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## GRAPE GARDENER

Newsletter for the Backyard Grape Grower

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### IN THIS ISSUE:

*The following articles appear in this issue of "Grape Gardener":*

- "Planting Grapevines"
- "Fruit Load Adjustment"
- "Weed Management"
- "Celebrate with Grapes"



### WEBSITES:

**The Weed Workshop –**

<http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/weedworkshop/>

**Table Grape Varieties for Cool Climates -**

<http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/faculty/reisch/bulletin/table/tableindex2.html>

### Planting Grapevines

*By Maurus Brown*



Once you have decided to grow and particular variety, be sure to purchase your plant material from a reputable nursery or garden center. Carefully, check over the grapevines upon receiving them to make sure each plant is healthy and has a good root system.

If planting bare root, try to wet the roots first before planting by letting them soak in water for a few minutes just before planting. Grapevines purchased in containers can be inspected by carefully tapping the sides of the pot and lifting the plant out. The root system should be white in color and hopefully not too root bound. Be sure to dig a hole that is at least 2 times the size of the root ball. Loosen the root system before planting to allow the roots to grow out evenly in the soil profile. Avoid planting when the soil is wet as this will cause the sides of the hole to be slick (smooth) sided which creates difficulty for new feeder roots to penetrate.

Select a site in your garden that is well drained, full-sunlight and the air moves reasonably well. Dig your holes large enough to accommodate the size of the root system. A heavy clay soil should be amended with potting soil, compost, and/or good topsoil before vines are planted. Grapevines **do not** like "wet feet" and of course will not grow well in soil that holds water.

## **Fruit Load Adjustment**

By Maurus Brown

There are times when grapevines do over produce (set too many clusters) and a certain amount of crop must be removed for the remaining fruit to mature properly. A grape grower should look at the vines just after the fruit has set on the rachis (portion of the cluster that holds the berries). With mature vines 4 years and older, there could be as many as 35-45 clusters set per vine. A healthy vine that is vigorous could reasonably mature this amount of fruit. This will also depend on what varieties that are grown. When too many clusters are left on a vine, the fruit may not ripen evenly and the level of sugar in the fruit may not reach maximum potential.



**Fig. 1: Reliance**

Commercial producers have found that approximately 10-12 fully expanded leaves (source of carbohydrates) needed to provide enough energy for the fruit (sink = storage of carbohydrates) to mature properly. One way to assure that a crop will mature evenly and with reasonably high sugar content is to selectively prune off excess green clusters before the fruit begins to ripen (turn color = veraison). This will enable the vine to focus more of the photosynthate (carbohydrate =

sugar) produced in the leaves into the fruit.



**Fig 2: Canadice**

## **Weed Management**

By Maurus Brown

The annual control of weeds in the garden is in full swing. Grapevines, like many other perennial crops, do not grow well when competing with grass or broadleaf weeds. Most gardeners prefer to use mechanical or other non-chemical means of managing weed pressure in the backyard.

Good old-fashioned weed pulling and hoeing works well to control unwanted vegetation under a trellis or arbor. As we all know, this can be very labor intensive. In another effort to control unwanted weeds, many gardeners apply mulch either directly to the ground surface or over the top of garden cloth or plastic. Spring rains have certainly slowed up much work in the garden. It would be best to wait until the ground has returned to a "normal" level of moisture before applying mulch.



Some gardeners will choose to use herbicides for controlling evasive weeds. Roundup® is a systemic herbicide that can be used

to effectively control grass and broadleaf weeds. There is a noted risk with this herbicide. Any green tissue is an open target and every effort must be taken to avoid contact with plants that you wish to keep alive. Unless a grapevine is dormant there is always and risk of spray drift onto green shoots and leaves. There is a 14-day preharvest interval (PHI) for Roundup® and no grapes are to be harvested until after 14 days.

Poast® can be used to control grass around grapevines, but there is a 50-day PHI for this herbicide. Early spring application of Poast® to treat grasses could be considered. It may, although, be difficult to obtain small (garden size) quantities of this material. Contact with fruit or grapevine vegetation should be avoided.

Devrinol® 50 DF, commonly used in commercial fruit plantings, can be applied to control weeds under newly planted or established grapevines. Contact with fruit or grapevine vegetation should be avoided.

As with any pesticide, be sure to read and follow label directions. The label is the law. If the plant species you are growing is not listed on the label, you **should not** apply the product to or near your plants.

*OSU Bulletin 506 (Midwest Commercial Small Fruit Spray and Grape Spray Guide)* describes several herbicides that can be used for bearing and non-bearing grapevines. Normally, commercial

herbicides are cost prohibitive for a gardener to purchase. You may have to shop around to find the same active ingredient in garden supply stores. Application of a **"Restricted Use"** pesticide must be conducted by a licensed pesticide applicator.



## **Celebrate with Grapes**

By LuAnn Freppon

It's the time of year for celebrations. Graduation, weddings, anniversaries and family reunions, all celebrate the people we care about and milestones in their lives. These celebrations usually include food. The following recipe is one of those special finger-foods, that may have substantial calories, but also includes some nutrients. These chilled **"Grape Surprises"** are handled frequently during preparation, so remember to keep them chilled and wash hands well before preparing (or use plastic gloves) to prevent any food borne illnesses.

### **Grape Surprise**

1 pound seedless grapes (washed)  
1 carton, soft cream cheese  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
milk to adjust consistency  
crushed vanilla wafers (crumbs)  
finely chopped nuts

Mix cream cheese, lemon juice, and milk till smooth. Dip individual grapes into cheese mixture until coated and roll in cookie crumbs and nuts (mixed together). Chill and serve.