



## WINE GRAPE INFORMATION FOR PENNSYLVANIA AND THE REGION

From Penn State Cooperative Extension

<http://pawinegrape.com/>

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Each winter pruning workshops are held around the region. In Virginia, [workshops](#) are hosted by local extension agents and scheduled on 1/8 (expired) and 2/19 from 1-3 p.m., with location/dates for two additional workshops to be announced. The [Maryland Grape Growers Association](#) usually hosts 3-4 pruning workshops. In Pennsylvania, a pruning workshop will be held at [Waltz Vineyards](#) in Manheim, PA on Monday, 27 January from 9 a.m. to noon. The lecture portion covers vine anatomy and terminology, commercial training and trellis systems, pruning equipment, pruning principles and practices, and common sense rules. This is followed by an outside demonstration of head/cane and cordon/spur pruning in the vineyard. The workshop is free but pre-registration is required. Please RSVP to [mlc12@psu.edu](mailto:mlc12@psu.edu) if you plan to attend. Check the weather and dress appropriately, the workshop will be held regardless of weather conditions. Pruning is vitally important to achieving vine balance and good quality wine. Given the recent cold, adjustments in pruning practices in areas susceptible to bud and trunk injury is even more important. You can find information about [pruning grapevines](#) on the PWGN website including Pruning Rules, Vine Size and Balance and Ready, Set, Prune. Please check the PWGN [viticulture and enology calendar](#) for more events around the region.

Larry and Chris Burkhardt own and operate [Little Britain Ag Supply](#) in Quarryville, PA. Chris has a plant path masters degree with Dr. Barb Christ, and worked with Dr. Elwin Stewart on his vine decline project so he is familiar with vines and vineyards. Their business is in the middle of the expanding wine industry in southeast and south central Pennsylvania, and they are very interested in developing a working relations with commercial vineyards. I view vendors as a potentially valuable resource for the wine industry, and each grower should decide if they are getting valid and effective information and recommendations, and the right products at a fair price. On January 8 they hosted a vineyard producers meeting in Chester County that focused on grape diseases and vineyard management with [Dr. Mizuho Nita](#), the grape pathologist from Virginia Tech as the main guest speaker. He presented information about phomopsis, downy mildew, and botrytis bunch rot, and fungicide trial updates on powdery, downy and late season rots (click [HERE](#) to view Dr. Nita's two power point presentations). One focus of his research has been on ripe rot and there is not a silver bullet solution to *Colletotrichum*. He tests many fungicides at the VA Tech research vineyard in Winchester and his results are well worth reviewing. Be sure to be a regular visitor to Dr. Nita's blog – [Virginia Grape Disease Update](#), which is a southern harbinger of conditions in southern Pennsylvania, and also the Virginia vineyard IPM guide (a worthy complement to the NY/PA Pest Management Guidelines for Grapes). The audience for this meeting included many of the best wine growers in the state so a lively discussion ensued. All seem to

agree that harvest critter issues are becoming more serious, including one grower who said that wasp and yellow jacket damage is now his number one threat to wine quality. Birds seemed not to be quite as severe in '13 but they will be back, and netting is the best solution, though there has been talk about those giant wavy-scary dancing air-balloon figures seen on used car lots as an effective deterrent to birds and four-legged varmints. All manner and sizes of these vertebrate pests are getting into vineyards, as if nature has wrung the dinner bell on grapes, which are a great late season source of food. There was some agreement that the 3-strand NZ type electric fence may be as effective as a 10' exclusion fence for a fraction of the cost. Late season fruit rots and downy mildew are tops on the disease list, though the dry weather in September and October helped to suppress both in many vineyards (with the help of outstanding vineyard management during the summer). The main concern is that the fruit diseases are getting an early toehold in clusters and causing infections later on, this would include the late season sour, bitter and ripe rot organisms, so the early sprays, including phomopsis if there is a history of problems with this disease, is imperative, with the right materials at the full-label rate and excellent coverage. I have the distinct impression in talking with growers about using the early leaf removal practice to loosen clusters on tight, rot prone varieties like Pinot Gris, Riesling and Chardonnay that they are not removing leaves early enough or enough leaves. According to the work by Dr. Stefano Poni in Italy, the leaves must come off well before bloom and the 6-8 basal leaves must be removed, leaving a new shoot with just 2-3 apical leaves. This looks scary, but according to Dr. Poni, this is the time to adjust hormone distribution to affect berry set and open the clusters. I talked about [effective vineyard spraying](#), invoking the name of Dr. Andrew Landers frequently, but also my own experience with spraying vineyards. Each application involves dozens of decisions before, during and after spraying the vineyard, and each one must be carefully considered and correct to achieve the goals of the application, not to mention the health and safety matters, and equipment quality, care and operation. Click [HERE](#) to see my power point presentation (2.8MB). I continue to believe that effective spraying, which results in less disease and insect damage to fruit, may be the best and fastest way to improve overall grape quality in the region. Spraying is NOT intuitive. You have to learn how to do it correctly, effectively and safely, and it needs to be at the core of vineyard ops. Brian Dickerson, who manages several vineyards in SE PA, talked about the vintage and the many and difficult decisions he had to make given every changing conditions, for example, letting the cover crop grow high to increase the soil moisture sink vs. impeding airflow through the vineyard, which could exacerbate diseases.

I'd like to thank Larry and Chris for organizing and hosting this meeting, and for their interest in serving the needs of vineyards in the area. We should have more meetings like this. The level of conversation and quality of the discussion was very high and resulted in some serious learning and exchange of ideas and information. We also need more vendors who are dedicated to serving the wine industry, and helping it to grow and educate grape growers about products and services.

-0.9F – that was the low temperature at my house at 07h00 on 1/7. A friend who was in Tioga County said the low temp was -10F. Damage to vines is ethereal and often defies logic or explanation, why one vine died and another did not. But if the vines are in a low spot where the soils may be wet and cold air can be trapped, then the vines are at greater risk – most veteran growers know where their high risk areas are and new growers will learn over time. The Arctic vortex was an advective event so wind machines in Ontario and elsewhere were silent, and the cold took over. I'm not sure how the persistent frigid wind will affect vines. Growers will certainly want to cut buds and make pruning adjustments, and given the way this season is going (cold) the timing and choice of pruning varieties is important (a blend of value of variety and cold tolerance), usually the Bordeaux reds would be pruned last. It's hard for growers not to be in the vineyard but it's better to wait to the latest possible time to prune and still get

it done before bud break. The good thing about the cold is that it should help to suppress disease and insect overwintering populations. In my experience, trunk injury will reveal itself later in the year – I have seen shoots collapse as late as August in vineyards, but checking trunks for necrotic tissue can give an indication of the extent of damage. I am not a fan of replacement viticulture but I have come to accept it as a production practice north of the Mason-Dixon. John Thull, research vineyard manager at UMN talked about it this summer with ease and acceptance as part of regular vineyard practices in Minnesota. Hilling up grafted vines and maintaining replacement parts are standard practices. Use this resource for more information about cold injury to grapevines: [Winter Injury to Grapevines and Methods of Protection](#) (E2930) from Michigan State University. Winter is not over and continued vigilance and adaptation is necessary.

VINEYARD PROPERTY FOR SALE: 29 acre farm in southern Chester County. 23 acres tillable with high well drained soils on a southeast facing slope, includes a historic 2880 sq. ft. brick farmhouse. \$550,000, call Joel Brown – Beiler-Campbell Realtors – 610-213-9001 or [jcbrown1@zoominternet.net](mailto:jcbrown1@zoominternet.net).

WINERY FOR SALE: [Seven Valleys Winery](#) is for sale: Private paradise nestled in the fertile farmland of Southern York County. Located 1.5 miles from the heart of Shrewsbury. This distinguished estate boasts spectacular landscaping with 79+ acres. The property offers so many possibilities with the functioning winery, tasting room, many outbuildings, pond and lovely beautifully restored home currently used as a rental. The winery is a perfect location for private parties, weddings and business retreats. The tasting room is available for meetings and private events. Relaxing scenery of rolling acres of grapevines can be enjoyed from the deck. Contact Larry Lindt at 717-880-7180.

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