'Lakemont', 'Suffolk Red' and 'Cayuga White' New Grapes from New York

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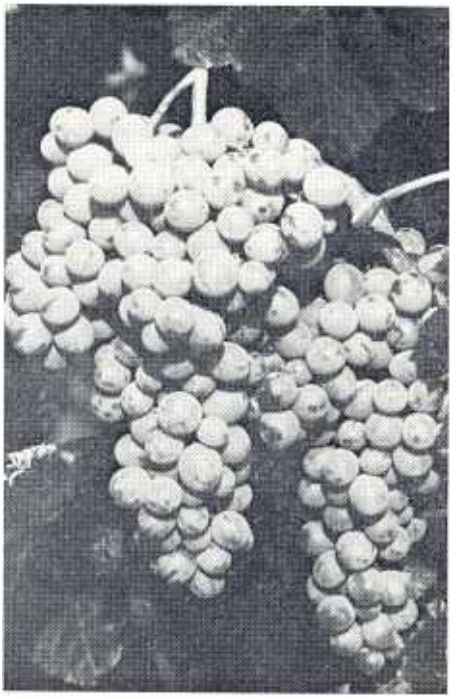
A major objective in breeding dessert grapes has been to combine the seedless character available in certain grapes of Mediterranean origin with sufficient cold hardiness and disease resistance from our American grapes so that the resulting varieties could be suitable for New York conditions.

Two major seedless varieties have been found to be the best sources of the seedless character in this program initiated some 50 years ago. These are: 'Sultanina' or 'Thompson Seedless', a leading raisin and dessert grape and 'Black Monukka', another superior quality dessert grape of somewhat lesser economic importance.

The most productive of all seedless crosses was one made in 1928 between "Ontario' and Sultanina'. 'Ontario' is a very early ripening, white American-type slipskin variety, a seedling of 'Winchell' x 'Moore's Diamond' introduced by the Geneva Station in 1908 and still the best of its type in its season. A family of 56 seedlings fruited. From these the 'Interlaken Seedless' (New York 15292) was named in 1947 and 'Himrod' (New York 15310) and 'Romulus' (New York 15291) in 1952.

These varieties are all seedless, greenish-yellow in color and ripen at different times. 'Interlaken Seedless' is very early, 'Himrod' early and 'Romulus' midseason, about with 'Concord'. The vines of the three varieties are vigorous and productive and hardy enough to tolerate normal winters at Geneva with minimum winter injury. However, if temperatures fall much below −5 to −10°F or if the vines are allowed to carry excessive crops or to lose their leaves early by attacks of mildew or leaf-hoppers, injury will occur at even less extreme temperatures.

Of the three, 'Himrod' has been found to have the finest eating quality and has gained at least limited commercial acceptance in such widely scattered regions as Japan, India, Ohio, Arkansas and on Long Island, N. Y. 'Himrod' has a fault in that its clusters are often loose and scraggly, due to poor berry set. This can be remedied by cane ringing or by gibberellin applications after bloom (3).



Lakemont (N.Y. 15305)

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A fourth selection, 'New York 15305', from the same family has been maintained in test vineyards and is now being named because it has fruit quality equal or nearly equal to 'Himrod' and does not have the problem of poor berry set. It has also been rather widely distributed.

NEW INTRODUCTIONS

Lakemont

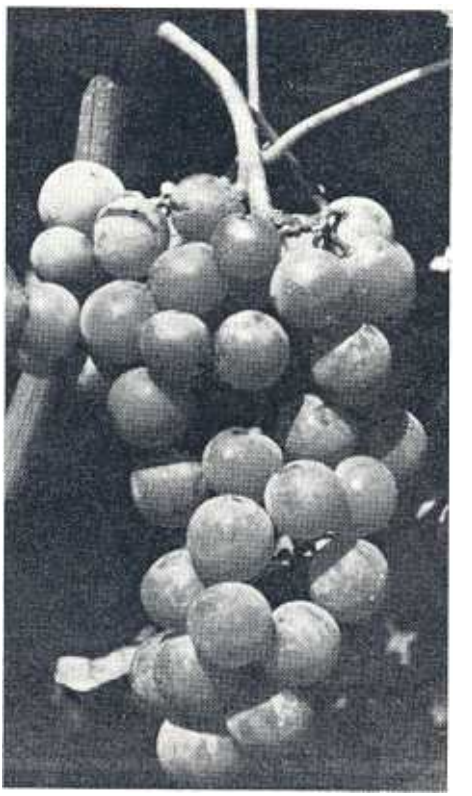
Vines of 'Lakemont' have moderate vigor, they are slightly less hardy than 'Himrod' but more so than 'Interlaken Seedless'. The vines are productive. Flowers are perfect, stamens upright. The fruit clusters are medium to large, medium compact to compact, wedge shaped. Berries are medium to medium minus in size, oval, yellowish-green. Flesh is tender, adheres to the skin as in the seedless parent, juicy, sweet, refreshing, very good to excellent in quality. Seeds are small, abortive, hardly noticeable. Season is about with 'Delaware' or a little later.

Suffolk Red

'Suffolk Red' (New York 21572) is a seedling of 'Fredonia' x 'Russian Seedless 136'. The seedless parent was apparently 'Black Monukka' under another name. It was brought to Geneva by Dr. A. B. Stout of the New York Botanical Garden in 1933 for use in the seedless breeding program. The seed parent, 'Fredonia', is an early midseason, blue, American-type grape of fair quality, a seedling of 'Champion' x 'Lucile' introduced at Geneva in 1927.

The cross was made in 1935. The fruit was first described in 1941 and the selection was propagated in 1944 as an attractive red seedless.

The vine of 'Suffolk Red' is vigorous and production can be good under appropriate conditions. Flowers are perfect, stamens upright, short. Fruit clusters are medium to large, long cylindrical, loose to scraggly when no ringing or gibberellin treatments are applied. Berries are medium in size, round, bright red. Flesh is melting, meaty, sweet, of very good quality. Seeds are small, soft and hardly noticeable. Season is early, before 'Delaware'.



Suffolk Red (N.Y. 21572)

'Suffolk Red', like the other seedless introductions, will experience bud killing when winter temperatures are much below −10 or −15°F. It also tends to set scraggly clusters. However, under conditions of relatively mild winters as in Suffolk County on Long Island, and with gibberellin treatments to insure a good set, it has performed very well. Similar reports have been received from other locations. For these reasons, and because it is an early, attractive red seedless of

excellent quality, it is being named so that it may be more widely available.

Cayuga White

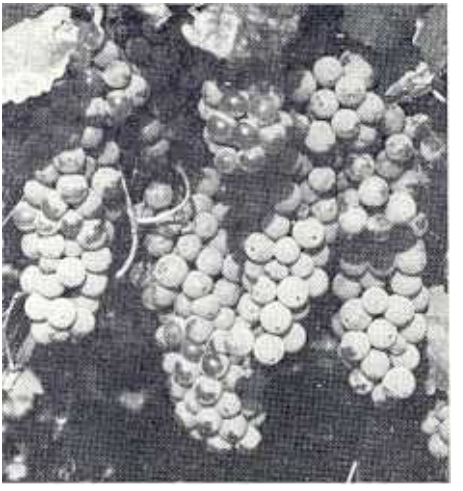
'Cayuga White' is the first of a projected "Finger Lakes" series of new wine grapes for New York.

An expanding and changing grape industry has recently brought about considerable interest in variety evaluation and improvement in the Northeast and Great Lakes area where relatively few pure vinifera or European varieties of grapes are grown. Increasing attention is being given to varieties that will produce premium quality dry table wines of distinctive character. This implies pleasant and characteristic aroma and flavor in wines that are an appropriate accompaniment to a meal.

'Cayuga White' (formerly N.Y. 33403 or Geneva White #3) deserves extensive testing as such a grape. The cross was made in 1945 between 'Seyve-Villard 5-276 (Seyval)' and 'Schuyler'. The former is a French Hybrid which produces a dry white wine of very good quality under New York conditions. It has considerable vinifera in its background and also two or more non-Labrusca American species.

The second parent, 'Schuyler', is a 1947 Geneva introduction, a cross of 'Zinfandel' x 'Ontario'. 'Zinfandel', a major red wine grape in California, is pure V. vinifera in origin. 'Ontario', an early white American-type grape, is a cross of 'Winchell' x 'Moore's Diamond'. The wine character of 'Cayuga White' has a complex origin, and appears to be a blend of some of the most desirable characters of its progenitors.

The fruit was first described in 1952. A year or two later it was selected for further trial as a very productive vine. The original propagation or second test consisted of 4 vines planted in the fall of 1955. Based on their performance, the selection was



Cayuga White (G W_3)

included in "25-variety trial" established in 1964 as a formal trial of the most commercially promising American and French hybrid varieties and six new Geneva selections. This experiment was located at three sites in commercial vinyard areas. 'Cayuga White' proved to be the highest producing white in these trials in their 6th year in the vineyard in 1969 (2).

The vine is vigorous and has been rated as medium hardy. Moderate injury, or killing of about 30 percent of the primary buds, occurred after a temperature of –20°F in the winter of 1967-68 at Geneva. The vines recovered with little cane or trunk injury. The flowers are perfect with upright stamens and bloom is relatively late. Fruit clusters are medium to large, medium compact; long and slightly tapering. Berries are slightly larger than medium, roundish to ellipsoidal, white. The skin is resistant to cracking and the flesh is meaty, somewhat astringent.

A wine sample was first made in 1955 by a Finger Lakes winery and rated very good. Since that time, samples have been made at Geneva in ten different years. With no exception,

the wines have been rated very good to excellent (1). The samples have been described as pleasant, nicely balanced, with delicate aroma, neutral, fruity, European type, resembling most nearly 'White Riesling'.

The harvest dates have usually fallen between September 24 and 29, about 'Concord' season or mid-season at Geneva. At harvest, soluble solids have ranged from 17.0 to 19.0. The fruit hangs very well; fruit condition has been excellent for two or more weeks after normal harvest. If higher solids are desired, a later harvest should be possible.

Literature Cited

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Cornell University Changes Department Name

The Board of Trustees of Cornell University has approved a name change for the Department of Pomology at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station at Geneva. That Department, headed by Dr. Walter J. Kender, is now named the *Department of Pomology and Viticulture.* Viticultural research has gained in prominence in the overall program at Geneva and now the Cornell Administration has given recognition to the national stature of the program in this department. The project leaders in grape research, Dr. Nelson J. Shaulis and Dr. John Einset, and their staff, have accounted for major contributions to the grape industry through their work on vine management and breeding, respectively. It is hoped by Cornell University that the importance of grape research will now be more accurately reflected in the official department name.