

Some Important Varieties of Vinifera Table Grapes Introduced Since 1946

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Thirteen vinifera table grape varieties introduced since 1946 are being grown or tested in California. The United States Department of Agriculture introduced four: Cardinal, Exotic, Blackrose, and Calmeria. The California Agricultural Experiment Station introduced nine: Perlette, Beauty Seedless, Delight, Early Muscat, July Muscat, Gold, Italia, Canner, and Queen.

Perlette is an early, white, seedless grape, popular from the start and still in demand. Its popularity continues in spite of heavy expenses required for thinning the compact clusters. *Perlette* ripens about 18 days before *Thompson Seedless* and the berries are reported to be one third larger. Sugar content of berries is low and the flavor is neutral, but it has the advantage of maintaining its attractive appearance for a longer period of time after harvest than does the average variety. The vine is very vigorous and productive. The acreage planting of *Perlette*, as given by the California Fruit and Nut Crops Acreage Estimates for 1958, is 2,936.

Beauty Seedless is an early, blue-black, seedless grape with berry size similar to that of *Thompson Seedless*. Berries are firm, sweet, and juicy. Clusters are too compact. Vine is medium in vigor. The variety has been lightly planted.

Cardinal is an early, large, red grape of excellent flavor. The size and shape of cluster are very good, but the setting of some "shot" berries is a weakness. The vine is medi-

um in vigor and very productive. The peak of planting of this variety has probably passed. The Acreage Estimates, California Fruit and Nut Crops for 1958 lists 3,678 acres of *Cardinals*.

Delight is a white seedless grape which ripens a week later than *Perlette* and the berries are a little smaller. It still surpasses *Thompson Seedless* a little in size of berries and in earliness of ripening. The berries have a slight muscat flavor, but the cluster is too compact. The vine is medium in vigor and production. Plantings have been light.

Early Muscat is a white, early grape, ripening just after *Perlette*. The vine is medium in vigor and very productive. The berries are of medium size and have a marked muscat flavor. The cluster type is good.

Exotic is a medium-large, black grape ripening about 10 days later than *Cardinal*. Berries are spherical, very firm, and of good quality. The clusters are well filled but not compact. However, they are too long for commercial use and need shortening. Some berry cracking at the blossom end has been evident in certain localities. The vine is very vigorous and productive.

July Muscat is a white, medium-early grape with a strong muscat flavor. Berries are medium in size and cluster type is good. The vine is vigorous and of medium productivity.

Gold is considered an excellent white table grape prospect. The ber-

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ries are large, oval in shape, and firm. Berry skin is tender with a golden sheen. Gold ripens in early August and has a mild muscat flavor. Cluster type is good. The vine is of medium vigor and very productive.

Italia is a mid-season white grape with a mild muscat flavor. Berries are large and golden. The cluster type is good. Vine is of medium vigor and very productive. *Italia* was extensively planted but returns have been disappointing. Few new plantings are being made. The California Fruit and Nut Crops Acreage Estimates for 1958 lists 1,823 acres of *Italia*.

Blackrose is a mid-season black grape with very attractive appearance and high quality. Berries are very large, jet black with a light-grayish bloom. Clusters are large, conical, well filled but, as a rule, not compact unless girdled. The vine is vigorous and productive. Because of tenderness of skin, *Blackrose* is better adapted to local markets than for distant shipments.

Canner is a white, seedless grape with berries larger than those of *Thompson Seedless* and brighter green. It ripens in mid-season, is low in sugar, and detaches easily from capstem. The clusters are large and compact and the vine is vigorous and productive. It has rated a good prospect for canning or fruit cocktail use.

Queen is an attractive red, mid-season grape. Clusters are large and loosely winged. Berries are large, uniform, and dark red. Vines are of medium vigor and productive. *Queen* will compete with *Flame Tokay*. Although the berry flesh texture is not as firm as that of *Flame Tokay*, the cluster type is better and full color is more easily attained.

Calmeria is a large, late, white, storage-type grape. Berries set well in clusters of excellent type. The sugar

content is high. *Calmeria* is much less subject to spotting than *Almeria*, but is subject to sunburn. Vines are medium in vigor and very productive. Planting stock of this variety is in demand at present.

The United States Department of Agriculture began table grape breeding in California in 1923, and California Agricultural Experiment Station followed soon thereafter in 1929. The work has gained momentum through the years. At present a number of nurseries and private breeders in California are also doing considerable grape breeding work.

The *Thompson Seedless*, or *Sultanina*, is by far the most important variety of grape grown in California today. U. S. Department of Agricultural Statistics for 1958 show California produced 93 percent of the grapes grown in the United States in the previous 14-year period.

The acreage plantings of the five most extensively planted varieties according to the Acreage Estimates of California Fruit and Nut Crops for 1958 are as follows: *Thompson Seedless*—203,639; *Emperor*—31,468; *Zinfandel*—26,113; *Carignane*—24,755; *Flame Tokay*—22,542.

Of the 231,586 acres planted to raisin grapes, 203,639 or 88 percent are of *Thompson Seedless*. According to the 1958 California Marketing Grape, Raisin and Wine Report 5,898 carloads of *Thompson Seedless* were shipped by rail for fresh table use, or more than for any other variety. Many *Thompsons* are also crushed for wine.

The wide acceptance of the *Thompson Seedless* as a fresh table grape by the American public, plus the fact that the three major markets for fresh, raisin and wine are open to seedless grapes, means that more and more efforts should be expended to produce larger and better seedless grapes.