



Available on the Internet at

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/viticulture/463-019/463-019.pdf>

General Consideration of Varieties

- Will consistently produce high quality crops at your site
- Is in demand by existing wineries, has potential for future demand, or will be used in your own winery
- Crop value consistently exceeds cost of production

General Consideration of Vinifera Relative to Other Species/Hybrids

- Must be grafted to pest-tolerant rootstock
- As a group, vinifera are more susceptible to fungal pathogens
- vinifera are more cold tender:
 - Native American spp > hybrids > V. vinifera
- vinifera grape prices roughly twice that of hybrid grape prices

Vitis Vinifera Relative to other Species/Hybrids

- Must be grafted to pest tolerant rootstock



Chardonnay (vinifera)

- **Strengths:**

- Yields ave. 4.8 t/a at Winchester (clone #4)
- Demand for lower yielding clones, such as #95 and #96; softer demand for clones #4 and #5
- High fruit quality, adaptable cultivar
- Fair cold hardiness (MLTE -5F)

- **Weaknesses:**

- Early bud break
- Susceptible to botrytis, powdery mildew and grapevine yellows.



Cabernet Sauvignon (vinifera)

- **Strengths:**

- Good demand
- Yields at Winchester ave. 4.5 t/a with clone #7, 2.8 t/a with clone #6. Both high quality
- Late bud break
- Good rot resistance

- **Weaknesses:**

- Cold-tender (MLTE -7F); one of our most cold-sensitive cvs.
- Bunch stem necrosis



Cabernet Franc (vinifera)

- **Strengths:**
 - Good demand
 - Good rot resistance
 - Cold hardiness superior to Cabernet Sauvignon
 - Clones #1 and #214
 - Softer tannins in fruit/wine compared with C. Sauvignon
- **Weaknesses:**
 - Occasionally poor fruit set
 - High incidence of leafroll virus



Merlot (red vinifera)

- **Strengths:**
 - High demand
 - Excellent fruit quality
- **Weaknesses:**
 - Cold tender
 - Highly susceptible to bunch rot

Petit Verdot (vinifera)

- **Strengths:**

- Yields ave. 5.1 t/a at Winchester
- May be best used in blending
- Greater cold hardiness than Cabernet Sauvignon
- Generally high quality fruit, little rot

- **Weaknesses:**

- High acid and pH in some years
- Demand uncertain



Traminette (hybrid)

- **Strengths:**

- Good yields
- Excellent fruit quality
- Excellent cold hardiness
- Good disease resistance

- **Weaknesses:**

- Uncertain demand
- Limited commercial experience in VA



Norton (red American spp.)

- **Strengths:**
 - Cold hardy
 - Good disease resistance
 - Good for blending
 - Increasing local interest
- **Weaknesses:**
 - Low yields
 - Uncertain demand
 - High pH and high TA



Viognier (vinifera)

- **Strengths:**
 - Good demand
 - Excellent fruit quality
 - Good resistance to bunch rot
 - Fair cold hardiness (MLTE -11F)
- **Weaknesses:**
 - Weak growth in some situations
 - Yield ave. 2.9 t/a at Winchester
 - Bud necrosis can limit yields (a blessing?)



Chambourcin (hybrid)

- **Strengths:**
 - Excellent quality
 - Good cold hardiness
- **Weaknesses:**
 - Uncertain demand



Vidal blanc (hybrid)

- **Strengths:**
 - Good cold hardiness
 - High yields
 - Late bud break
 - Good bunch rot resistance
- **Weaknesses:**
 - Overcropping
 - Susceptible to tomato & tobacco ringspot viruses



Other Varieties

Variety	Comment
Chardonel (hybrid)	Good – far superior to ‘Seyval’
Muscats, Malvasia	Good, niche market
Nebbiolo	Cold tender, perhaps with good clone
Pinot gris	Good
Pinot noir	Too rot prone
Riesling	Too rot prone
Sangiovese	Cold tender, perhaps with good clone
Sauvignon blanc	Too rot prone
Syrah	Cold tender, perhaps with good clone

Other Considerations

- Table grapes?
 - Seeded vs. non-seeded (see my bulletin)
- “Alternative” wine grape varieties?
 - Some may do quite well, but go slowly until the market acceptance is developed