

Growing Guide for Grapes

Grapes have been grown for centuries in many regions of the world. New England is no exception and grapes can be grown in almost every area of our region. Grapes are delicious in jams and beverages as well as just to eat fresh. They are easy to grow as long as they have support, and will provide a bountiful harvest for many years.

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| Light: | full sun, at least 8 hours |
| Soil: (pH) | well drained, sandy loam, pH of 5.5 to 6.2; avoid poorly drained soils |
| Zone: | 3-7 |
| Moisture: | 1 inch/week during growing season |
| Fertilizer: | 10-10-10 or equivalent; organic options include Espoma or Pro- Gro |
| Plant Height: | vine; needs support |
| Pollination: | Self pollinating |

Varieties

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| Canadice | Lakemont |
| Concord | Reliance |
| Himrod | Edelweiss |
| Frontenac | Itasca |
| Cayuga White | |

Plant Care

Choose a site that has full sun and that is protected from strong, winter winds. Select varieties that are suited to your region. Prepare the soil well in advance of planting, making sure the pH is in the correct range, and has been amended with organic matter such as compost or well rotted manure. Grapes should be planted in the spring (usually in the first part of May in New Hampshire). Do not fertilize at planting time, although starter solution may be suggested. The plants should be spaced 8' apart depending on the type of support system being used, and the rows 10-12' apart. When planting in rows, an easy trellis consists of posts set in the row every 10-15', with end posts braced well. The posts should be set in the ground at least 3' to bear the weight of the vines. Two wires (9 gauge) are secured to the posts; the first one at 3' from ground level and the second, 5'. Grapes can be grown on many types of support; arbors, fences, and decorative trellises are some possibilities. It is easier to train the grapes in the first season





if the support system is in place. Once planted, prune the plants to a single cane and cut back to two buds. During the growing season, tie all shoots that grow to a stake; tie shoots loosely to avoid cutting into the canes. Water the plants when less than an inch of rain is received per week during the growing season and control weeds to reduce competition for water and nutrients.

Pruning

Once grapes have started to mature, they grow quickly. Usually, one or two layers of leaves are enough for flower and fruit development. All grapes produce fruit on one year old wood, but remember grapes will generally produce more growth than necessary. Dormant pruning should be done in late winter and early spring. When you are training to a wire trellis system, a single, vigorous cane is grown up a post and cut back to the second horizontal support wire (1st year). When buds develop into side shoots, choose 2 that are closest to each wire (2nd year) and remove all of the other canes. These lateral shoots are cut back, leaving 10-12 buds, and then tied along the wires creating 'arms'. In the following years, annual pruning consists of thinning out shoots to a few 'spurs' (short shoots with fruit buds). If you want to train grapevines up an arbor or other structure, let a single cane grow up until it reaches the area where branching is desired, and cut the cane at that point. New shoots will develop, and arms can be trained accordingly. Thin out unwanted shoots annually. Old plantings can be rejuvenated by cutting the plant back to shoots that have developed low on the trunk. These shoots are then trained as a young plant would be.

Fertilizer

Fertilizer should be applied 3 weeks after planting in the first year. Apply ¼ # 10-10-10 or its equivalent around each plant. This amount should be doubled each year, until 1 # is reached. This is the maximum amount of fertilizer applied to mature vines each year. A thin amount of compost may be applied annually.

Insects and Disease

Some insects and diseases occur on grapes. Grapes are commonly susceptible to powdery mildew and botrytis which can negatively affect yields and plant growth. Japanese Beetles, leafhoppers, and some moth species are attracted to grapes and if left unchecked, will do serious harm. Check your plants regularly, and if needed, spray. Products such as Serenade and Copper fungicides should control fungal problems. For caterpillars and beetles, use Thurcide or Captain Jack's Dead Bug. Always read the label for application rates and other precautions.

When the fruit starts to ripen, birds and raccoons can be troublesome. Netting will help keep birds away, and some animal repellants should deter raccoons.





Wentworth Greenhouses

Helpful Tips and Information



Harvest, Storage and Use

Grapes should be left to ripen on the vine until the stalk snaps off cleanly and easily. Bags placed over the bunches, can prevent birds and bees getting to them first. Berries keep well under refrigeration or can be preserved in jelly, juices, made into wine or dried as raisins. Of course, they are a delicious treat fresh from the vine.

For more detailed information, use the following link:

https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource004155_Rep5936.pdf

https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource007159_Rep10342.pdf



www.WentworthGreenhouses.com
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