

# Potassium Critical Component In Maintaining Healthy Vines

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Also, growers need to examine the pH of the vineyard and monitor that over time. "And over time, you can change things," said Martinson, by proper nutrient and soil pH management.

Hans Walter-Peterson of Cornell looked at nitrogen and other nutrient use of the vine plant. About a third of the nitrogen available to the plant is used for fruit and two-thirds goes to the shoots and leaves. For potassium, two-thirds goes to the fruit and a third to the leaves.

Potassium deficiency can

show up in a dry year, with heavy cropload, in areas where the site has been leveled or topsoil removed, poor weed management, and after heavy application of dolomitic limestone.

Nitrogen reserves are critical for vine survival over winter, which provides 15 to 30 percent of the total N demand. And different types of nitrogen in chemical or solid-based form and chemical makeup dictate N availability.

Water can be one of the most limiting factors in vine physiology, noted Walter-Peterson. Foliar application of N

during drought is only a short-term solution.

Correcting soil pH to provide optimum levels can take time. Walter-Peterson recommends no more than two tons of lime per year per acre. Look for the best ENV, or effective neutralizing value, on the lime bag label.

Martinson provided an overview of his work in the Finger Lakes Region. The area has about 10,000 acres of grapes and 70 wineries producing 50,000 tons of grapes per year. There are 42 varieties of grapes grown in the region.

Martinson, who provided a slideshow history of the region, said developing the Geneva hybrids was the "the best thing the state ever did."

The program helps a five-county area. The area supplies grapes to wineries to the tune of 11 percent of total production. There are 60,000-80,000 tastings per year and the area has seen a 10-20 percent growth in tastings. Half of the wineries are less than 10 years old but supply a large and growing tourist industry.

The Enology Research and Extension Center in Geneva provides a brewing technology lab with 150 research wines, the New York Wine Analytical Laboratory, and a new position created for an extension enologist.

Dr. Terry Bates, Cornell University Fredonia Vineyard Lab, spoke about soil characteristics and nutrient availability. Bates also provided an update on the Lake Erie Grape Growing Region, which includes 30,000 acres that are involved in Concord grape production. Concord, Niagara, and some hybrids are primarily grown.

About 25 percent of the product is converted to wine (the largest state, not includ-

ing California) and 75 percent of the field growth is Concord grape variety. Seventy-five percent of all field-grown grapes are processed.

A lot of production, Bates noted, is in the concentrate market, in competition with California.

The region near Lake Erie can provide great grape-growing conditions but severe snowfalls. "We live and die by the lake," said Bates. "But it enables us to grow grapes."

The Fredonia Lab Research Complex encompasses 30 acres three miles from the lake. Many of the growers are making major efforts to use mechanical harvesters and also for pruning and thinning. One grower paid for the machine twice in the first year in labor savings, noted Bates.

The PAW business meeting included an overview of the strategic plan under way. Included was information provided on crop insurance and plant disease management.

New board members elected include David Hoffman, president; Ed Jansen, CPA, treasurer; and Nelson Steward, Rick Masser, David Othmer, Sherry Sowers, Richard Blair, Karl Zimmerman, and Kari Skrip, directors.

## Top Ten List

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varieties. We have been advised not to plant less than an acre of a single variety.

### • Number Three: Ordering Plants

To get the best selection, place your vine orders at least a year in advance.

Be sure you have a market for the grapes you choose to plant.

French Hybrid and Native American grape varieties are

more cold tolerant, yield more tonnage and are easier to grow, but they command a far lower price per ton, and the demand is much less predictable.

### • Number Two: Labor Needed In The Vineyard

Caring for an acre of grapes requires 200 man hours per season. This can be a critical factor in deciding how many acres to plant.

Seasonal workers for planting, pruning and harvesting can be difficult to find.

### • The Number One Thing A Prospective Grower Should Know: Bring Plenty of Money.

Whatever budget you've established for the development of your vineyard, triple it!

A final word. Viticulture is as much an art as a science. And no matter how much the experts differ, they all seem to agree on one thing. There is no substitute for a grower's understanding of his site, his microclimate, and his soil.

## Direct Marketing Conference Jan. 27-29

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. — Dan Pawlowski, president of the New York State Farmers' Direct Marketing Association, announces that the 2003 New York State Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference is Jan. 27-29 at the Saratoga Sheraton, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. This conference, entitled "Planting the Seeds for Change," will feature three days of educational sessions for direct marketers, followed by a post conference bus tour to farm markets through the Saratoga region and into western Massachusetts.

The theme of the conference was chosen as a response to this year's series of

weather related disasters — record warmth in April, cold and late season frosts, hail storms, and record-breaking rainfalls.

"I know that if I hadn't started going to the New York State Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and learning how I could direct market my apples and diversify my business, this year's weather would have put me out of business. Instead I learned that by adding extra enterprises to my farm operation, like farm birthday parties, a gift shop and agri-entertainment activities, my farm could survive a disastrous year," said Isabel Prescott of Riverview Orchards in Rexford, N.Y.

Joe Peck, agricultural humorist and author of "A Cow in the Pool and Udder Humorous Farm Stories," will open the conference on Jan. 27. Peck's keynote address will be followed by five consecutive sessions that will aid direct marketers to begin their business, expand their business, and improve their business.

For more information on the 2003 NYS Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and for trade show information, call Diane Eggert at (315) 475-1101 or e-mail [diane99@dreamscape.com](mailto:diane99@dreamscape.com).

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## ANNUAL VEGETABLE GROWERS MEETING

Thursday, January 2, 2003 - 12:30 to 3 p.m.

at BAREVILLE FIREHALL, Bareville, PA

Jeff Stoltzfus - will review vegetable test plot results from 2002 and discuss the latest varieties.

Tim Elkner - will make pesticide credits available

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