



Table Grapes

Grapes are wonderful plants for home gardeners because of their delicious usefulness and vigorous growing nature. They can be used strictly as a fruit crop, or they can be used decoratively to cover a fence or an arbor. Even a small backyard can be home to a beautiful and productive grape vine.

Soil

Grapes prefer a light soil with good drainage and moderate to high fertility. Achieving this means incorporating lots of organic matter into the existing soil, and supplying the growing vines with light mulch during the winter.

Planting

Planting can be done in early spring or winter. It's best to purchase your vines as bare-root plants early in the spring. They are least expensive this way, and it's easier on both you and the plant to put them in the ground during the dormant period. Just before or after you put the vines in the ground, prune them back to two or three buds. Prune the roots if necessary to avoid wadding them in the planting hole. Grapes should be planted one inch deeper than they grew in the nursery, and spaced eight feet apart for maximum performance. Grapes should always be planted in full sunlight to grow the healthiest plants and to create high sugar content in their fruit.

Fertilizing and Watering

The newly planted vines should be kept moist the first year after planting. In succeeding years, they will easily withstand short dry periods.

Fertilizing with aged manure mixed with compost or straw in early spring gets the vines off to a speedy start early in the growing season. That mixture also acts as mulch, retaining moisture. Later in spring, before fruit set begins, an application of a complete fertilizer will ensure plenty of nutrients to maintain the health and production of your plants.

Pruning

Grapes may be pruned anytime from December through February. The first growing season should produce one main trunk from the two or three buds left at planting time. Select the strongest vine for this purpose at pruning time. The second growing season should produce four lateral branches. Fewer or more may be utilized to meet individual requirements such as arbors, trellises, etc.

When pruning grapevines, always leave a finger or stub with three or four buds. Some light summer pruning may hasten fruit development. Pinching side shoots back to one leaf from the cane is an easy way to do this. Pinching side shoots off forces more energy into fruit production and away from vegetative growth. Also, in early summer, canes can be pinched back to two leaves past a fruit cluster. Leave one bunch per cane the first year; after that, save two or three.

Home Grown Gardens

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Varieties

Although 'Concord' is a popular, well known variety of grape, it is not recommended for growing in the Willamette Valley.

'Flame' — European origin. Seedless. Loose clusters of crisp, sweet, red berries. Clusters are loose enough that Bunch Rot is not much of a problem. Very good flavor that lends itself to fresh eating or making raisins. Vigorous and productive. Needs hot summers for best fruit production. Ripens from late July to early August. This is the red seedless grape you will find in most grocery stores.

'Glenora' — American origin. Seedless. Introduced from the Geneva Station in 1976. Glenora is the first black seedless variety. Medium size, loose, well-filled clusters of medium, seedless bluish-black berries. Smooth, thin skin with sweet and spicy highly flavored flesh. Superior quality-keeps well on the vine. Highly vigorous vine with medium productivity. Ripens in late August or early September, about 20 days before 'Concord'. Hardy to approximately -10 degrees F. Grows well in zones 5-8.

'Himrod' — American origin. Seedless. Introduced from the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in 1952. Long, large, loose clusters of medium sized, oval, seedless golden yellow berries. Crisp skin, sweet and juicy flesh. Fine table quality. Used for juice. Has a pure, sweet, delicate flavor. Also makes excellent raisins. Moderate disease resistance. Ripens about 25 days before 'Concord'. Fairly hardy.

'Interlaken' — American origin. Seedless. Introduced from the Geneva Station in 1947. Medium size tapering clusters with small to medium, seedless golden berries. Crisp, meaty, sweet flesh with a pleasant tangy flavor. Good for eating fresh and excellent for raisins. Vigorous vines are disease resistant. Ripens mid to late August. Medium hardy if not allowed to overcrop.

'Suffolk Red' — American origin. Seedless. Medium size, long, loose clusters. Round, firm, meaty, seedless berries. Excellent quality. Color varies from bright red to grayish pink. Needs direct sun to develop maximum red color. Needs constant moisture and fertility to keep the vine growing well, then it can be very vigorous. Good mulch will often do the trick. Moderately susceptible to mildews but almost disease free. Ripens during September, about 14 to 20 days before 'Concord'.

'Catawba' — American origin. Clusters are medium to large and well formed. Fruit is medium size, round, dull purplish-red with distinctive flavor. Flavor is both vinous and slightly foxy, aromatic. Catawba is a very good table grape and a very good keeper after picked. Excellent for jams and jellies. It is also widely used in New York and Ohio for wine and champagne. Vines are vigorous, productive, and hardy, but are Mildew susceptible. Hardy to approximately -10 degrees F.

'Stueben' — American. Introduced by the Geneva Station in 1947. Very large, nicely formed, long and slender compact clusters. Blue to purplish-black berries. Delicious tender sweet flesh with a distinctive spicy flavor. Very good table grape that also makes excellent red wine. Vigorous, hardy, and very productive vines. Resistant to Black Rot and Downy Mildew. Ripens in mid September, a few days before 'Concord'.

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