

# 2014 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 200 farms produce over 90 different varieties of grapes from 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.



**Cornell University**  
Cooperative Extension  
Finger Lakes Grape Program

### ***WHAT GROWERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE FINGER LAKES GRAPE PROGRAM***

*"Hosmer Winery's relationship with the Finger Lakes Grape Program has been essential over the last 40 years."*

- Cameron Hosmer, Hosmer Winery  
Ovid, NY

*"Without the Finger Lakes Grape Program, I don't think the industry would have progressed as far as it has."*

- Don Tones, Clearview Farms  
Branchport, NY

*"The Finger Lakes Grape Program is to be congratulated for its programs and its assistance to New York State grape growers. Their work assists both large growers and the smaller vineyard grape growers like us with equal dedication and attention. Their education programs, publications, and newsletters are superb."*

- Carolyn Smith, Canoe Landing Vineyard  
- Hammondsport, NY

## B.E.V. NY Conference Brings Business, Enology and Viticulture Together to Benefit the Finger Lakes Grape & Wine Industry



In 2014, the FLGP and Cornell Enology Extension Program joined with faculty from the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management to create B.E.V. NY, a three-day conference that focused on providing the latest information about business, enology and viticulture to the grape and wine industry. While grape growers and winemakers have always been a traditional audience for Cornell, the inclusion of business and marketing topics attracted sales and marketing staff from area wineries as well. In its first year, B.E.V. NY attracted over 500 attendees from three different states during the three-day conference. Over 100 winery owners and tasting room staff attended the business-focused day, many of whom had never attended a Cornell event before. Both the Enology Extension Program and Finger Lakes Grape Program had higher attendance than ever at their respective programs as well. Evaluations collected from attendees were very positive overall for all three days, with many stating that they were able to take away important information that they could use in their business, and want to see this format continue.

## Tailgate Meetings Provide Opportunity for Valuable Interactions and Learning

The FLGP hosted eight Tailgate Meetings for grape growers in 2014. These meetings are informal gatherings held at vineyards around the Finger Lakes region every other Tuesday during the growing season, where growers and FLGP staff discuss current issues in the vineyards including emerging pest problems, timing of various cultural practices, adaptation to the year's growing seasons and changes in market conditions among others. In many of these discussions, FLGP staff are able to provide growers with advice and possible solutions based on research from Cornell and other institutions. The meetings also provide growers with opportunities to interact and network with one another, hearing about possible solutions to problems from fellow growers as well. In 2014, over 140 growers attended Tailgate Meetings in all five of our member counties. While most growers who attend each meeting are from that general area, others have come from more distant locations including Skaneateles Lake and Lake Ontario. Surveys indicate that over 90% of growers who attended a Tailgate meeting learn something new that they have implemented on their farm.



Tailgate meetings give growers and FLGP staff the chance to exchange information and ideas during the season.

## FLGP Helps Industry Respond to Winter Injury



Mechanical pruning can reduce costs and improve production after significant winter injury.

The “polar vortex” of 2014 brought some of the coldest temperatures the Finger Lakes has seen in the past 10 years, to the point where there was concern about significant bud and vine death in the industry. To better understand the extent of damage, the FLGP conducted a broad survey of Finger Lakes vineyards to estimate the level of bud damage. FLGP staff collected 126 samples from 18 different locations throughout the region (cutting a total of more than 14,000 buds), and reported those results to the industry. Growers and wineries used these results to better understand the extent of damage in different locations and varieties, allowing them respond to the situation by adjusting pruning practices and fruit purchasing decisions. The FLGP hosted a field meeting at a local vineyard to demonstrate alternative pruning techniques and equipment that growers could use to reduce the potential yield losses in their vineyards. One grower who implemented these alternative pruning techniques was able to increase revenue from his vineyard by \$3,200/acre.



## First Harvest of Grapes, and Information, from the Finger Lakes Teaching and Demonstration Vineyard

The Finger Lakes Teaching and Demonstration Vineyard entered its third growing season this summer. The vineyard is already proving to be a great asset to the industry, from the training of new industry professionals to the phenology and harvest data we have been collecting.

We collected phenology data from all variety, clone, and rootstock combinations in the vineyard that were of bearing age. At harvest, we measured weights and took cluster counts for most varieties. Marquette was the first variety to enter budbreak and bloom, with most other varieties following a few days later in both cases. Between these other varieties, there was very little difference in dates of both phenological stages, which was reflective of what we saw in many commercial vineyards this year. Veraison dates were spread out through the month of August, with Marquette being the earliest variety (August 1), and Riesling the last variety to reach veraison on August 22.

At harvest, Vidal blanc and Corot Noir had the greatest number of clusters per vine, due to our decision not to drop any fruit in either variety this year. All of the vinifera varieties had some crop thinning done, depending on vine size. Zweigelt had the heaviest clusters, with an average cluster weight of just over 0.5 lbs/cluster.

The FLGP hosted a vineyard equipment demonstration at the Teaching Vineyard this summer, featuring a machine that removes leaves using high-pressure air, and a cultivator to remove weeds under the trellis using flexible fingers that are able to remove weeds close to the base of the vine. We will also be hosting three grape pruning workshops this winter at the vineyard.

The Finger Lakes Community College's (FLCC) Viticulture and Wine Technology program continues to use the vineyard to give its students hands-on experience with concepts that they learn about during their classroom sessions. This year, students gained experience in pruning and tying during the dormant season, shoot thinning, nutrient sampling, and pre-harvest fruit sampling. The FLCC program used fruit from seven different varieties in the Teaching Vineyard for their winemaking classes this year.

We thank the Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority for their financial support of the Finger Lakes Teaching and Demonstration Vineyard.



FLGP Educator Mike Colizzi during a demonstration of a new cultivator at the Teaching & Demonstration Vineyard.

## Monitoring for Early Signs of New Invasive Insect Pests

As our economy has become more connected to the rest of the world, the potential for new invasive pests to reach our fields and impact farmers has increased. New invasive pests like the Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle and Spotted Wine Drosophila can have major impacts on the quality of grapes, wine and grape juice. For the past four years, the FLGP has participated in the Grape Commodity Survey with other regional grape extension programs in New York. The goal of the project is to monitor vineyards for the presence of new pests of grapes, including the European Grapevine Moth, the European Grape Berry Moth, the Summer Fruit Tortrix Moth and the Egyptian Cotton Leafworm. Finger Lakes Grape Program staff placed 96 traps in 12 different Finger Lakes vineyards this year, monitoring them every two weeks during the growing season. None of the targeted insects was found in this year's survey.

*Funding for the Grape Commodity Survey project was provided by the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets.*



Delta trap used to monitor for the presence of new invasive pests in Finger Lakes vineyards.

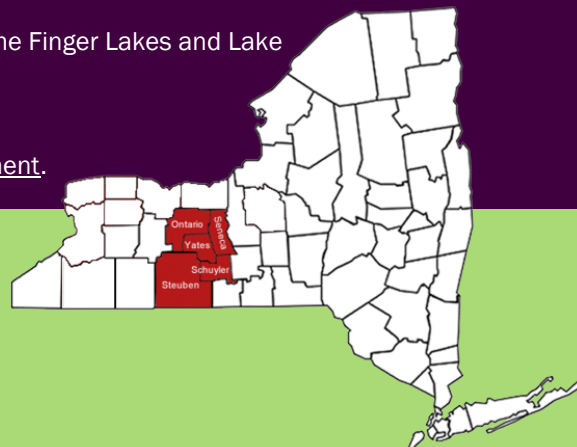
## ENROLL IN THE FLGP

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.

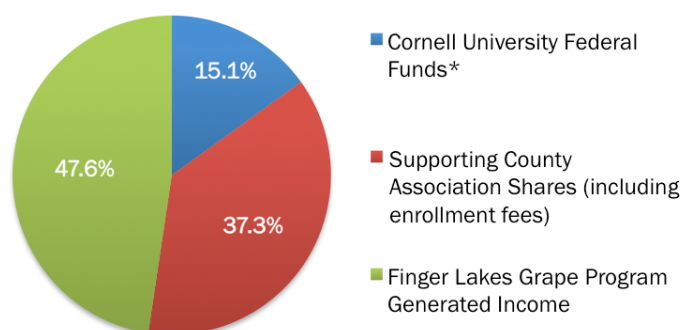
Benefits of enrollment in the FLGP include:

- *Finger Lakes Vineyard Update* – brief email updates 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.
- *Finger Lakes Vineyard Notes* – semi-monthly newsletter with information from the Finger Lakes and Lake Erie regional grape extension programs.
- Important announcements about upcoming events, meetings and workshops.

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



## 2014 OPERATING BUDGET



\* USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Smith Lever Funds



**B.E.V. NY**  
BUSINESS | ENOLOGY | VITICULTURE

February 26 – 28, 2015  
RIT Inn and Conference Center  
Henrietta, NY

<http://events.cals.cornell.edu/bevny2015>

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