

## Growing Wine Grapes

Deep, well-drained soils can grow grapes producing high quality wines, according to seven years of experiments by horticulturists with The Pennsylvania State University. The best yields, and high quality red wines, have been produced with Chelols, De Chaunac and Chancellor. Yields have ranged from 6.9 to 7.7 tons per acre over the past five years.

High quality white wines, and best yields, have come from Vidal Blanc (Vidal 256) and Seyval Blanc. These

grapes averaged 6.9 tons per acre during the past five years.

Reporting the findings is Dr. Carl W. Haeseler, associate professor of pomology at Penn State. Dr. Haeseler is pomologist with the Erie County Field Research Laboratory at North East, a division of Penn State's Agricultural Experiment Station, where the studies were begun in 1967. The experiments involve 32 varieties.

In addition to suitable soils, wine grapes require

favorable weather in relation to the last spring frost and the first fall frost, and air drainage that protects plants from extremes in cold weather.

Variety trials are also underway in the south-central and southeastern areas of the Commonwealth. From preliminary observations, Dr. Haeseler believes several wine-grape hybrids look promising for these areas. The first commercial crop should be taken from some of the new plots this season.

Interest in large-scale production of wine grapes has increased in Penn-

sylvania during the past few years. The interest was stimulated by the passage of the Limited Winery Act. The bill permits the sale of tablewine at the winery provided annual production does not exceed 100,000 gallons per winery per year. Wineries are now located in Erie, Lancaster, Chester, Bucks, and Venango counties.

As for other varieties showing considerable promise for red wines, Dr. Haeseler lists Cascade, Marechal Foch, Leon Millot and Landot 4511. Showing promise for white wines are Villard Blanc and Dutchess. However, the latter two are

easily damaged by low temperatures. Dr. Haeseler added that Villard Blanc is mediocre in northwestern Pennsylvania.

While Catawba and Delaware are presently the dominant varieties, they are of low quality as premium table wines, Dr. Haeseler points out. He indicates they are used in Pennsylvania chiefly to produce rose and champagne.

"Perhaps the greatest challenge faced in growing wine grapes is to control bird damage, especially by robins, starlings, and grackles. Varieties very susceptible to birds are Marechal Foch, Cascade, Leon Millot, Aurora, and Baco Noir. In fact, all wine

grape varieties are attractive to birds in some degree," he affirmed.

The major insect and disease problems in the grape trials at North East have been aerial phylloxera, erineum mite, botrytis, powdery mildew, and downy mildew.

European varieties, known as vinifera, have not produced grapes as quickly as the hybrids, Dr. Haeseler said. Yields have also been lower than the hybrids in early years, averaging 3 to 3½ tons per acre for White Riesling and Chardonnay and slightly higher for Cabernet Sauvignon. However, wine from these varieties has been excellent, he observed.

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## Pa. FFA Will Choose Queen

Pennsylvania FFA members will choose their first state queen during the annual FFA Activities Week June 18 to 20 at The Pennsylvania State University. The Pennsylvania queen will enter national competition during the National FFA Convention and American Royal Livestock Exposition at Kansas City, Mo., in October.

Under new membership rules, this will be the fifth year for girls to be active in FFA programs. Last year some 130 young women took part in FFA Activities Week at Penn State.

New this year among contests will be one for pleasure horse judging. The various contests, a feature of FFA Activities Week, will be held the morning of June 19.

Dr. James M. Beattie, Dean of the College of Agriculture at Penn State, will be among the dignitaries welcoming delegates and contestants at a general

session in Schwab Auditorium the evening of June 18. The program will include Coleman Harris, program specialist from the National FFA headquarters in Washington, D. C.

Addressing the general session the night of June 19 will be Doyle Waybright of Gettysburg, North Atlantic Regional Vice President of the FFA. The FFA queen will be presented at this general session. This evening program will be held in Recreation Hall.

Business meeting of the State Association of FFA will be held all three days. Awards to contest winners will be made the morning of June 20 at a final general session in Schwab Auditorium, starting at 9:30. Awards will include trips to regional and national contests.

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