

Newsletter

August 2004

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 19th, at 7:30 PM.
Meeting Place: Maplewood Community Pool, 7550 Lohmeyer, Maplewood, MO
Website: www.mowinemakers.org
Submitted by: Paul Hendricks

Next Meeting:

The program will be "History of Winemaking in Missouri"

Cellar Notes:

Crush time is here! Approximate ripening dates for grapes in this area:

Cayuga	mid Aug
Seyval	mid to late Aug
Vignoles	late Aug
Traminette	early Sep
Chardonel	early Sep
Vidal	early to mid Sep
Chambourcin	early to mid Sep
Norton	late Sep to early Oct

Goals for ripeness: Whites, 0.85 to 0.75 % titratable acid; Reds, 0.80 to 0.65 % titratable acid
If these acid levels are attained, then the sugar and pH levels will generally be at desirable levels, except for the Norton variety in which the pH will probably be too high and will need to be adjusted

My general procedure for making White Wines from hybrid grapes:

1. Chill the grapes to 45 to 55 °F before processing.
2. Pick out all the rotten berries (if the rot is bad, after picking out the rotten berries, dip the cluster in water with 200 ppm SO₂)
3. Crush the grapes without tearing the stems
4. Add an enzyme as soon as the grapes are crushed (I dilute the enzyme with distilled water in a spray bottle and spray it on the grapes as they come out of the crusher).
5. Press out the juice and discard the pomace
6. Treat the juice with 50 ppm SO₂ (some recommend not adding the SO₂ until after juice clarification)
7. Cold settle the juice for 12 to 48 hours at 40 to 50 °F
8. Rack the clear juice off the sediment into a primary fermenter
9. Bring to room temperature
10. Add sugar if necessary for 12% potential alcohol
11. Add yeast nutrients
12. Rehydrate the yeast according to package directions before adding to the juice
13. When the fermentation is going well, siphon the must into a carboy
14. Place in a temperature controlled environment at 55 to 60 °F for a slow steady fermentation
15. When the specific gravity has dropped to around 1.010 bring to room temperature to finish fermenting

Vineyard Notes:

Allowing the grapes to hang long enough for them to ripen before something eats them or rot ruins them is always the major issue at this time of the year.

Birds will start eating grapes two to three weeks before they are ripe enough to harvest. They can decimate a crop in a few days. I use ¾ inch mesh vinyl netting to cover my grapes. The net is 17 feet wide and as long as the row plus allowances for the ends. I bring the edges together under the row and staple them to the ground and close off the ends. Some birds still get into the nets.

Coons and possums will get under the nets (I've never determined how they do it without tearing the net). They can devour a lot of grapes in a short time. These pests can be caught in live traps (such as Havaheart) baited with dog food or canned tuna. What you do with them then after you catch them is up to you

A yard dog may offer some control of four legged pests but dogs that stay inside the house at night will not be effective.

Sour bunch rot is one of the worst problems in this area. It is a wet rot that affects nearly ripe fruit and smells like vinegar. It starts in one or two berries and then can spread rapidly to the entire cluster. Tight clustered varieties such as Seyval and Vignoles are more susceptible.

Sour rot is thought to be caused by low-grade powdery mildew infections and insect damage such as grape berry moth larva. Insects can also spread the sour rot organism on their bodies. Prolonged periods of wetness and high humidity are conducive to sour bunch rot development. (*reference, <MSU.edu web page> Annemiek Schilder, Michigan State University Plant Pathology*).

It would seem that the best defense against sour rot would be a good spray program for powdery mildew and grape berry moths and maintaining an open canopy, which would allow partial sunlight and good air circulation in the fruiting zone.

Be sure and adhere to the labeled minimum harvest interval on any pesticide used close to harvest.

Indiana State Fair Wine Competition

Club member win awards at the largest wine competition in the country...3300 entries including commercial and amateur.

Charlie Franke	Bronze for Vidal
Charlie Franke	Silver for Locust Honey Mead
Judy Hon	Bronze for Seyval
Steve Schmitt	Bronze for Melody/Traminette

Calendar of Events:

September 16th MWS regular meeting

The SEMO District Fair (Cape Girardeau) wine competition is Sep. 11-18. Entry deadline is Aug. 27. Wines must be received by Sep. 12th. Cost is \$2 per bottle. It is open to commercials and amateurs alike. Contact Greg Stricker <gstrick@msn.com> for entry form.