

*Washington State Grape Society
October, 2007 Newsletter
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RUST MITES BUILDING UP IN WA VINEYARDS

Summer populations of grape leaf rust mites are building in eastern Washington vineyards. From levels of less than one per leaf in late

June, some vineyards are now showing populations of up to 100+

per leaf. These populations will shortly make themselves noticeable by producing leaf bronzing on late summer foliage. They do NOT require spray treatment as there is no apparent impact of summer feeding on vine health or fruit quality. Any sprays applied in summer for rust mites during August will miss a certain proportion of the population which has already occupied winter refugia on vine trunks.

The presence of rust mites/leaf bronzing should be used as an indication that spring sulfur treatments for rust mites will be needed in 2008. Spring sulfur treatments were widely used by WA growers in 2007 and successfully prevented restricted spring growth and yield loss caused by these mites.



Please report significant leaf bronzing to Deborah (Tora) Brooks at WSU-Prosser (brooks1@wsu.edu), so that we may collect samples of associated predatory mites for research on biological control of rust mites. photos by Victor Reyna

KEEP THE DATES FOR WSGS ANNUAL MEETING

November 15-16 8am-4:30pm at the Nazarene Church in Grandview.

The program has expanded to two full days and is packed with information for wine and juice grape growers.

Thursday's topics include:

- Late Season Irrigation Effects on Grapes
- Mechanization in Vineyards
- 2007 Grape Crop Economics
- Trellis Tension Monitor to Aid Crop Estimation
- Concord Whole Plant C-N-P-K Budget

Friday is pest management and sustainable viticulture

Keynote speaker: Kelly Lentz from Mendocino Wine Co. discussing carbon dioxide emissions released into the atmosphere and deemed responsible for climate change. How does this affect the grower and are there practical ways in dealing with global warming?

Other topics include:

- History & Biology of Beetle Pests on Grapes
- Update on Bugs
- Mites – One, Growers – One
- Cover Crops for Hosting Predators
- AgWeatherNet
- Nematode Management Tools
- Update on Leaf Roll & Stem Pitting
- Low-Volume Conventional, Organic, Biodynamic: Panel discussion

and lots of door prizes!

Speakers include:

Olufemi Alabi, Trent Ball, Wyatt Cone, Joan Davenport, Albert Don, Tess Grasswitz, Gary Groove, David James, Ridhar Jarugula, James Michael, Keith Oliver, Mercy Olmstead, Ekaterina Riga, Kerry Ringer, Russ Smithyman, Jen Smithyman, Doug Walsh, Derek Way, Joseph Yenish, Paul Blom.

WSGS FIELD DAY: AN AUTOMATED VINEYARD AND MORE...



On August 9, Grape Society members met at Columbia Crest for a rousing tour that spawned numerous questions. The day began with Russ

Smithyman leading a caravan of pick-ups to the approximate 650 acres at Canoe Ridge vineyards. Here we examined several different blocks in a deficit irrigation study. The goals were to control canopy size and open the fruiting zone by limiting water. There were two blocks, one with a traditional irrigation strategy and one with extreme deficit irrigation. The blocks with extreme deficit irrigation received their first drink just that week with only a quarter inch of water. From now until harvest, they will maintain a 70% full vine ET regime. The blocks averaged about 3 tons/acre. With 3-4 feet of shoot growth and some yellowing of leaves to open the canopy, Columbia Crest achieved their goals in these cabernet and merlot blocks. Russ seemed to prefer this style of management and canopy shape as opposed to using

a vertical wire. The winemakers too are pleased with the results and often blend the extreme deficit blocks with the traditional blocks. If you want to try this extreme deficit irrigation be prepared to see a reduction in yield for the first 2 years, but then the vine appears to level off. Also don't be alarmed to see the loss of vegetation; first the tendrils, then the shoot tips, and lastly the basal leaves to open the canopy.

All this talk on irrigation spawned a great conversation on post-harvest irrigation practices. The goal is to apply enough water to protect the vines during the winter, but too much could promote excess vigor in the spring. The practices ranged from wetting the soil 16 inches to 36 inches. There is not a good understanding or standard recommendation of exactly how much water to apply.



The tour moved to experimental vineyards being managed with a 2-armed Oxbo. This is a large piece of equipment that has the capabilities to mechanically pre-prune, sucker, remove leaves, and fruit thin. This is an experimental unit not used on many farms. Overall, the comments and economic savings are positive. Using the Oxbo to pre-prune saved an approximate 20-25% in labor costs for hand pruning. There was also an estimated 40% cost savings to run 2 arms while pruning, rather than 1 arm. However, there are still some kinks and efficiencies to be worked out. For example, there is only a 3 week window that the trunk cleaner will remove suckers efficiently, basically before they get woody. Also, the system is key. The trellis needs to be precise and straight with irrigation lines tied down low. The cost savings could be even greater by combining tasks like suckering and shoot thinning. For now some growers are skeptical that the cost of the machine is worth the investment for growers with smaller farms.

Overall, an extremely successful event and thanks to Grape Society President, Jack Watson for organizing it!

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT WSU?!

New WSU President



Elson S. Floyd, 51, was named President of the four-campus Washington State University on December 13, 2006. He took office as the 10th president of Washington State's land-grant research university on May 21, 2007.

At numerous events President Floyd has stated that agriculture is a top priority. This is some of what he has had to say on a September 26th web posting.

"In the fall, many Washingtonians visit orchards. Last week, I was one of them.

My trip to Central Washington centered around the dedication of a new Washington State University tree fruit research orchard near Rock Island. The work that will be done there, and will continue in the main research labs in Wenatchee, provides a good illustration of what WSU must do to support the economy and a way of life in our state.

*If you are not involved in the tree fruit industry, or in agriculture in general, you might think that it has a sort of timeless quality. **In truth, agriculture is a most dynamic industry. Without the latest and best research, its strength can be eroded by foreign competition.***

The day we begin to take our agricultural legacy for granted is the day that we will begin to lose it."

Find more about President Floyd at <http://www.wsu.edu/president/index.html>

New WSU Extension Food Scientist

Kerry Ringer joined the WSU team in Prosser on August 1. She comes to us with a doctoral degree in molecular plant sciences. She has interest in aroma compounds in wine grapes and other fruit. Kerry is a Washington native having grown up in Ellensburg and completing her degrees at WSU. Feel free to contact Kerry at 509-786-9324 or kringer@wsu.edu.



Want updates on the latest research....

Join us for the WSU Grape Fieldman's Breakfast on the first Thursday of the month at The Barn in Prosser. Breakfast starts 7:15am, followed by a round table discussion, and a speaker. The breakfast is a meeting place for growers, consultants, industry, and university faculty to share experiences and gain knowledge. We start early and end early to get you back in the vineyard. Contact Gwen Hoheisel if you have any special needs or questions. 509-786-5609 or gwhoheisel@wsu.edu

PUBLIC RELATIONS: HOW TO GET YOUR WINERY NOTICED A SEMINAR BY VINEYARD & WINERY MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE

Santa Rosa, Calif. (September 24, 2007) -- Staying true to its commitment of providing the wine industry with timely educational events, Vineyard & Winery Management magazine presents the seminar Public Relations: How to Get Your Winery Noticed on November 8, 2007 at the FountainGrove Inn, Santa Rosa (www.fountaingroveinn.com). The daylong program is targeted at all levels of winery experience, and features a lineup of speakers with relevant wine industry know-how. Attendees may register via www.vwm-online.com or obtain general information at 800.535.5670 ext. 106.

SUSTAINABLE SMALL FARMING AND RANCHING COURSES NOW OFFERED

PUAYLLUP, Wash. -- This fall local farmers and those interested in becoming farmers have an opportunity to learn about new farming models. Selected county extension offices in Washington and Idaho are now taking registrations for a weekly course titled Sustainable Small Farming and Ranching. This evening course is part of an expanding series developed by the Cultivating Success program of Washington State University and the University of Idaho. Courses are already beginning in some areas, but late registrations are being accepted.

This 12-to-14 week course combines classroom and on-farm experience to give students lessons in technical aspects of farming along with practical whole-farm management skills. Guest speakers range from soil and compost research scientists to successful local producers. Students will tour local farm and market operations, meet key community resource people and build a network of resources and connections. In addition, class members explore Internet resources that provide critical production and marketing information.

"This course was designed for beginning farmers and for current producers who are interested in taking their farm in a new direction," said Marcy Ostrom, director of WSU's Small Farms Program and a co-instructor at WSU.

The cost of the 12-to-14 week course ranges from \$125 - \$200. Some scholarships are available. The course can be taken for continuing education units or college credit.

For information on course locations and more details about the Cultivating Success program visit www.cultivatinguccess.org or contact: Mary Kempfert in WA at mkempfert@wsu.edu or (253) 445-4565
Amanda Snyder in ID at amsnyder@uidaho.edu or (208) 885-204

NORTHWEST GRAPE GROWERS CAN NOW CALCULATE THEIR COST-OF-PRODUCTION ONLINE

With funding provided by a USDA Grant Partnership, the Washington Wine Industry Foundation (WWIF) officially launched online cost-of-production calculators for wine and juice grape growers in Wash., Oregon and Idaho at www.nwgrapecalculators.org [<http://www.nwgrapecalculators.org/>](http://www.nwgrapecalculators.org/) .

The calculators, modeled after existing tree fruit calculators and WSU production bulletins with input from growers in all three states, allow growers to enter their own cost figures into the calculator, and automatically calculate their costs of producing grapes. If a grower does not know his specific costs, the calculators are pre-set with industry average figures.

"The calculators are a valuable tool for grape growers," said Vicky Scharlau, WWIF executive director. "Growers can use their custom cost information to compare year-to-year figures, present to lenders and bankers for financing, evaluate the impact of different production methods and estimate their costs-until-yield."

There are sixteen calculator versions - four calculator types and four production years.

- * Wine grapes conventional
- * Wine grapes organic
- * Juice grapes conventional
- * Juice grapes organic

Each calculator has four production years to choose from - year 1: Establishment, year 2, year 3 and years 4+, so growers can calculate the costs for an individual year, all production years or forecast costs until full yield. The results can be printed out and saved to a computer.

To learn more about the calculators visit www.nwgrapecalculators.org [<http://www.nwgrapecalculators.org/>](http://www.nwgrapecalculators.org/) .

DEADLINE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM APPLICATIONS IN WASHINGTON SET FOR NOVEMBER 2

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Washington today announced the application deadline – November 2 – for Washington producers interested in participating in a popular cost-share program called the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

According to NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, Dave Brown, the deadline is two weeks earlier than last year's, and has been moved up to help complete as many contracts as possible before the current programs expire under the existing Farm Bill.

“In discussions with national, regional, and state leaders,” Brown said, “we believe it would serve the people of Washington best by obligating any new EQIP funds as early in the fiscal year as possible. Therefore,” he said, “producers will need to submit a completed application by November 2 to be considered in this round of EQIP contracting.”

EQIP is a voluntary, cost-share assistance program that funds conservation practices including those aimed at helping farmers improve irrigation efficiency; manage run-off nutrients and/or animal waste; improve the health of native plant communities; and reduce soil loss. In 2006, Washington agricultural producers qualified for more than \$16 million in cost-share assistance through the program. Contact: Dave Brown, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, 509/323-2971

WSU IPM TEAM SAVES GROWERS MONEY, WINS AWARD

A Prosser team of WSU researchers and their wine-industry collaborators are the winners of the 2007 Integrated Pest Management Team Award.

The award is given each year to the team that successfully implements an integrated pest

management (IPM) solution to an agricultural pest problem. The Pacific Northwest Vineyard IPM team, led by entomologist Doug Walsh, and based at WSU's Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Prosser, devised an innovative technique that virtually eliminated cutworm bud damage on grapevines.

The vineyard solution saves growers about \$5.5 million a year and has resulted in an 84 percent (about 25,000 pounds per year) reduction in pesticide use.

Previously difficult to control, Walsh said that cutworm “wakes up hungry in the spring” and immediately sets out to devour the buds where grape clusters form. Before Walsh and his team approached the problem, treatment consisted of an organophosphate insecticide “with negative environmental consequences,” Walsh said. The organophosphate insecticide also killed beneficial insects while only marginally controlling cutworm.



Walsh's research team came up with the idea of applying insecticides in a highly targeted fashion that took advantage of the cutworm's biology and avoided impacts to beneficial insects. By spraying a pyrethroid (rather than organophosphate) insecticide on the trunk of the vine where it meets the soil, cutworms are discouraged from climbing up from the soil where they dwell to the buds where they create damage.

The technique worked extremely well in early trials, so the challenge was adapting it to commercial-scale use. Walsh knew that herbicides were being applied to the vineyard floors with sprayers that used motion sensors that *prevented* the trunks of grape vines from being sprayed with damaging herbicides. Was it possible to use this technology to *target* the trunk instead?

“I asked a technician, ‘How difficult would it be to switch it over so that you just treated the trunk with an insecticide? And it was great. The technician

leaned over, pulled out the two wires that connected it, crossed them over and plugged them back in.” The simplicity of this solution, utilizing existing technology with a twist, was a key to its rapid adoption by the industry.

“The growers started using this solution,” said Walsh “and it was a real cost savings to them. They were using very little insecticide and getting very good control. The grower response within two years was universal. At this point I think every grower around here has adopted this practice in some form.”

In addition to Walsh, the award-winning team was composed of WSU research and Extension personnel Holly Ferguson, Ron Wight, Tim Waters and Sally O’Neal Coates. Industry collaborators were Len Welch, an entomologist with Valent USA, an agrochemical company, Leif Olsen of Olsen Wine Estates, Kevin Corliss of Chateau Ste. Michelle Wine Estates, and Sandy Halstead of EPA Region 10.

IMMIGRATION REFORM UPDATE

Congressman Hastings continues working towards an immigration solution that ensures national security and establishes a simple way for agriculture employers to access legal workers. Soon he will be meeting with officials from the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Labor about plans to enforce the "no-match" rule and streamline the H-2A program without congressional action.

HASTINGS VISITS RED MOUNTAIN

Congressman Hastings recently toured Benton County's Red Mountain Area Vision - a locally devised effort to develop over 4,000 acres into a park-like setting focusing on wineries, vineyards and related industries. The project is aimed at growing the Washington wine industry and building the local economy by attracting businesses and tourists to the area.

This summer Congressman Hastings added funding for the Red Mountain Area Vision to a bill that has been approved by the House of Representatives.

The bill must be acted upon by the Senate before it can be signed into law.

CONCORDS FOR COOKING



Commentary: Concord grapes are delicious, great with meat

American Concord grapes, identified by their dark blue-purple skins, offer an incomparably distinct, full-bodied burst of flavor -- and cooking with them provides a whole new adventure, according to two food writers. This article includes instructions for Alice Waters' easy grape preparation and describes how chef Mark Peel creates a delectable granita with Concord grapes, Beaujolais wine, black pepper and whole cloves. [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/5)

DATES TO REMEMBER AND THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO:

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| Nov 15-16 | WSGS annual meeting |
| Oct 4 | Grape Fieldman’s Breakfast at The Barn in Prosser – Come meet WSU’s new Extension Food Scientist, Kerry Ringer |
| Feb 6-8 | WAWGG annual meeting |