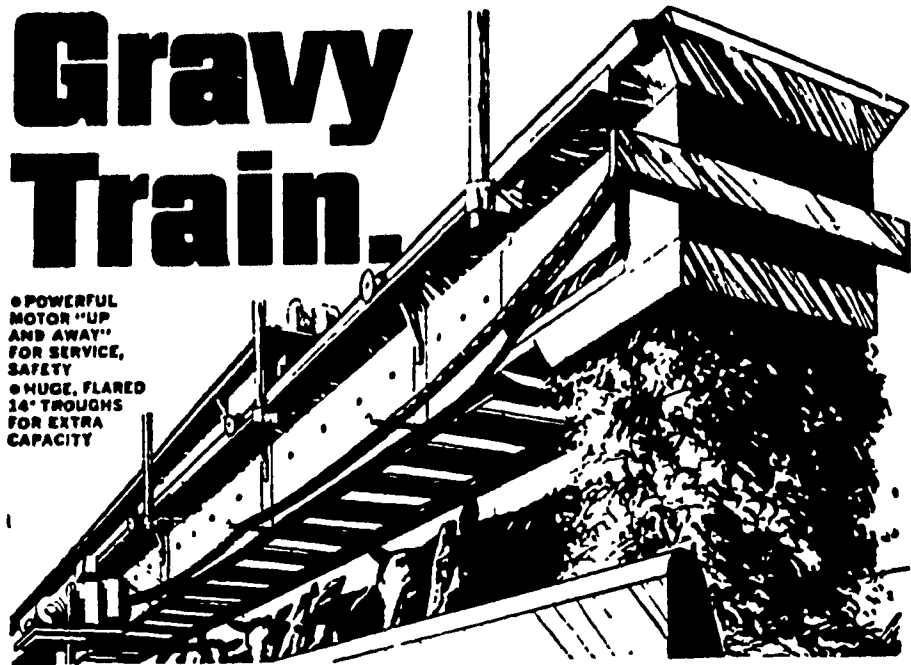
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