

North Texas Vineyard News

Fall, 2009

Contents

- Upcoming Events
- North Texas 2009 Harvest
- North Texas Vineyard Survey
- Fall Vine Health

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Upcoming Events

PROSPECTIVE WINEGRAPE GROWER WORKSHOP

Topics include: Vineyard Costs, Vineyard Labor, Site Considerations, RiskFactors, Necessary Expertise.

DATE: Monday, October 12, 2009

TIME: 9:00 am - 3 pm

LOCATION: Texas AgriLife Res & Ext. Center
1229 North US Hwy 281
Stephenville, TX 76401

COST: \$125 per person, \$200 per couple.
Lunch & materials included.

INSTRUCTORS: Fran Pontasch (254) 968-4144
Fritz Westover (281) 855-5600

ADVANCED GROWER WORKSHOP

Topics include: post harvest irrigation, nutrition, and weed management.

DATE: Tuesday, October 13, 2009

TIME: 9:00 am - 12 noon

LOCATION: Brennan Vineyards
802 South Austin Street
Comanche, Texas 76442

COST: \$20.00

INSTRUCTORS: Fran Pontasch (254) 968-4144
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This workshop assumes that participants have some viticulture experience or knowledge.

GRAPE CAMP 2009

Grape Camp is an educational program hosted by the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association for commercial vineyard owners & anyone interested in learning about grape growing in Texas.

Dates: Sunday - Monday

Nov. 15-16

Location: Inn on Baron's Creek
Fredericksburg, TX

To register visit:

<http://www.txwines.org/grapecamp/default.asp>

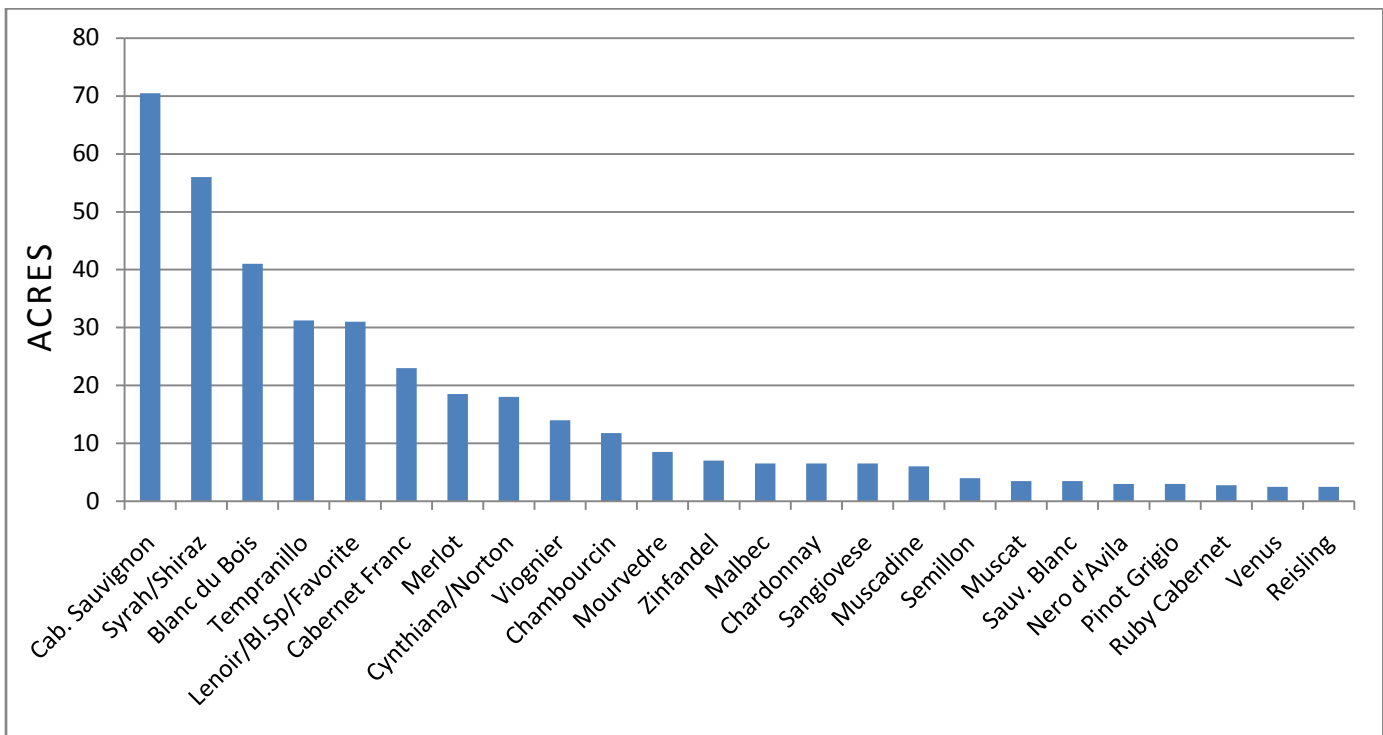
North Texas 2009 Harvest.

The harvested 2009 winegrape crop for North Texas came in at 40% of what could have been expected in a good year. Many vineyards were devastated by April's freeze. But, the few who weren't had harvests of exceptional quality of satisfactory yields. Most harvested grapes were red varieties. Whites were few. Some of the late variety reds were reported with lower Brix than desired. For 2009, lower Brix can be attributed to heat, secondary clusters, and/or picking early. We had a heat wave during what was the critical berry ripening state for some varieties, in particular Cab. Sauvignon. According to Biology of the Grapevine (Mullins, 1992), "high temperatures during Stage II and Stage III generally decrease the Brix". (Stage II and Stage III being the berry ripening and berry maturation stages.) Syrah's chemistry fared much better, and where freeze or frost were not a problem, they're yield was acceptable.

Results of North Texas Vineyard Survey.

One of my projects this year was to collect a survey of grape varieties planted in North Texas. The results were collected by an online survey, a written survey, phone calls, emails, and/or personal visit. Based on the information gathered, North Texas has 420 acres of grapevines planted on 90 vineyards. At this time, approximately 25% of that total acreage is non-bearing new plantings.

Top ten varieties, in order: Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah/Shiraz, Blanc du Bois, Tempranillo, Black Spanish/Lenoir/Favorite, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Cynthiana/Norton, Viognier, Chambourcin.



Other varieties planted in North Texas, but with regional acreage less than 2.5 acres are:

Lomanto	Pinot Blanc	Dolcetto	Champanel
Rhakatsatelli	Seyval Blanc	Verdelet	Roussanne
Chenin Blanc	Barbera	Chardonel	Montepulciano
Palomino	Vidal Blanc	MalvasiaBianca	Tramimette

Rootstock information was more uncertain. Considerable winegrapes in North Texas are own rooted, however, there is an increasing number of grafted vines - most new plantings are with grafted vines. Paulsen 1103 is the rootstock most planted. It also appears to be the most versatile and successful rootstock in North Texas areas, despite the various site considerations and scion varieties.

Other often used rootstocks in North Texas: 110R, 5BB, 5C, 101-14 Mgt, Dogridge, SO4. Success for these is often debatable, and of course, contingent upon site characteristics, scion variety, and overall goals of grower.

Acreage spread is as follows:

25-60 acres = 3 vineyards

10-25 acres = 6 vineyards

5-10 acres = 12 vineyards

3-5 acres = 22 vineyards

0.5-3 acres = 43 vineyards.

Information not obtained from all vineyards.

Healthy Canopy → Hardier Dormancy — Sturdier Trunks — More Dependable Crop

Dormancy is a three stage process. It begins after harvest as the vines acclimate to lower temperatures. The ideal acclimation process allows grapevines a progressive exposure to lower temperatures. During this time, the vines convert starch and sucrose to certain compounds that lower tissue freezing points and prevent the growth of large ice crystals. This acclimation period, in the perfect world, is followed by a full dormancy of predictable low temperatures. A warming trend or deacclimation process, then follows, gently waking the grapevines to a glorious budbreak. However, our winters are fickle as we experience time and again northers following a 90° day. Sporadic cold fronts can lead to split and damaged trunks. Wood damage to trunks from winter injury can take a season or two before it is visible.

According to Dry and Coombe, 2005, in Viticulture 1: Resources, “Young, heavy-cropping or otherwise stressed vines with low carbohydrate reserves suffer most”. Grapevines are not able to accumulate adequate carbohydrate reserves if the leaves fall off prematurely – whether due to Downy Mildew, drought, Pierce’s Disease, or other causes. The current rains make for a perfect environment for Downy Mildew.

The following is a recent update by Fritz Westover, in regards to effective fungicide applications for Downy Mildew. “Remember that Dithane (mancozeb) or Captan are inexpensive (roughly \$15 per acre) to apply, and are meant to be used in a protective manner, not as a cleanup product after a raging downy mildew infection cycle has begun. If it has been rainy at your site (or will be), and you suspect that downy mildew may be a potential problem (or has been in the past) it would be advisable to apply at least one protective spray. This is especially the case for 1st or 2nd leaf vines, which can be more severely stunted or killed by downy mildew. The objective at this time of the season is to maintain healthy foliage until leaves drop naturally. Phos acid products offer some locally systemic protection, but will not effectively clean up a full-blown infection. If experiencing long periods of rainy weather, or if you see the first signs of mildew in the vineyard, I would recommend tank mixing a phos acid product with either Dithane or Captan for added protection. AgriLife extension has tested these tank mixtures in the past, and no tank mixture problems were observed. To read rates of phos acid products such as Rampart or ProPhyt, see June 2008 Gulf Coast Vineyard Updates: http://winegrapes.tamu.edu/news/regionalnews/GulfVineyardUpdate_June08.pdf