Australian Grape Varieties

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Australian viticulture is founded upon varieties of *Vitis vinifera* many of which are similar to those grown in other grape growing regions of the world. A few varieties, virtually unknown to American or European viticulturists, have attained some cultural status, or have attributes that may be of value to overseas viticulture.

The purpose of this article is to acquaint readers of Fruit Varieties and Horticultural Digest with several of these varieties that may be of interest to grape breeders or have sufficient merit to warrant trials as commercial varieties.

Fig. 1. Bruce, a sport of Sultana with berries that make premium raisins for Australia's export markets.

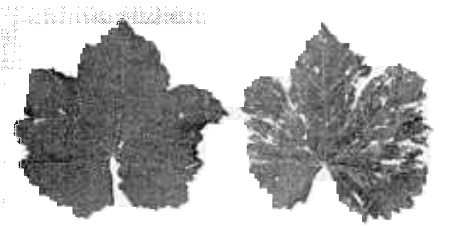

Fig. 2. Berries and a leaf of Normal Sultana (left) and Bruce (right), a sport of Sultana.

Bruce—originated on a vine property near Merbein, Victoria as a sport of Sultana (syn. Sultanina, Thompson Seedless). The clusters of Bruce are about the same size or only slightly smaller than Sultana with somewhat smaller, less ovate, pale, cream coloured berries. Mature berries are fully seedless but differ somewhat from Sultana in that the flavour of Bruce is slightly "flat" and less rich. The vine of the sport is less vigorous and distinct in appearance from typical Sultana. Young inflorescences are pale, cream coloured as though bleached from the normal green. The leaf colour from bud burst to flowering is normal green but then the newest formed leaves become variegated with a typical chimeral colour pattern of irregular areas of paler green and pale, colourless tissue on the leaf blade. The young, developing berries are pale, cream coloured with pale green longitudinal sectors. These pale green sectors gradually lighten and disappear as berry size increases with approaching maturity.

The primary interest in the Bruce variety in Australia is due to its ability

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to produce smaller sized, lighter golden coloured raisins than normal Sultana. Raisins of this type command premium grades and prices in overseas markets, especially in the United Kingdom.

Centennial (syn. Knight's Centennial). This variety originated near Bendigo, Victoria as a large fruited mutation on a branch of the variety Waltham Cross. Centennial is a tetraploid form of a famous table grape variety, Dattier, which is grown in Australia under the name Waltham Cross. Well grown clusters of Centennial are of magnificent appearance with large tapering bunches of very large, golden, ovate berries. Maturity is a week to ten days earlier than Waltham Cross and the berry texture is crisp, tender, firm and very good in quality. Like Waltham Cross, this sport is prone to produce straggly clusters or clusters with irregular sized berries under some growing conditions.

Clare Riesling—is an obscure variety whose true identity has not been established. It is thought that this variety was probably brought to the Clare district of South Australia from Austria by the Jesuit fathers who founded the Sevenhill monastery about 1850. Clusters are medium in size, often winged or shouldered and compact. Berries are medium, short ovate, greenish yellow with a characteristic copper colour when exposed to the sun. Texture is tender and juicy with a neutral flavour. Clare Riesling is highly regarded as a high quality white wine variety; but despite this reputation and the Riesling part of its name, it bears no close resemblance to the true Riesling of Germany in fruit or wine.

Fig. 3. Centennial (right), a tetraploid mutant of Dattier (left), known as Waltham Cross in Australia.

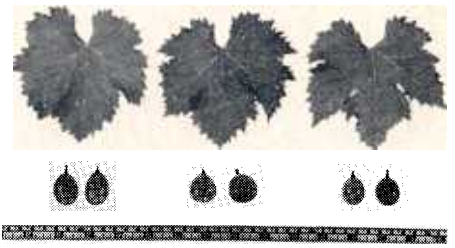

Fig. 4. Muscat Cannon Hall (left), believed to be a form of either tetraploid Muscat Alexandria (center) or diploid Muscat Alexandria (right).

Clare Riesling most closely resembles Semillon and has been confused with that variety in some Australian vineyards During active vine growth Clare Riesling may be distinguished by grass green shoots with whitish green shoot tips, compared with reddish-brown streaked shoots and bronze shoot tips in Semillon. Mature berries are slightly smaller and characteristically copper coloured where exposed to the sun.

Muscat Cannon Hall. The variety grown under this name in Europe and North America is of uncertain and obscure origin but it is considered to be a tetraploid or periclinal chimeral form of Muscat Alexandria by those who have studied it. The variety grown under this name in Australia, chiefly as an export table variety from Western Australia, is not a tetraploid and differs significantly from either the normal diploid Muscat Alexandria (grown as Muscat Gordo Blanco or Gordo in Australia) or tetraploid forms of Muscat Alexandria. Clusters are large, moderately compact, with large

ovate, greenish-yellow berries with light bloom. Texture is tender, medium firm with a rich, muscat flavour. Maturity is earlier than Muscat Alexandria and it is the first suitable export variety to ripen. Mature fruit of Muscat Alexandria may be distinguised from Muscat Cannon Hall by smaller, more greenish appearing, obovoid berries with sparse bloom and a stronger, more pronounced muscat flavour.

Nyora. This variety was introduced in 1963 by the Division of Horticulture, New South Wales Department of Agriculture. Nyora, which in the language of the Australian aborigines means "native berry," originated from a cross of Ohanez x Purple Cornichon made in 1937 at the Yanco Research Station at Yanco, New South Wales. This variety has the distinction of being the first to be named and introduced from an Australian experiment station grape breeding program. Clusters are large, moderately loose and tapering with medium large, ovate, jet black berries having a heavy attractive bloom. Nyora is a late table variety similar in appearance and quality to Purple Cornichon. It appears to be an improvement over the latter in being less prone to shatter when packed, and in having less tendency toward flaccidity, and somewhat more attractive appearance.

Fig. 5. Nyora, an attractive, black grape of Australian origin.

Acknowledgement

The authors thank Mr. A. E. Lawton for taking the photographs.

Sungold Nectarine for Northern Florida

A new nectarine, 'Sungold', has recently been introduced by the Florida Agr. Exp. Station. It is freestone when ripe, yellow-fleshed, and of excellent dessert quality. Sungold is about 2 inches in diameter, with a very short beak, is very attractive, with a bright red blush covering 80 to 100 percent of the fruit. it ripens in June or July in northern Florida. It's flowers appear to be rather resistant to cold in the spring. Sungold requires moderate to heavy thinning, and the fruit seem to have considerable resistance to brown rot.

Sungold was selected at the Quincy Experiment Station from seedlings grown from seed obtained from Rutgers University. This seed was a product of a cross made from an unnamed Rutgers selection and pollen obtained from a hybrid developed by Ralph Sharpe at the Florida Agr. Exp. Station, Gainesville. About 200 Sungold trees have been evaluated in grower and Experiment Station trials since 1966.

Trees and budwood are being distributed by Fla. Foundation Producers, Inc., P.O.B. 14007, University Station, Gainesville, Fla. 32601.