

About the Cover:

Funny Fingers® table grape

A characteristic of horticulture for more than a century has been its continuing commitment to producing new cultivars of fruit, vegetable, flower and nursery crops that excite the consumer with new shapes, colors, flavors/tastes and nutritional benefits. In addition, these same developments often enhance production efficiency through improved yields and the introduction of attributes such as disease resistance and extended shelf and/or storage life.

New cultivars can arise through a number of paths including the selection of novel strains, from traditional breeding using elite parents with desired characteristics, and through interspecific hybridisation. The subject in the cover photograph has been developed using the latter approach.

The sweet, curiously shaped table grape Funny Fingers® was bred by Dr David W. Cain of International Fruit Genetics (IFG), in Delano, California, from a hand pollinated cross of the variety Calinda and A2409, an interspecific seedless grape selection from Dr John R. Clark's breeding program at the University of Arkansas. It somewhat resembles lady-finger grape cultivars such as 'Rish Baba' (syn. 'Humphrey's Lady Finger') and 'White Cornichon' but differs in having berries that are even more elongated and pointed at the end. Other recently introduced cultivars from IFG combine the fruity flavors of Eastern grapes — *Vitis labrusca* — and the large, crisp, thin-skinned fruit of California-bred *Vitis vinifera* cultivars.

Plant Patent US20140013474 describes this hybrid as follows:

"The new grapevine 'IFG Twelve' is characterized by producing extremely narrow elongated seedless fruit with a characteristic pointed tip. The shape, which to the author's knowledge is unique among commercially available seedless table grape varieties,

provides consumers with a distinct visual signal to identify the new variety. The new variety is further characterized by producing medium firm reddish black fruits which ripen early in the growing season. Berries are moderately crisp in texture, mild flavored and may have small to medium size rudimentary seed traces. Bunches are long with narrow shoulders and are naturally loose so require no gibberellin for berry thinning. Vines of 'IFG Twelve' are moderately productive and may require cane pruning. The fruit ripen early season usually mid to late July in Delano" and (text slightly modified)

"Fruit:

- *General* - Ripening period - early to midseason; approximately; Jul. 30 (in 2011). Use - fresh market. Keeping quality - excellent. Resistance to - insects: average, typical of *Vitis vinifera* species. Diseases: average typical of *Vitis vinifera* species. Refractometer test – soluble solids: about 20.6°Brix. Brix/acid ratio - about 44.8. Titratable acidity - about 0.46. Juice pH - about 4.12.
- *Cluster*. Mature cluster length (peduncle excluded) - about 26.1 cm. Mature cluster width - about 12.3 cm. Mature cluster weight - about 478 g. Bunch density - medium. Number of berries - about 204. Form - cylindrical.
- *Peduncle*. Lignification of peduncle – medium. Length of peduncle – medium, approximately 4.2 cm.
- *Berry*. Uniformity of size - slightly variable Single berry weight - about 4.4 g. Natural shape - oblong. Seeds – absent. Cross section - circular. Berry dimensions - longitudinal axis: about 40.2 mm; horizontal axis: about 13.5 mm. Berry firmness - medium. Particular flavor - neutral. Bloom (cuticular wax)

- weak. Berry separation from pedicel
- difficult. Skin color (without bloom) - greyed-purple 187A, B.
- *Skin.* Thickness - medium. Texture - tender. Reticulation - absent. Tenacity - tenacious to flesh."

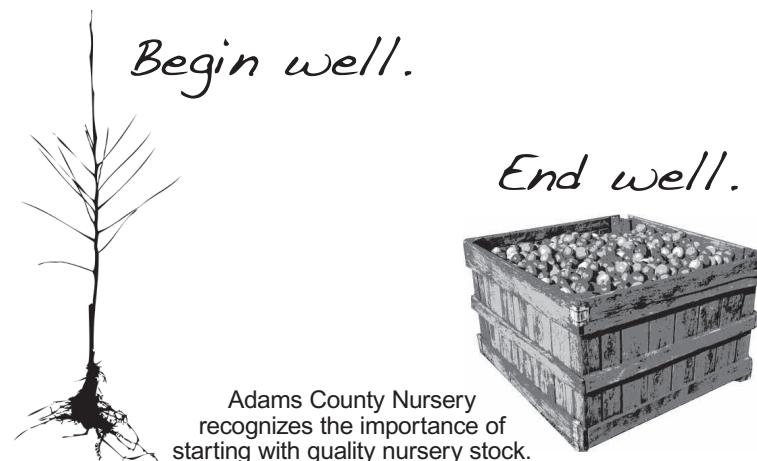
The cultivar is marketed under the name Witch Fingers™ by Grapery in California. There are limited plantings in the USA (~14 ha) and the cultivar has also been planted un-

der license in both Spain and Brazil.

Other cultivars that have been commercialised from the IFG breeding program include Sweet Sapphire®, Sweet Mayabelle® and Cotton Candy®.

Photograph: © David Karp

Contributors: David Karp and David Cain



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