



*LERGP Crop Update
January 15, 2026*

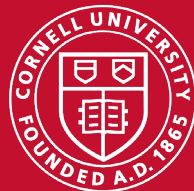


Cornell Cooperative Extension
Lake Erie Regional Grape Program



PennState Extension

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In this copy:

Registration for 2026 Winter Grape Grower Conference is open! [REGISTER NOW!](#)

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[Click here to
watch Podcasts](#)

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program is a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and the Cornell Cooperative Extensions in Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara county NY and in Erie County PA.

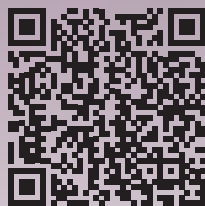
2026 LERGP WINTER GRAPE GROWER CONFERENCE

**THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026
WILLIAM'S CENTER
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8:00am-4:30pm**

**Come spend a day with your LERGP team,
invited guest speakers and fellow growers.**

Take a look at the full agenda [here](#).

REGISTER TODAY!



Business Management

Andrew Holden, Business Management Educator, Penn State University, LERGP

Unmarketable Grape Survey Results

While not perfect, 2025 was a good year for growing grapes in the Northeast. While drought did effect yields negatively, the quality of fruit was high, disease pressure was low, and harvest was fairly uneventful. Despite the lower-than-expected yields, and high-quality fruit, many growers reported difficulty selling grapes and the market saw a decrease in price per ton in a majority of varieties.

Globally, grapes have been facing an over saturated market the past couple years. Our region has seen the same effects, with growers seeing a decrease in demand and price in the last few years. At the request of grape growers in New York and Pennsylvania, I created a survey to capture data of grapes that did not get sold in 2025 and the value of said grapes. Unsold or unmarketed means that the grapes were grown to be sold but were not utilized in any way due to no buyers willing to purchase them. With the help of my colleagues across both Cornell and Penn State Extensions, we shared the survey across both states in December of 2025 to try and capture as much information as possible.

The survey provides us with more data to use in our understanding of the current grape market. I hope that the results shared from this survey can assist growers in making on-farm management decisions, as well as provide them with a resource to share with entities responsible for grape marketing and/or policy decisions.

While we did receive many responses from growers in both states, it is important to acknowledge that this survey likely did not capture everyone with unsold grapes in 2025. Another important aspect to consider when interpreting the results is that we do not have previous years of data to compare it to. With that being said, a majority of the responses stated that they did not have issues selling their grapes in past years. Prices were self-reported based on expected price or last year's price; any missing prices were supplemented with FLX Grape Price Survey results.

Finally, these results are just comprised of grapes that did not get sold. We received reports of grapes being sold at a loss from growers trying to recuperate some of their cost. I plan to work with Hans Walter-Peterson of the Finger Lakes Grape Program on a more detailed analysis of this data and will share it when it is available. Please see below the preliminary findings of the survey and feel free to contact me with any questions.

Survey Results:

According to the growers surveyed (all regions of NY & PA), **10,938 tons** of grapes with a value of **\$5,392,232** were not sold in 2025.

Regionally:

Lake Erie Region - The majority of the reported tons and value come from the Lake Erie Region made up of the county's Erie (PA), Chautauqua (NY), Niagara (NY), Erie (NY), and Cattaraugus (NY). This region reported **7,247 tons worth \$2,815,446 went unsold**. This region is predominantly concord grapes with this years concord production being estimated at 165,000 tons. That means the reported unsold concords equal roughly 3% of total production. Below you can see the top 15 varieties reported with tons, average price, and total value.

Lake Erie Region (NY & PA)

Variety	Sum of Tons	Average of Price	Sum of Value
Concord (Cash Market)	2991	\$ 336	\$ 980,125
Concord Cooperative	2249.3	\$ 369	\$ 866,962
Niagara	1068	\$ 375	\$ 384,853
Catawba	285	\$ 273	\$ 75,415
Elvira	85	\$ 303	\$ 26,625
Marechal Foch	78	\$ 600	\$ 46,800
Riesling	76	\$ 1,390	\$ 118,680
Traminette	58	\$ 854	\$ 53,530
Seyval Blanc	53	\$ 514	\$ 32,970
Frontenac	52	\$ 669	\$ 21,000
Cayuga White	33	\$ 625	\$ 21,300
Chambourcin	31	\$ 806	\$ 25,352
Sauvignon Blanc	20	\$ 600	\$ 12,000
Edelweiss	20	\$ 475	\$ 9,500
Fredonia	20	\$ 300	\$ 6,000

Finger Lakes Region – The Finger Lakes reported **3,010 tons of grapes, valued at \$2,099,282 unsold** in 2025. The grape with the highest value was Riesling with almost 400 tons unsold at a value of \$685,450.

Finger Lakes Region

Variety	Sum of Tons	Average of Price	Sum of Value
Niagara	927	\$ 424.44	\$ 381,940.00
Riesling	394	\$ 1,757.14	\$ 685,450.00
Catawba	356	\$ 392.09	\$ 112,230.00
Concord (Cash Market)	251	\$ 430.13	\$ 96,610.00
Cayuga White	242.2	\$ 613.64	\$ 151,955.00
Elvira	80	\$ 332.50	\$ 26,550.00
Concord Cooperative	68	\$ 420.33	\$ 27,950.00
Vignoles	66	\$ 833.33	\$ 47,000.00
Vidal Blanc	66	\$ 728.57	\$ 43,050.00
Delaware	61	\$ 441.20	\$ 26,072.00
Traminette	52	\$ 851.67	\$ 41,820.00
Marechal Foch	50	\$ 550.00	\$ 26,875.00
Diamonds	50	\$ 450.00	\$ 21,500.00
Aurore	50	\$ 400.00	\$ 20,000.00
Cabernet Franc	33	\$ 1,936.36	\$ 64,200.00
Sauvignon Blanc	31	\$ 2,033.33	\$ 62,000.00
Leon Millot	30	\$ 600.00	\$ 18,000.00
Baco Noir	30	\$ 600.00	\$ 18,000.00

As mentioned before, I plan to have a more detailed analysis of the survey data available shortly but wanted to share these primary results in today's crop update. Future analysis will include looking at more regions across both states, comparison of varieties, and other insights from the survey.

Thank you to all the growers who shared information for this project. Thank you to Hans Walter-Peterson, Finger Lakes Grape Program and Claudia Schmidt, Penn State Associate Professor of Marketing and Local/Regional Food Systems for assistance on the survey. Thanks to the Lake Erie Regional Grape Team, and PSU and Cornell State Viticulturist Cain Hickey (PSU), Jeremy Schuster (Cornell), and Alice Wise (Cornell) for sharing this with growers in both states.

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NORTH EAST FRUIT GROWERS, INC.









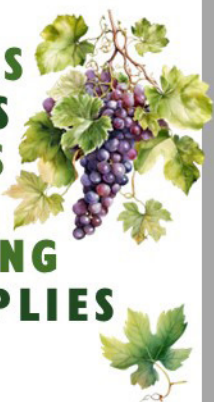


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Application Window: Opens January 15, 2026

Electronic applications will be accepted via the VAPG application portal until 1:00 p.m. Eastern on April 15, 2026.

Apply [HERE](#).

More info can be read [HERE](#).

What Does the VAPG Program Do?

The Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program helps U.S. agricultural producers enter into value-added activities that:

- Generate new products from raw agricultural commodities
- Create and expand marketing opportunities
- Increase producer income through enhanced product value and market reach

These grants support either:

- Planning activities (e.g., feasibility studies, business and marketing plans)
- Working capital needs (e.g., processing, packaging, advertising, inventory, and salaries)

Who Gets Priority?

Applicants may receive priority consideration if they meet any of the following criteria:

- Beginning farmer or rancher
- Veteran farmer or rancher
- Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher
- Small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm
- Farmer or rancher cooperative
- Proposing a Mid-Tier Value Chain project

Additionally, 10% of total funds are reserved for:

- Beginning, veteran, and socially disadvantaged farmers/ranchers
- Mid-tier value chain proposals
- Food safety projects where the majority of funds improve market access

Funding Overview

- Total Available Funding: Approximately \$25 million
- Maximum Grant Amounts:
 - Planning Grants: Up to \$50,000
 - Working Capital Grants: Up to \$200,000
- Matching Requirement: 1:1 match (100% of the grant amount), which may include cash or eligible in-kind contributions

Grants are awarded through a nationally competitive process based on criteria outlined in [7 CFR 4284, Subpart J](#).

Who May Apply?

Eligible applicants include:

- Agricultural producers (including harvesters and steering committees)
- Agricultural producer groups
- Farmer- or rancher-cooperatives
- Majority-controlled producer-based business ventures

Applicants must demonstrate that they:

- Own and produce more than 50% of the raw commodity
- Will retain greater revenue from the value-added product than from the raw commodity alone

How to Check Eligibility

A VAPG Self-Assessment Survey is available to help determine your eligibility. While not required, it is strongly encouraged before beginning the application process.

[Take the VAPG Self-Assessment Survey](#)

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Langworthy hails USDA's purchase of \$20M in grape juice

Jan 14, 2026

U.S. Rep. Nick Langworthy on Tuesday applauded the U.S. Department of Agriculture's announcement that it will purchase \$20 million worth of Concord grape juice through the Agriculture Marketing Service following his call for action.

Congressman Langworthy sent a letter late last year to Department of Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins urging them to initiate a bonus purchase of Concord grape juice to help stabilize markets after higher-than-average yields and declining export demand that created significant oversupply. Langworthy highlighted the growing inventory pressures facing growers and emphasized the importance of timely USDA intervention to prevent long-term market disruption.

"This is fantastic news for Concord grape growers in our 23rd Congressional District and across the country who have been facing serious market challenges through no fault of their own," Langworthy said. "By stepping in with this \$20 million purchase, the USDA is helping reduce excess supply, support grower prices, and protect the livelihoods of farming families and our rural communities."

The Concord grape industry has experienced unusually large harvests in recent years, combined with a sharp decline in export sales, particularly bulk juice shipments overseas. These conditions created significant downward pressure on prices and threatened the economic stability of growers across key producing states.

Langworthy also noted that USDA bonus purchases have historically been an effective tool to stabilize agricultural markets and that current conditions made this an ideal time for action. He made a similar successful request in 2024 that resulted in a \$45 million purchase. The USDA's decision will help move surplus juice into nutrition and commodity programs while supporting domestic agriculture.

New York's 23rd Congressional District is home to a grape industry that contributes nearly 10,000 jobs to the economy.

Langworthy concluded, "Concord grapes are a cornerstone of agriculture in Western New York and critical to our economy. This purchase will help ensure our growers can continue producing a nutritious, American-grown product while keeping this vital industry strong."



Andy Campell
General Manager

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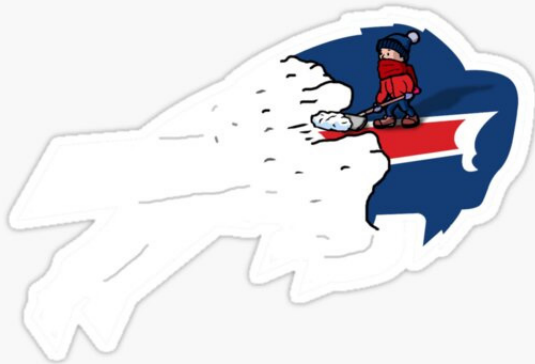


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Viticulture

Jennifer Russo, Viticulture Extension Specialist, LERGP

In the Vineyard

Predicting Cold Hardiness and Budbreak in Grapevines

Penn State University is hosting a webinar on predicting cold hardiness and budbreak in grapevines. A new cold hardiness tool from the ColdSnap project offers growers clear guidance on winter injury risk, with insights on Pennsylvania budbreak trends and how weather shapes vine response.

Through controlled experiments that measured how grapevine cold hardiness responds to changing temperatures, researchers developed a model that accurately predicts bud cold hardiness and budbreak in the field. The ColdSnap project now offers these predictions in a practical, grower-focused tool to support winter injury risk assessment and management, with plans to incorporate budbreak forecasting as the next enhancement. To ground this resource in Pennsylvania and regionally important cultivars, the session will also present cold hardiness and budbreak patterns observed across multiple seasons in Pennsylvania vineyards, helping growers understand how regional variation and recent weather conditions shape winter injury risk and vine phenology.

Event Details [Click Here to Register](#)

When: January 27, 2026 (1:00 PM-2:00 PM ET)

Registration deadline: January 27, 2026, 1:00 p.m.

This event is being offered at no charge to participants.

Space is limited - preregistration is required.

Registration is required to receive the link to access the webinar.

A link to the recorded webinar will be emailed to registrants within ten business days after the live event. The recording will be accessible for six months from the event date.

Who is this for?

- Vineyard owners
- Winery owners
- Vineyard managers
- Winemakers
- Extension educators
- Viticulture specialists

What will you learn?

- Grapevine budbreak and recent cold hardiness trends in Pennsylvania
- Acclimation and deacclimation in grapevines
- How to use a new grapevine cold hardiness prediction tool

2025 Fall Advisory Committee

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program held an advisory committee meeting in November 2025 to help guide our winter programming. The meeting gathered growers, processors, research and extension staff to identify critical challenges facing the grape industry and to guide future extension programming, research priorities, and outreach efforts. Below is a summary of the discussion points that we based the programming and speakers off of for our March 19, 2026, in-person

Grower Conference:

1. Mechanized Pruning & Vineyard Management

- Transitioning from hand pruning to mechanized pruning increases dead wood, disease pressure, and reliance on sprays—especially in the first few years.
- Growers reported success with rotational pruning systems that alternate between cane pruning, modified mechanical pruning, and minimal follow-up to manage wood health and labor.
- There is strong demand for peer-to-peer learning, particularly panels featuring growers with long-term experience using mechanized systems.

2. Labor Constraints & Input Tradeoffs

- Labor shortages are forcing operational changes, often increasing spray needs and disease risk.
- Multi-row sprayers and integrated mechanization can offset labor costs.
- Growers are interested in reevaluating economic thresholds for sprays and inputs, accepting limited losses to reduce costs.

3. Vineyard Economics & Market Reality

- The traditional strategy of increasing yield to maintain profitability no longer works due to:
 - Shrinking juice and wine markets
 - Processor delivery limits
 - Rising input and equipment costs
- Consensus emerged that industry oversupply is structural, not cyclical.
- Many participants believe long-term viability requires:
 - Acreage reduction
 - Increased efficiency
 - Diversification and shared services
- Comparisons to the dairy industry highlight the need for innovation, consolidation, and new product development.

4. Need for Paradigm Shifts & Market Development

- Incremental efficiency gains are insufficient; the industry needs new markets and uses for grapes and byproducts (e.g., health, cosmetics, nutraceuticals).
- Health-benefit research and marketing were repeatedly identified as potential levers to stimulate demand.
- Meaningful progress likely requires coordinated industry, research, and policy efforts.

5. Extension Tools, Technology & Decision Support

- Strong interest in practical tools rather than theory, including:
 - Cost-of-production and enterprise budgeting tools
 - Input price benchmarking
 - Increased training on digital tools (e.g., myEV, NDVI, variable-rate applications)
- Growers emphasized customization, usability, and farm-level applicability.

6. Business Continuity & Succession

- Succession planning is becoming urgent, with many growers seeking guidance on contracts, timelines, and financial planning.
- This topic is increasingly relevant and time-sensitive.

7. Outreach & Communication

- Extension programs are valued, but many growers remain disconnected.
- Processors can play a key role in disseminating information.
- Providing ready-to-share, standardized outreach materials would improve reach and consistency.
- Growers asked for SLF mitigation strategies, information on Yeast Assimilated Nitrogen, relating soil and tissue tests, how to identify specific compounds that come from vines, and biological practices.

Dr. Lynn Sosnoskie sent an email asking for your input:

Happy New Year!

As the state Liaison for the IR-4 Project, I am writing to request your input on the most pressing weed, insect, and pathogen management challenges in your key commodities. Your feedback, including suggestions of pesticides that could or should be evaluated, will help shape IR-4-sponsored research trials planned for 2027.

Please take time to review the 2026 Food Use Workshop results (<https://www.ir4project.org/events/2025-food-use-workshop/>) to familiarize yourself with pest-crop-pesticide combinations that have ranked highly in the past ("A" Priorities; see the Pre-Workshop Nomination Lists).

When developing your suggestions, cross-reference your interests with the 2026 Final Residue and Product Performance Lists. Please do not resubmit needs already included on those lists, as they are part of trials scheduled for the coming year.

REPLY DIRECTLY TO ME. Let's not frustrate the greater community with a flurry of reply-all responses.

If you are unfamiliar with the IR-4 Project, it is a U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded program that helps specialty crop growers gain access to safe and effective pest management tools. IR-4 generates the research data needed for EPA registration of crop protection products that are often not financially feasible for registrants to pursue independently. The project supports conventional, biopesticide, and integrated pest management solutions for insects, weeds, and diseases, helping ensure specialty crop producers remain productive, competitive, and compliant with regulatory standards.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cheers,

Lynn



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PA Update

Megan Luke, Penn State Extension Viticulture and Tree Fruit Educator

PA Update

SAVE THE DATE REMINDER

Free respirator fit testing at Burch Farms on Wednesday, February 11th

Penn State Extension's Pesticide Education team offers this free service, which takes place each year during the Winter Commercial Tree Fruit event in Erie County. You DO NOT have to participate in the Tree Fruit event to receive a respirator fit test and the required 30-minute training that comes with a letter or certification. The testing and certification are free; you can sign up for a spot and show up only during that time.

The free 30-minute training is worth one 1 PA core credit. The training begins at 11:15 AM.

Free respirator fit testing is open to any PA grower and a limited number of NY growers IF you are a LERGP member. No NY credits will be available, but you can still receive the training certificate and a free fit test. Please arrive before the start of the talk. I will be available to direct you at the event. FYI, lunch is only provided to those registered for the Commercial Tree Fruit School, but coffee should be available.

Remember that respirator fit testing is mandatory for pesticide applicators using pesticides that require respirators. Clean and inspect your device for damage and replace cartridges as required.

Respirator Fit Test Program 2026

Jan. 27-28 at Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable (MAFVC)— Hershey, PA

Feb. 3 at Penn State Crops Conference— Lebanon, PA

Feb. 11 at Winter Tree Fruit School— North East, PA (Erie)

Feb. 12 at Winter Tree Fruit School— Wexford, PA (Allegheny)

Feb. 16 at Winter Tree Fruit School— Biglerville, PA (Adams)

Feb. 19 at Winter Tree Fruit School— Leesport, PA (Berks)

Feb. 25 at PA Wine and Grape Conference— State College, PA

Mar. 12 at Penn State Vegetable Grower meeting— Wexford, PA

Jun. 18 at Phipps Conservatory — Pittsburgh, PA

For more details, contact: stw5035@psu.edu or 814-863-9606 or

visit: extension.psu.edu/upcoming-respirator-fit-test-sessions



Photo: Garo Goodrow, Penn State Extension

*Participants **must** bring their respirator(s) and be clean shaven.

The Penn State Pesticide Education Program has partnered with third-party vendors to provide FREE respirator fit testing and medical evaluations! A 30-minute respirator training will be offered at each event. The events assist individuals in satisfying the EPA's Worker Protection Standard (WPS) respirator regulations.

Upcoming PA Wine Marketing Research Board Conference

State College, PA February 25th-26th

The *Pennsylvania Grape and Wine Industry Conference* is designed for all stakeholders in the East Coast grape and wine industry. Whether you are a novice grape grower or winemaker or an established grower and producer, educator, researcher, wine marketer, or business professional, this annual industry conference is designed with you in mind. The event is hosted by the Pennsylvania Wine Marketing and Research Program in partnership with Penn State Extension and the Pennsylvania Winery Association (PWA).

Eligible participants have the opportunity to receive Pennsylvania Pesticide Recertification Training Credits from PDA if they attend the appropriate technical sessions during the conference (pending PDA approval). Megan Luke of the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program will present a talk titled “Drought to deluge, pesticide application best practices for changing weather patterns”, eligible for PDA pesticide applicator recertification credit (Core 00). Respirator fit testing is also available, free of charge.

A complete conference agenda is available on the [PA Wine Marketing Research Board website](#) or the [Pennsylvania Winery Association](#). A block of rooms has been set aside at the Nittany Lion Inn. Contact [The Nittany Lion Inn](#) (814) 865-8500 and reference group number PENN26W to make your reservation. The group rate is available until January 29.

Register for the conference [here](#).

EPA Herbicide AND Insecticide Strategy Updates

If you haven't read about the upcoming changes to pesticide labeling, please see the resources listed below from previous Crop Updates.

These changes to pesticide use requirements are a drastic change from our standard practices and require additional record-keeping and research before every pesticide application. I will provide more information on these requirements as they become available. My presentation at the LERGP Annual Grape Grower Conference will focus on creating a risk map for your property and using the runoff and drift calculators, as well as the mitigation menu, now required by the EPA for many pesticides.

For the 2026 growing season, pay special attention to your herbicide and insecticide labels. Look for “mandatory mitigation”, Bulletins Live, and drift mitigation language.

Current status of several pesticides under review:

Ziram- Can be used for the 2026 growing season. A 12-month grace period to remove the product from the pipeline was supposed to start in 2025, but has not yet been announced. Product manufacturers have completed a “last call” production run and are not planning to continue making new product unless the EPA reverses its previous cancellation.

Mancozeb- Can be used for the 2026 growing season. No updates are available at this time. The proposed cancellation of use for grapes is under review following the public comment period, which

closed in October 2024.

Captan- Labels will be updated to reflect the new language for Bulletins Live 2! and the Mitigation Calculator. Review the label carefully at the time of purchase.

Antimicrobials- A general alert went out last week, indicating that antimicrobial agents used in the manufacturing of food products will be reviewed under EPA guidelines for Endangered Species Act compliance. This may require testing of effluent leaving production facilities (such as wineries) to ensure that these chemical agents are not entering sensitive watersheds. No action is needed at this time, but it may be prudent to review the movement of water through your operation and determine the final outflow from water used for sanitizing practices, as well as the proximity to any risk zones, such as wells, creeks, rivers, etc.

Contact information:

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- Jim Joy, JM Joy Farms



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Updates and Information

Kimberly Knappenberger, Viticulture & IPM Extension Support Specialist, LERGP

NEWA

Here we are in the “Dark Days” of the year with the shortest of course being the winter solstice that was on Sunday, December 21, 2025 with a whopping 9 hours and 4 minutes of daylight. The good news is that we are already gaining daylight with 9 hours and 25 minutes for today! Things are looking up! Every day we add a couple more minutes! Did you know that our longest day will be the summer solstice on June 21, 2026 with 15 hours and 18 minutes of daylight? That’s quite a difference! Hang in there! It’s coming!



These shorter days also pose some problems for some of our fleet of weather stations, especially when we aren’t seeing much sunshine during those daylight hours due to overcast conditions. Most of the stations are good through this time, but we have a couple that struggle with low sunlight. You may have noticed that East Ripley and Versailles are not consistently reporting data and that NEWA does fill in some estimated data for when there is no actual data. The Westfield (South) station is currently out for repairs but should be back soon. East Westfield is also not reporting but I am hoping that a quick reset will get it back online (that could be related to the Verizon outage from yesterday – hoping to have that remedied by the end of the day). Some of the others have been a little delayed now and then but seem to be catching up. If you notice something that seems out of the ordinary – even for the “Dark Days”, please let me know with an email to ksk76@cornell.edu. I appreciate all of the eyes on these so I can correct problems as soon as possible. Stay warm and get some rest! Brighter days are coming but soup is great for now!



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Upcoming Events and Mark Your Calendar Days

Thursday, January 22, 2026- Cornell Grape Pathology Fruit School

Thursday, March 19, 2026-Winter Grape Grower Conference- [register today!](#)

Wednesday, April 8, 2026-How to Certified Course-NYSDEC

Wednesday, April 15, 2026- NYSDEC Pesticide Applicator Exam at CLEREL

**Stop in to the CLEREL office to pick up
your 2026 LERGP Planning calendar
anytime!**

Links of Interest:

Cornell Cooperative Extension:

<https://cals.cornell.edu/cornell-cooperative-extension>

Efficient Vineyard:

<https://www.efficientvineyard.com/>

LERGP:

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

<https://lergp.com/>

NYSIPM:

<https://cals.cornell.edu/new-york-state-integrated-pest-management>

Veraison to Harvest:

<https://cals.cornell.edu/viticulture-enology/research-extension/veraison-harvest>

Spotted Lanternfly Pocket Guide:

<https://lergp.com/spotted-lanternfly>