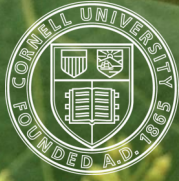


Cornell Cooperative Extension

Finger Lakes Grape Program



June 13, 2024

Finger Lakes Vineyard Update

In the Vineyard

There will be no Vineyard Update next week while I am attending the ASEV national conference in Portland, OR. The next Vineyard Update issue will be sent out the week of June 24. - Hans

The time of seemingly unmitigated growth and development in the vineyard continued over the past several days, as we barreled into bloom in almost every variety that hadn't started last week.

The warmer spring that we had this year resulted in a shorter time span between budbreak and bloom compared to last year (see table). Despite the very early budbreak last year, bloom was pretty close to average dates in 2023 thanks to a cool May and early June, but this year we are still ahead of our average phenological dates by almost a week, like we were at budbreak.

While the period between budbreak and bloom can be heavily influenced by climatic conditions during that time, the span between bloom and veraison is less prone to manipulation how warm or cool it is then. In Concords, the average span between budbreak and bloom is about 69 days \pm 2-3 days, with almost no relationship between that and growing degree days during the period. Assuming that is the case for other cultivars as well (and there's some reason to believe it is), the chances are more likely than not that other varieties will reach veraison early as well. If so, it could mean some extra days of ripening or an earlier harvest, depending on grape variety, conditions during harvest, etc. It's not a guarantee obviously, but I think the chances are better than normal that we could be looking at an early start to the ripening period this year.

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Cabernet Franc cluster in bloom in Seneca Lake vineyard (6/11/24).

	2023			2024		
	Budbreak	Bloom	Days*	Budbreak	Bloom	Days*
Riesling	4/26	6/19	54	5/2	6/10	39
Chardonnay 96	4/20	6/17	58	5/1	6/6	36
Cabernet Franc	4/27	6/19	53	5/2	6/7	36
Lemberger	4/22	6/18	57	4/30	6/9	40
Grüner Veltliner	4/26	6/18	53	5/2	6/9	38
Marquis	4/15	6/13	59	4/28	6/3	36
Jupiter	4/13	6/13	61	4/20	6/4	45
Cayuga White	4/30	6/17	48	5/3	6/5	33
Aravelle	4/26	6/19	54	5/1	6/8	38
Corot Noir	4/29	6/18	50	5/3	6/7	35
Marquette	4/13	6/7	55	4/22	5/31	39

* # of days between budbreak and bloom

IPM

2024 Grape IPM Guidelines for NY/PA

The 2024 New York and Pennsylvania Pest Management Guidelines for Grapes is now on sale and is available for purchase at <https://www.cornellstore.com/books/cornell-cooperative-ext-pmep-guidelines>. The cost for either the hard copy or online version is \$35. There is no longer a discount for purchasing both formats at the same time.

The 2023 edition of the guide will be available to view for two weeks, expiring on June 24th, after which it will no longer be accessible.

Downy Mildew

It probably won't come as much of a surprise that we're starting to see downy mildew lesions showing up in vineyards around the Finger Lakes. We had more rain last week than we've had in a while, so conditions were prime for its development. Just for a quick review, those prime conditions are:

- Frequent rainfall and/or high humidity conditions
- Spores are released at night when humidity is >95% and can infect as long as tissue is wet for a few hours after it lands.
- Optimal temperatures for infection and spread are in the mid-to-upper 70s (°F).

We met all of these conditions on both June 6 and June 9-10 last week, so again, it's not terribly surprising to see signs of infections on tissues that didn't have adequate protection at those given times (see photos).



DM lesion on top of leaf...



...and bottom of leaf

As you hear every year from us, this is the most critical time to manage all the major diseases, especially downy mildew. Be sure to be using the best materials available to you during these next several weeks while fruit is setting and is still vulnerable to infections. A few reminders about DM materials:

- DO NOT rely on strobies (FRAC 11) for DM management (or powdery mildew, for that matter).
- If you are a grower who has been informed that you have DM populations that are resistant to FRAC 40 materials (Revus, half of Revus Top, half of Zampro), consider backing it up with something else if you can.
- Because of its high potential for resistance development, the recommendation is to only use Ridomil once per season. In that case, I think using it at post-bloom/fruit set (assuming the canopy is relatively clean) makes sense to get the most bang for your buck as far as impact, while also having less chance of resistance to develop because of lower DM populations at that time. Ridomil has a long PHI interval (Ridomil Gold/Copper, 42 days; Ridomil Gold MZ, 66 days) compared to most other materials, so keep that in mind if you are planning to use it this year.

A Guide to H-2A Audit Preparedness - Part 1 of 2

Bonnie Nelsen, LOFP Business Management Specialist

This article is Part 1 of 2 and first appeared in Fruit Notes, a subscription newsletter. It was downloaded from the [Cornell Ag Workforce Development Program](#)'s website.

This article has been adapted from a webinar on H-2A audit preparedness hosted by Seso Labor, Inc. on March 6, 2024. Seso also hosted a H-2A lunch and learn session on Wednesday 17 April, 2024, in Sodus Point, NY.

Insufficient numbers of US workers have prompted many farmers to hire temporary non-immigrant (H-2A) workers for seasonal agricultural labor. Although the H-2A program allows farmers to meet labor needs, the program involves specific requirements for employers. One requirement is participating in periodic, unannounced audits conducted by state and federal departments of labor (DOL hereafter).

There are two possible H-2A audit scenarios: Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) desk audits and DOL wage and hour investigation audits. Although both types assess an employer's compliance with H-2A program requirements, each audit is different in its focus, requirements, procedures, and outcomes. Both types are stressful and potentially disruptive to an unprepared employer. Anticipating an audit and being prepared will lower stress and help you achieve a favorable outcome.

This article introduces the topic of H-2A audit preparedness by describing the objectives and procedures for an OFLA desk audit. It will provide recommendations for preparing an audit file, a set of records that will, at a minimum, be requested in a desk audit. Having this documentation ready before its needed will ease the audit process and result in fewer disruptions. The next article on H-2A audit preparedness will examine wage and hour investigation audits.

Desk Audits Defined: A desk audit—also called a paper audit—is a high-level inspection of an employer's compliance with H-2A rules. A desk audit is conducted by personnel at the Department of Labor's Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC), which is located in Chicago, Illinois. The OFLC, which is part of the USDOL's Employment and Training Administration, plays an important administrative role in the H-2A program. When an employer submits a job order (an ETA 790/790a form) to recruit temporary seasonal workers, the request is submitted to a state workforce agency (SWA). After reviewing and conditionally approving the job order, the SWA will refer it to the OFLA for certification or final approval. In addition to certification, the OFLA determines prevailing wages, sets policy, and conducts audits for compliance (N.A., 2024).

A desk audit is a high-level assessment of compliance based on the employers 'core compliance' documentation—important paperwork that participants must complete and retain to participate in the H-2A program. Desk audits can be random or targeted—if an employer has had problems in the past, they are more likely to be targets of an audit. Because this inspection is non-granular, auditors do not delve into a farm's work schedules, overtime records, pay records, or other details (that's a wage and hour investigation). In a desk audit, DOL personnel want to know if an employer recruited and employed workers as described in a previous year's job order and, if not, why.

The OFLC Audit Process: For employers, the process begins when a letter announcing an audit is received in the mail. This letter will identify a list of documents that must be returned to OFLC within 30 days. Requested documents consist of the "core" documents in your audit file but many include others. It's important to send copies of all requested documents for inspection.

Employers are required to keep required H-2A records on file for three years, so an audit can focus on any single or multiple years (single-year audits are the norm). For example, an audit conducted in 2024 can request documents from 2021, 2022, 2023, or several years.

It is very important to respond to the OFLC letter within 30 days! Failure to do so will result in a negative judgment, leading to disbarment (being excluded from the H-2A program) or supervised recruitment for up to three years. According to Daniel Ross (2024), Seso's in-house H-2A counsel, the main reason for employer disbarment from the H-2A program is failure to respond to an audit notice—farms that are fully compliant and have done nothing wrong can be disbarred from H-2A if they ignore an audit letter! If you're unable to provide all requested documents within 30 days, it's possible to request an extension from the OFLC. Extensions should be requested as early as possible. If you have a legitimate reason for the request, you may receive more time at the OFLC's discretion.

A Guide to H-2A Audit Preparedness - Part 1 of 2

Bonnie Nelsen, LOFP Business Management Specialist

After an employer's documents are received, OFLC personnel will examine the records and compare them to the job order from the target year. The auditor will look for evidence that the employer has either complied with program requirements or has not based on the records. If discrepancies are found, the auditor will ask for an explanation. For example, if workers were sent home earlier than expected, the employer will have to explain why this happened. If there was a legitimate business reason for discrepancies and proper procedures were followed (for example, the three-fourths pay rule was followed), the discrepancy will probably be allowed. If not, the employer can be penalized. The stakes of an audit are high: debarment or supervised recruitment can result from failure to follow proper procedures and present documentation to prove this. If a desk audit raises suspicion of willful violation, OFLC auditors may refer the case for a wage and hour investigation.

Preparing for A Desk Audit: The best way to manage an audit is to be prepared for one in advance. This involves preparing an audit file containing core H-2A documents. Because employers are required to keep documents for three years from the date of certification (or denial), each audit file should be maintained for three years. While the audit file may not have all requested documents by the OFLC, it will contain most of the paperwork needed for a desk audit. At minimum, your audit file should contain the following documents (Ross, 2024):

- Proof of recruitment efforts and updated final recruitment report.
- Proof of workers' compensation.
- Copies of each worker's earnings records.
- The work contract or a copy of the Application for Temporary Employment Certification if no separate contract exists.
- If applicable, records of notice to the NPC and DHS of the abandonment of employment or termination for cause of a worker / early departures (i.e., notice that workers have absconded after arriving at the farm or returned home early after being fired).
- Inbound and outbound transportation reimbursements and subsistence.
- H-2A visas and I-94's for each worker assigned to the contract.
- Proof that no recruiter fees were charged to workers by third parties.
- Copies of housing inspection from the state or federal inspection, and water test certificates for worker housing.
- Vehicle registration and insurance policies, as well as driver's licenses for any drivers transporting workers.
- Farm Labor Contractors must also retain copies of surety bonds, grower agreements, and FLC/FLCE licensing.

I-9's should be retained for 3 years after the date of hire, or one year after employment ends, whichever is later. If you have any questions about the required documents, contact the OFLC for clarification. It's also a good idea to note the reason for any discrepancies that may arise from the paperwork. For example, if fewer workers were needed than expected, be prepared to explain why; if workers returned home early because there was less work than expected, be prepared to explain.

Having this paperwork on hand will put you in a better place when an audit occurs. The process will be less stressful and disruptive to normal operations if you're prepared!

References:

Ross, Daniel, Schulte, Chris and Stefany, David (2024) "2024 Spring H-2A audit preparedness seminar." Webinar hosted by Seso Labor, Inc., on March 6, 2024.

N.A. (2024) "Foreign Labor Certification." US Employment and Training Administration, retrieved from [Foreign Labor Certification | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](https://www.dol.gov/eis/whats-new/foreign-labor-certification).

Are you interested in trialing a bioinoculant?

Several years ago, we began testing commercial bioinoculants to increase growth of vines here in the Finger Lakes. The goal of these bioinoculants is to introduce beneficial fungi (called AMF) to the soil that forms a symbiotic relationship with the vine roots, helping them acquire more water and nutrients. In both field studies and greenhouse studies, inoculants that contained AMF improved root growth (see Figure 1), shoot growth, and leaf blade/petiole nutrient concentration. However, many bioinoculants are quite expensive (ranging from \$200 to more than \$1,000 per acre) so we are testing application methods to determine whether the inoculant needs to be applied every year, and/or to every vineyard row.

We are looking for grower-collaborators who are interesting in trialing different application methods for the bioinoculant. The application methods are: 1) every row vs. every other row, or 2) one vs. two applications of the bioinoculant. If you are interested in trialing one of these methods, we can bring you some inoculant and help you apply it. We'd come back and take some leaves for nutrient measurements at veraison from the vines.

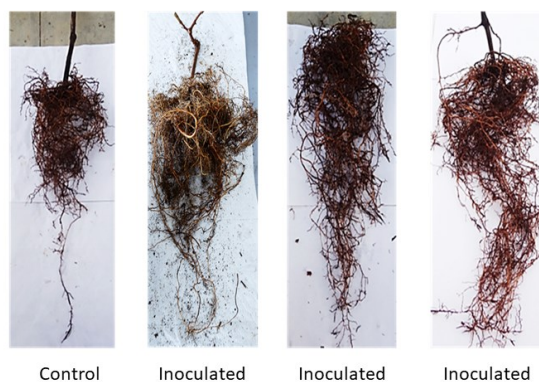


Figure 1: Inoculated vs. Control (no inoculation) treatments on own-rooted Cabernet Sauvignon

Image credit: Mariam Berdeja

Please reach out to me at Justine@Cornell.edu if you are interested. Thanks to the New York State Department of Ag and Markets and the New York Farm Viability Institute for funding this project.

Upcoming Events

Don't forget to check out the calendar on our website (<https://blogs.cornell.edu/flxgrapes/events/>) for more information about these and other events relevant to the Finger Lakes grape industry.



Tailgate Meeting

Tuesday, June 25, 2024 4:30 – 6:00 PM

Dr. Frank Vineyards, Beattle Hill Rd, Hector, NY ([click here for Google Map](#))

Our next Tailgate Meeting will be on Tuesday, June 25 at Dr. Frank's vineyards located in Hector, NY. These meetings are a time for growers and the FLGP staff to discuss what's going on in the vineyards, ask questions, and learn from each other. There is no set agenda for the most part, so bring questions, observations, thoughts, etc. and let's talk about them. Each meeting has been approved for 1.5 pesticide recertification credits by DEC .

Here is the remaining schedule for Tailgate Meetings this year:

- July 8, 2024 (Monday) Simmons Vineyard, 3243 Fingar Road, Bluff Point NY
- July 23, 2024 Knapp Vineyard, 2770 Ernsberger Road, Romulus, NY
- August 13, 2024 Randall Standish Vineyards, 5506 NY-21, Canandaigua, NY
- August 20, 2024 Miles Wine Cellars, 168 Randall Crossing Rd, Himrod, NY

Hangtime: Grapevines to Wines webinar on grapevine nutrition

Presented by ASEV-Eastern Section

Thursday, June 13 11:30 AM EDT

Topics that will be covered in this webinar will include tissue sampling and interpreting vine nutrition. Specifically sampling techniques, common mistakes, and technologies that can assist in the field.

Featured presenters:

- Dr. Justin Scheiner, Extension Viticulture Specialist at Texas A&M.
- Michael Cook, Texas A&M Viticulturist
- Jennifer Phillips Russo - Viticulture Extension Specialist at Cornell University
- Rob Chancia- Researcher at the Rochester Institute of Technology

All interested are invited to attend, both ASEV members and non-ASEV members! Free, registration required, just click the link below.

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hkUYiyDIR4isot9iy8tW0w

2024 GDD & Precipitation

FLX Teaching & Demonstration Vineyard – Dresden, NY					
Date	Hi Temp (F)	Lo Temp (F)	Rain (inches)	Daily GDDs	Total GDDs
6/5/24	81.3	65.3	0.00	23.3	583.7
6/6/24	79.7	65.8	0.45	22.8	606.4
6/7/24	69.1	60.1	0.06	14.6	621.0
6/8/24	74.3	57.6	0.01	16.0	637.0
6/9/24	69.3	53.2	1.01	11.3	648.2
6/10/24	63.1	52.5	0.00	7.8	656.0
6/11/24	61.2	54.1	0.00	7.7	663.7
Weekly Total			1.53"	103.3	
Season Total			9.31"	663.7	

GDDs as of June 11, 2023: 540.3

Rainfall as of June 11, 2023: 7.05"



Seasonal Comparisons (at Geneva)

Growing Degree Days

	2024 GDD ¹	Long-term Avg GDD ²	Cumulative days
April	69.9	64.2	+1
May	393.5	255.5	+11
June	175.1	484.3	+11
July		647.2	
August		596.8	
September		361.1	
October		113.9	
TOTAL	638.5	2522.9	

¹ Accumulated GDDs for each month.

² The long-term average (1973-2023) GDD accumulation for that month.

³ Numbers at the end of each month represent where this year's GDD accumulation stands relative to the long-term average. The most recent number represents the current status.

Precipitation

	2024 Rain ⁴	Long-term Avg Rain ⁵	Monthly deviation from avg ⁶
April	4.73"	2.86"	+1.87"
May	2.75"	3.04"	-0.29"
June	1.57"	3.58"	
July		3.48"	
August		3.19"	
September		3.43"	
October		3.39"	
TOTAL	9.05"	22.97"	

⁴ Monthly rainfall totals up to current date

⁵ Long-term average rainfall for the month (total)

⁶ Monthly deviation from average (calculated at the end of the month)

Additional Information

Become a fan of the [Finger Lakes Grape Program on Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter \(@cceflgp\)](#) as well as YouTube. Also check out our website at <http://flgp.cce.cornell.edu>.

Got some grapes to sell? Looking to buy some equipment or bulk wine? List your ad on the [NY Grape & Wine Classifieds website](#) today!

Finger Lakes Grape Program Advisory Committee

Eric Amberg- Grafted Grapevine Nursery

Dave Orzel– Nutrien Ag

Matt Doyle- Doyle Vineyard Management

Tara Farnan- Barrington Cellars

Chris Gerling- Cornell University Extension

Mike Colizzi- E & J Gallo

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Cornell Cooperative Extension Finger Lakes Grape Program

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