

FRENCH-AMERICAN HYBRID WINE GRAPE VARIETIES SUGGESTED FOR THE MOUNTAINS OF WNC



AUORE

French-American hybrid grape widely grown in New York State (U.S.A). Used to produce fruity white wines of mild intensity, usually with a dry finish; also good quality sparkling wines. Mainly found in the colder northern temperate regions of North America.

BACO NOIR

A French-American hybrid grape used to make an intense red wine regarded by some as a good substitute for Cabernet Sauvignon. Capable of aging, its origins trace to the Folle Blanche and a Native American strain of grape. Extensively grown in the cool northern regions of N. America.

CAYUGA (WHITE)

A hybrid cross between the Johannesburg Riesling and Seyval Blanc grapes. Makes a fruity white wine of mild intensity somewhat similar to Aurore. Widely grown in the Finger Lakes region of New York State and other cool regions of North America.

CHAMBOURCIN (NOIR)

A French-American hybrid used to make red wines with fruity flavors and some herbaceous flavors. Grown in the cooler regions of Eastern U.S. and Canada. Decreasing acreages also found in Europe; due to stringent European Union rules these varieties cannot be blended with traditional varieties.

CHANCELLOR (NOIR)

A French-American hybrid with origins in the Rhone Valley of France. Was widely grown and very popular in France where it was used to produce high quality red and rosé wines. Now being replaced by varieties stipulated by E.U. rules. Also grown in the cooler regions of Eastern U.S. and Canada.

CHELOIS

French-American hybrid grape used to produce robust, fruity red wines hinting of Burgundy and often finished in a dry style. Found mainly in cooler regions of the Northern U.S. and Canada.

DE CHAUNAC

An early ripening French-American hybrid grape that gives a fruity, balanced red wine usually possessed of low to mild tannic content. Planted mainly in the cooler regions of the Northeast U.S. and Canada.

ISABELLA

French-American hybrid grape grown on limited acreages in New York State. Also still found in colder regions of Eastern Europe. Derived from a native *Vitis labrusca* grape of N. America and an unknown vinifera and probably created by random pollination as a result of the 18th century attempts to establish European vines in the U.S. Rapidly being removed and replaced by varieties that lack the obtrusive "foxy" taste and flavor of this grape.

LANDOT

French-American hybrid grape used for making fruity red wine of mild intensity with usual grapey *labrusca* nuance found in its parent grapes. Mostly produced in the Eastern U.S.

LEON MILLOT

Early French-American hybrid grape very similar to Marechal Foch below.

MARECHAL FOCH

A French-American hybrid grape, with French Alsace Gamay origins, noted for producing deeply colored and strongly varietal wines considered by some to have a "Burgundian" character.

NORTON

This hybrid grape is found mainly in the warmer regions of the southeast U.S. Taste and aroma characteristics of the light, dry red wine are said to include coffee and spicy flavors. Generally accepted as identical to the *Cynthiana* grape – a cross between vinifera and native American grapes. Cold-hardy to -10F.

RAVAT (VIGNOLES)

Commonly grown in the cooler regions of North America, this French-American hybrid used for making white dry, late-harvest and ice-wines has its origins in the Chardonnay grape. Currently very popular as a dessert wine because of its restrained fruitiness and good balance.

RAVAT NOIR

French-American hybrid grape related to Pinot Noir. Some stock is planted in the Eastern states of the U.S. in order to make a currently light, candy-flavored red wine.

SEYVAL BLANC

A French-American hybrid grape that can be used to make high quality white wines of various styles. Crisp, fruity dry versions have sometimes been likened to French "Chablis" in aroma and taste. Grown extensively in the colder northern temperate zones of N. America and Europe.

VERDELET

French-American hybrid mainly planted in the Finger Lakes region of Western New York state and in the Niagara Peninsula region of Canada. Suitable for eating as a table grape as well as for making white wine.

VIDAL BLANC

Popular French-American hybrid white wine grape with fruity, floral flavors and good balance descended from the Ugni Blanc of France, (a.k.a. Trebbiano of Italy). Made in a variety of styles - i.e.: dry to sweet including late-harvest dessert style and ice wines. Cool region grapes vinified in a Rhine/Mosel manner are said to have a Riesling-like character.

VILLARD BLANC

French-American hybrid grape used mostly for making a fruity, mildly intense white wine of simple nature. Was widely planted in France until E.U. rules stipulated strict varietal combinations. It is now found mostly in the cooler regions of the Northern U.S. and Canada.

Excerpts taken from *The Grape Grower – A Guide to Organic Viticulture*
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NATIVE AMERICAN WINE GRAPE VARIETIES SUGGESTED FOR THE MOUNTAINS OF WNC

SEEDED VARIETIES

AMERICA

Cold-hardy to -30F. Excellent disease resistance. Tolerates Pierce's Disease. Good for wine making but berries too small for table grapes.

BETA

Cold-hardy to -50F. Good disease resistance. Ripens nearly one month before Concord. Makes good wine.

BLUEBELL

Cold-hardy to -35F. Makes good wine. Ripens about 4 weeks before Concord grapes.

CAMPBELL EARLY

Black grape with big clusters and large berries. As hardy as Concord.

CATAWBA

A Native American - ("Vitis labrusca") - grape cold-hardy to -10F. It is used to produce sweet white, red and rosé wines distinguished by a so-called "foxy" component. Commonly grown in the Eastern U.S. and Canada. New York state wineries produce large amounts of sparkling wine from this grape. It is also quite popular when made into an ultra-sweet "ice-wine." Susceptible to most diseases. Not recommended for WNC.

CAYAUGA

White grape. Cold-hardy to -20F. Very productive and can make a good wine.

CENTURY I

Cold-hardy to -15F. Produces large, ovoid, black or reddish-black berries like vinifera. Tends to be overly sensitive to nitrogen so in normal soils, it is overly vigorous and may not set fruit. Does well in poor soils.

CLINTON

Cold-hardy to -25F. A truly American grape that is a spontaneous cross between the North American species *Vitis riparia* and *Vitis labrusca*, first found in New York State by Hugh White in 1835. Makes a nice red wine. Extensive vineyards growing in Switzerland and Northern Italy.

CONCORD

Native American hybrid grape producing the characteristic "foxy" flavored style of wine associated with *Vitis labrusca* vines. Grown mainly in the Eastern and Mid-Western U.S. and Canada to produce sweet finished wines, grape juice and jellies.

DELAWARE

A Native American hybrid grape variety used to make dry, sweet and sparkling red wines of good quality and mild "foxy" character. Commonly grown in the Eastern U.S. where it has considerable popularity when made into "ice-wine." Resists Pierce's Disease and very resistant to black rot.

DUTCHESS

Native American hybrid grape used to make fruity, quite sweet white wines with mildly "foxy" character. Mainly found in Eastern U.S.

EDELWEISS

Cold-hardy to -30F. Makes good wine in cold climates. Also a good table grape. Excellent disease resistance. Can be grown with little or no spraying as far south as northern Kentucky. Grown in southern Norway.

ESPRIT

Produces large clusters of round, white berries. Originally developed for wine but makes fine table grapes also. Very good disease resistance. Ripens 2-3 weeks before Concord. Cold-hardy to -25F.

FRONTENAC

A breed developed by University of Minnesota in 1995. Red grape cold-hardy to -35F. Doesn't need the warm weather to produce high sugar for winemaking – 24 Brix is common. Leave them on the vine as long as possible before harvesting. Produces wine that is close to classic vinifera in quality.

GOFF

Discovered in New York in 1898. Decent red grape that has an unusual characteristic of being able to store safely in ordinary refrigeration for six months or more. The flesh is firm, almost rubbery and resists cracking from rain. Ripens after Concord.

IVAN

Very productive black, rather small, neutral grapes that ripen extremely early (7 weeks before Concord). Prune to spurs. Cold-hardy to at least -25F.

LaCross

Extremely productive white grape similar to Seyval. Good wine grape. Cold-hardy to -25F. Requires serious regulation of vigorous growth to stay cold-hardy.

LOUISE SWENSON

Produces a very nice white wine even though the sugar seldom exceeds 20 Brix. Also used as a good seeded table grape. Good disease resistance. Some susceptibility to anthracnose. May need irrigation on sandy soils. Cold-hardy to -40F.

MARECHAL FOCH

Great for making organic wine in cool weather growing regions. Also makes an excellent fresh grape juice. Prune to canes. Cold-hardy to -25F.

MUSCADINE

Best known varietal name for a Native American species of grape common to the Southern states of the U.S. and also found in Mexico. Generally known as a hot weather grape until the discovery of a few cold-hardy strains growing in the mountains of Madison County NC. Of the 26 different cultivars being domestically grown in the US, *Scuppernong* is the most recognized. Mountain Muscadines are cold hardy to 0F at 2100 feet.

NEW YORK MUSCAT

Always in top three in tastings. Produces oval, reddish-blue grapes with the best Muscat flavor short of the vinifera. Cold-hardy to -15F. Medium vigor and productivity. Prune to spurs.

NIAGARA

Native American hybrid grape used to create popular white wines with strong "grapey" flavor, usually sweet finished, but also found in dry versions. Possibly one of the few hybrids that will remain popular in the U.S. because of a wide consumer base created after World War II. Vine plantings are mainly in the Eastern and Mid-West regions of the U.S.

ONTARIO

New York bred white grape that makes a good wine. Ripens 4-5 weeks before Concord. Productive on light, fertile soils. May lack vigor in heavier soils. Cold-hardy to -20F.

PRAIRIE STAR

A Swenson bred white grape that is cold-hardy to -40F. Resistant to mildew diseases but moderately susceptible to black rot and anthracnose. Shoots tend to break in early season high winds. Use low cordon or low fan-training system with catch wires to attach the shoots.

PRICE

Blue hybrid grape from Virginia Tech is one of the best American grapes. It is productive with good vigor and is cold-hardy to -25F. Good disease resistance. Ripens early making it a good choice for short, cold seasons. Ideal grape for blending in winemaking, too.

STEBEN

American Native hybrid seeded blue grape used to make mild, grapey, red wine. Found mostly in the Eastern and Mid-West regions of the U.S. Good vigor, productivity, general disease resistance, and nice fall leaf color that makes it desirable for growing on arbors near your home.

SWENSON RED

Unique, fruity flavor only beaten in tastings by muscats. Cold-hardy to -25F. Grapes have a bluish color in cold climates. Heavy dew or fog may interfere with fruit set. Train on 5-foot high wires to improve fruit set.

SWENSON WHITE

Excellent white grape with cold-hardiness to -30F. Makes nice wine and table grapes. Has an odd trait of a few berries forming a cluster of 6 seeds about the size of a cherry pit inside one grape berry. Ripens 3-4 weeks before Concord. Prune to canes.

SEEDLESS VARIETIES

Canadice – red grape
Himrod – white grape
Interlachen – green-gold grape
Jupiter – blue grape
Lakemont – white grape
Mars – blue grape
Reliance – red grape
Vanessa – red grape
Venus – black grape