

Cornell Cooperative Extension Finger Lakes Grape Program

Quarterly Report: January—March 2022

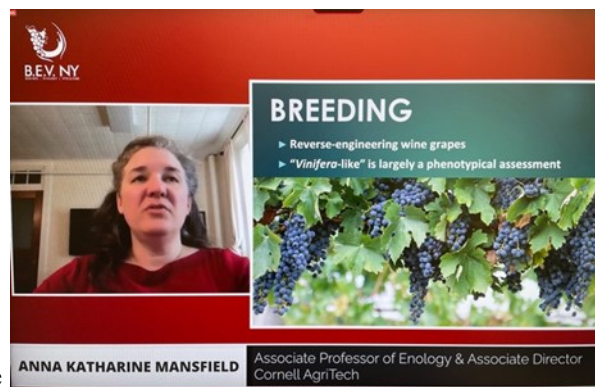
Program Highlights

- B.E.V. NY was held on March 29-31 this year over Zoom. The three-day program featured 50 different speakers and panelists from around the world. One of the overarching themes of the conference was ‘sustainability’, including its environmental, economic, and social aspects. The conference included session on many important topics, including increasing diversity and inclusion in the New York industry, the development of new grape varieties with better traits for a changing climate, and important updates on pest management.
- After two cold nights in January that caused significant injury to some grapevines in the Finger Lakes, the FLGP hosted two winter injury “walk-in clinics” to help growers learn how to assess bud injury in their own vineyards. Injury levels vary by cultivar and location, but in some locations bud injury is up to 50% or more. .
- The FLGP received funding from the NY Wine & Grape Foundation to continue our evaluation of a product that enhances the cuticle layer of grape berries to see if it can reduce the incidence and severity of late season cluster rots in grapes.

B.E.V. NY 2022 Goes Virtual Again

For a second year in a row, the annual B.E.V. NY conference was held as a virtual event due to concerns about the continuing presence of COVID-19. But that did not deter from the development and presentation of another successful conference for the state’s grape and wine industry.

B.E.V. NY 2022 was held on March 29-31 over Zoom. The program was developed by staff from the NY Wine & Grape Foundation, the Cornell Craft Beverage Institute, and the Finger Lakes Grape Program. Each day of the conference contained business, enology, and viticulture, providing a variety of content each day. One of the overarching themes of the conference was sustainability in the New York grape and wine industry, but with a broader context beyond just environmental sustainability. Several sessions were focused on how to improve the diversity of faces and voices in the industry and the diversity of the customers who purchase NY wines. On the grapes and winemaking side, two sessions were devoted to “modern” grape varieties, meaning cultivars that are better adapted to different growing conditions where grapes are grown around the world. One session featured grape breeders from New York, Minnesota, and Germany, talking about the new traits and varieties that are coming from their breeding programs and others around the world. The second session featured a panel discussion of three winemakers who are having success making high-quality wines from these kinds of varieties. Working with the NY Wine & Grape Foundation, we were able to ship tasting kits to attendees who registered for this session ahead of time, giving us the ability to include a tasting of these winemakers’ wines as part of the session.



Cornell enology professor Anna Katharine Mansfield talked about winemaking practices for modern varieties before the winemaker panel and tasting.

We were able to take advantage of the fact that the conference was held online by inviting a broad range of speakers from different locations around the world. Our keynote speakers included renowned wine writer and critic Stuart Pigott from Germany, Dr. Elizabeth Tomasino from Oregon State, a sensory scientist discussing environmentally derived off-aromas in wines, and Dr. Russ Smithyman, a viticulturist and researcher in Washington who spoke about where he sees viticulture heading in the next few decades. We also had other speakers from Germany, California, Maryland, Virginia, and Minnesota.

B.E.V. NY 2022 Goes Virtual Again. (Continued from page 1)

Our attendees were also from many places other than New York, including California, Pennsylvania, Ontario, Canada and even Japan. As was the case last year, attendees paid just a single price to view as much or as little of the conference as they wanted to. This gave many people the opportunity to watch presentations on subjects that they might not normally view when the conference is held in person and each day has a different focus.

We were also fortunate to retain the services of CrushWine XP, an event management company who took care of most of the administrative tasks associated with the conference. The livestream itself was managed by the team at eCornell, who made the conference look highly professional and polished.

Cold January Temperatures Cause Bud Injury in FLX Vineyards

Cold temperatures on the nights of January 16 and January 21 caused injury to grapevine buds in a number of different varieties, especially in *vinifera* cultivars, which tend to be more susceptible to cold temperatures. Temperatures in many vineyards reached -10°F or colder for several hours on one or both nights. In addition to colder than normal temperatures, bud hardiness testing that had been done up to that point showed that the vines generally were not as hardy as they usually are by mid-January. This is mostly the result of a warmer than normal winter up to that point, which meant that the vines were less prepared for a significant cold event. The amount of bud injury varies greatly by location and grape variety. Reports from our own assessments and those of other growers around the region showed injury levels around 15-30% in many Riesling and Cabernet Franc blocks, while more sensitive cultivars like Syrah, Sauvignon blanc, and Gewürztraminer suffered damage closer to 50% or even more.



Growers practice cutting buds to check for injury at one of the FLGP clinics on winter injury in February.

To help growers make their own assessments of bud damage, the FLGP held two bud injury “walk-in clinics”, one at Wagner Vineyards in Seneca County (February 9) and one at Simmons Vineyards in Yates County (February 10). The main purpose of the clinic was to give growers some guidance on how to check grapevine buds for injury. A supply of grape canes and razor blades were provided so growers could practice cutting buds themselves and ask questions about proper technique and interpretation of what they saw. Over 40 growers attended these two meetings.

Grant Funding

Evaluation of a Berry Cuticle Supplement to Reduce Cluster Rots in Vineyards. Submitted to New York Wine & Grape Foundation/Lake Erie Regional Grape Research & Extension Program. Budget: \$19,303. Collaborator: Alice Wise – CCE Suffolk County

This project is evaluating the effectiveness of a product called 'HydroShield' at reducing Botrytis bunch rot and sour rot in grapes. HydroShield is a proprietary product currently under development at Oregon State University but is not yet commercially available. HydroShield is purported to thicken the berry cuticle and therefore provide improved resistance to egg laying of *Drosophila* fruit flies. In preliminary tests in Oregon, when sprayed on grapes, HydroShield has reduced egg laying by *Drosophila suzukii* (spotted wing drosophila) and subsequent development of cluster rot.



Presentations

Reckoning with 2021: Enology in a Challenging Harvest. Panel member, B.E.V. NY 2022. March 31, 2022.

Vineyard Practices for High Quality Grape Production. Cold Climate Grapes & Wine Conference (hosted by Minnesota Grape Growers Association), Rochester MN. February 26, 2022.

Sweet "Champagne" to Dry Riesling: The Evolution of the Finger Lakes Grape & Wine Industry. Cold Climate Grapes & Wine Conference (hosted by Minnesota Grape Growers Association), Rochester MN. February 25, 2022.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Finger Lakes Grape Program

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The Finger Lakes Grape Program is a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations in Ontario, Seneca, Schuyler, Steuben, Wayne and Yates Counties.

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