

Can West Virginia be the Napa Valley of the East?

BY DEBBIE STILES-RENZI
Staff Correspondent
BUCKHANNON, WV — Yes, Pennsylvania, they really do grow grapes in West Virginia!
And there are those, like Ferrenc "Frank" Androczi, who produce

home-grown wine here in the Mountain State.
Frank Androczi operates one of the four licensed wineries in the state of West Virginia. A native of Hungary, Androczi has created a bit of his homeland in Upshur

county, with his many fruit and nut trees, berry bushes and vines, his vineyard, and the wines that he produces at his "Little Hungary Farm Winery."

Androczi believes grapes are an excellent cash crop for West Virginia. The deep, rocky clay commonly found in most of the state provides fertile soil and proper drainage, and that, Androczi exclaims, "is what the grapes need."

For the most part, Androczi is right, says SCS soil conservationist Joe Wentz. However, poor soil drainage can be a problem in some areas, Wentz wrote in a recent issue of Vineyards of West Virginia, newsletter of the West Virginia Grape Growers Association (WVGGA).

Grapes don't tolerate poorly drained soils at all, he said, so any such location isn't the place for grapes, Wentz advises. Wetness indicated by gray mottling in the soil shouldn't be considered a problem if it occurs three feet or more below the surface, however.

Grapes prefer a pH of 6.5 to 7.0, which is a little more basic than the average for West Virginia farmland. When Androczi began his plantings after moving to Buckhannon in 1967, he added 3 tons per acre of lime to the vineyard sites.

Varieties

A variety of groups, both public and private, have been working to establish which grape varieties (Turn to Page A19)



This particular plant is a cutting of one which Frank Androczi smuggled out of his native Hungary in 1976.



Frank Androczi stands beside the wire barrels in the cellar he built near Buckhannon, W.Va. Some of the re-cycled barrels came from the Jack Daniels Distillery in Tennessee.

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