

# 2021 Year In Review



The Finger Lakes Grape Program (FLGP) is a regional extension program of Cornell Cooperative Extension, serving the grape and wine industry of the Finger Lakes where more than 300 farms produce over 125 varieties of grapes from approximately 10,000 acres of vineyards. The FLGP provides unbiased, research-based information to the industry in all areas of grape production including vineyard and pest management practices, vineyard nutrition and soils, new vineyard establishment, and farm business management as a means of supporting the industry's growth and long-term sustainability.



**finger lakes**  
grape program

Like many things in 2021, our year was a weird mix of things we did because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and some things that weren't any different from our lives before March, 2020. For example, because of COVID restrictions on indoor gatherings, B.E.V. NY 2021 was held completely online this year, and featured an expanded roster of national and international speakers in addition to our strong contingent of local experts. Although it was held online, we had the highest registration ever for B.E.V. NY, with over 450 people attending at least a portion of the event from multiple states and Canada.

Just a couple of months later, we started our series of Tailgate Meetings, which are held every other week and alternated this year between being held online via Zoom, and in-person meetings held outdoors. The in-person meetings allowed those growers who could not or prefer not to attend an online meeting to still get important information on pest management and other topics.

We also continued to pursue new information to help the industry improve quality, productivity, and sustainability. After a nine-month suspension, we were able to restart our field trials looking at management of late season cluster rots, especially sour rot, which reared its ugly head again this harvest after being mostly absent the past two seasons. We also started new collaborations with faculty at Cornell AgriTech. We are working with Katie Gold on projects that are tracking the development of fungicide resistance in downy mildew populations, and looking for ways to improve disease forecasting models and early detection systems that would allow growers to improve their downy mildew programs while using less materials. We are also starting to work with colleagues like Yu Jiang and Terry Bates to help growers understand and learn to use precision agriculture tools that can provide growers with new levels of understanding of their vineyards and how to manage them most efficiently.

As always, we are grateful for the ongoing support of our program from the six county Extension Associations that partner with us, and from the people who make up the Finger Lakes grape and wine industry.



*Pictured (from left to right): Donald Caldwell, Ellen Coyne, Brittany Griffin, and Hans Walter-Peterson*



## B.E.V. NY Goes Virtual

The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to change tactics for our annual B.E.V. NY conference in 2021. The conference was held March 3 – 5 entirely over Zoom. The structure of the meeting was altered so that each day featured two-hour sessions on Business, Enology and Viticulture, allowing us to provide a similar amount of content as we would in person, but in a format that was more easily digestible for an online conference over three days.

The Finger Lakes Grape Program and Cornell's Enology Extension Lab (now part of the Cornell Craft Beverage Institute) partnered with the New York Wine & Grape Foundation to organize and present this year's conference. This more formal partnership with the Foundation, now in its second year, has helped to strengthen the business program at B.E.V. NY as well as

expanding our marketing and outreach efforts for the event.

While taking advantage of the opportunity to expand the universe of speakers we could invite, the program also featured many speakers from Cornell and the New York Industry, including growers, winemakers and marketing and tasting room staff. The largest session of the conference, with over 200 attendees, was the pest management session on Thursday afternoon, which featured Cornell experts on weed management, grape diseases, and the spotted lanternfly.

In total, more than 470 people from across the United States and Canada attended this year's virtual

conference – more than have ever attended the event in the past. Evaluations from attendees were overwhelmingly positive, both for the content of the program and for the online format. Some attendees even encouraged us to consider holding some or all of B.E.V. NY online in the future, even when in-person meetings are permitted again. Because of the structure of the program and the pricing (one fee for as much or as little of the content as they wanted), a number of people said that they attended sessions that they normally would not have if the meeting was held in-person and were able to hear about topics that they normally would not have a chance to.

## Assessing Sour Rot Management

In years with significant rainfall during harvest, sour rot and other late-season cluster rots can reduce growers' yields and revenues by 30% or more. The FLGP has been testing two new materials to see if they can help to reduce these losses to growers by strengthening the waxy cuticle layer around the berries, which could reduce cracking that allows for the microbes that cause sour rot to enter the fruit, and reduce the attraction of fruit flies which rapidly spread the disease.

We established trials at two locations in the Finger Lakes earlier this year – one at our Teaching & Demonstration Vineyard near Dresden, and the other in a commercial Riesling vineyard in Seneca County. One of these trials, funded by the New York Farm Viability Institute, had been suspended in August, 2020 due to uncertainty of funding during the COVID-19 pandemic, but was able to restart in June, 2021. We have been granted an 18-month no-cost extension by the Farm Viability Institute which will allow us to continue the project for two more seasons.



*Jancis Robinson (bottom), one of the preeminent wine writers in the world, was one of the keynote speakers for this year's virtual B.E.V. NY conference.*



## Veraison to Harvest Newsletter

The arrival of harvest also means the start of the annual *Veraison to Harvest* newsletter, which provides the industry with information about how harvest is progressing and numerous articles about various viticulture and enology projects conducted at Cornell and with other institutions. Each week during harvest, Donald Caldwell, FLGP viticulture technician, collects 20-30 samples of grapes, representing multiple varieties and vineyard locations in the Finger Lakes, for analysis at the Enology Extension Lab at Cornell AgriTech in Geneva. Similar samples are collected from other grape growing regions in New York, and the results from all of these are published each week in the *Veraison to Harvest* newsletter. The newsletter is distributed to over 150 grape growers in the Finger Lakes region, and about 400 growers statewide.

This was the final year that the project was led by Tim Martinson, statewide viticulture extension specialist, who will be retiring in early 2022. Plans for continuing the project are currently under discussion among other viticulture and enology extension staff. Past issues of *Veraison to Harvest* can be found at <https://grapesandwine.cals.cornell.edu/newsletters/veraision-harvest/>.



*Tim Martinson (pictured right) has been the driving force behind the annual Veraison to Harvest Newsletter since its inception. We are grateful for his leadership on this project for so many years.*

## Upgrading NY Grape & Wine Classifieds

The NY Grape & Wine Classifieds website has become a vital resource for grape growers and wineries across New York State over the past several years. The site provides a single place for members of the industry to go to buy or sell goods and services that can help their businesses, such as fruit that doesn't already have a buyer, bulk wine that can help fill a hole in inventory, or a vital piece of equipment that will save time and labor. The site facilitates over \$1 million a year in transactions, with much of that activity occurring within the Finger Lakes region.

In 2021, we worked with Cornell IT to make some updates to the site to improve its usability and security. The updated site has far fewer "spam" advertisements and users, which makes it an easier and more pleasant experience for both the users and those of us who administer the site. This upgrade is the first step in a larger effort to create a new website for the Classifieds that will provide even better security, an improved user experience including a mobile-friendly interface, as well as some new features such as automatic text or email notifications to users. We anticipate that the new site will be operational by next spring.

## ENROLL IN THE FLGP

Enrolling in the FLGP gives growers access to research-based information that enhances productivity, profitability, and sustainability of the grape industry in the Finger Lakes region.

Benefits of enrollment in the FLGP include:

- *Finger Lakes Vineyard Update* – our weekly electronic newsletter sent every week during the growing season.
- *Veraison to Harvest* - weekly updates on fruit maturity and other harvest-related information leading up to and during harvest season.
- Important announcements about upcoming events, meetings and workshops.

For more information or to enroll online, visit <http://flgp.cce.cornell.edu/enrollment>.



### FLGP Industry Advisory Committee Members

#### Ontario County

Eric Amberg, Amberg Grapevines  
TJ Brahm, Randall Standish Vineyards

#### Schuyler County

Tina Hazlitt, Sawmill Creek Vineyards  
John Santos, Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards

#### Seneca County

Bill Dalrymple, Dalrymple Farms  
Cameron Hosmer, Hosmer Winery

#### Steuben County

Matt Doyle, Doyle Vineyard Management  
Peter Weis, Weis Vineyards

#### Wayne County

Steve Sklenar, Sklenar Vineyard  
Herm Young, Young Sommer Winery

#### Yates County

Eileen Farnan, Barrington Cellars  
Harry Humphreys, Overlook Farms

#### Other Members

Chris Gerling, Cornell AgriTech  
Kim Marconi, Three Brothers Wineries & Estates  
Gregg McConnell, Farm Credit East  
Justine Vanden Heuvel, Cornell University

## CONTACT US

### HANS WALTER-PETERSON

Team Leader, Viticulture Extension Specialist  
phone: 315-536-5134  
cell: 315-521-8789  
e-mail: [hcw5@cornell.edu](mailto:hcw5@cornell.edu)

### DONALD CALDWELL

Viticulture Technician  
phone: 315-536-5134  
e-mail: [dc886@cornell.edu](mailto:dc886@cornell.edu)

### BRITTANY GRIFFIN

Administrative Assistant  
phone: 315-536-5134  
e-mail: [bg393@cornell.edu](mailto:bg393@cornell.edu)

## Cornell Cooperative Extension Finger Lakes Grape Program

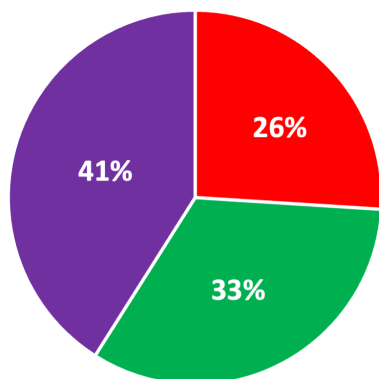
<https://flgp.cce.cornell.edu/>



@cceflgp



YouTube



- Cornell University Federal Funding
- County Association Shares
- FLGP Generated Funds

**Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.**