



*LERGP Crop Update
February 12, 2026*

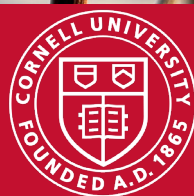
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Kim Knappenberger

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Lake Erie Regional Grape Program



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In this copy:

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

California on track to raze another 40,000 acres of vineyards- *Andrew Holden-* [page 4](#)

Cold Events and Bud Hardiness-*Jennifer Phillips Russo-* [page 9](#)

Save the Date Reminders- Free Respirator Fit Testing - *Megan Luke-* [page 14](#)

High, Low Avg Temperature Chart, NEWA - *Kim Knappenberger-* [page 17](#)



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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.

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scanning the QR code.**

We look forward to seeing you!



Business Management

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

California on track to raze another 40,000 acres of vineyards

Source: <https://www.farmprogress.com/grapes/california-on-track-to-raze-another-40-000-acres-of-vineyards>



A pile is left over from a vineyard that was recently removed. California farmers appear on pace to remove another 40,000 vineyard acres this year, which would bring the total statewide to about 473,000. - Todd Fitchette

California farmers may be on track to take out another 40,000 acres of vineyards this year to address a structural oversupply of grapes, based on activity since the most recent harvest, Allied Grape Growers' Jeff Bitter told Farm Press.

Bitter, the AGG's president, urged farms in the Golden State to remove 50,000 acres of vineyards each year in 2024 and 2025. Growers responded by taking out about 37,000 acres in 2024 and another 40,000 acres after the 2024 harvest, but about 20,000 acres of new vineyards came online in each of the last two years.

Producers may begin to see a light at the end of the tunnel with the 2025 season's relatively small crush, as most industry leaders expect it to fall under 2.5 million tons. How close the industry will come to achieving balance in 2026 has been a [matter of recent debate](#), with one expert at the Unified Wine and Grape Symposium suggesting that California wineries will face a shortage of grapes this summer.

Bitter doesn't necessarily agree, but told Farm Press after the conference that the industry appears

on track to remove at least another 40,000 acres based on trends he's seen since harvest. He didn't make a recommendation for pullouts this year, but suggested 40,000 acres "would bring us very close to longer-term balance, based on today's wine shipment rates," he said in an email.

"If we don't see huge price rebounds ... there might be enough demand to consume all the supply," he said recently. "It might be the first time in four years we've seen that happen."

Bitter suspects this year's crush will be limited by what wineries will purchase or by light production because of abandonments and removals, the latter of which he has [estimated](#) was in the "tens of thousands" of acres last year. In 2025, an estimated 30% of wine grapes statewide went unsold, according to the Sonoma County Winegrowers.

California had an estimated 590,000 bearing and non-bearing acres of wine grapes in 2024, [according to](#) the Wine Institute. The removal of 117,000 vineyard acres over three years would bring that number down to 473,000.

A shift in focus

Bitter's latest estimate came as thousands of wine industry professionals [gathered](#) Jan. 27-29 for the Unified symposium in Sacramento. The conference was highlighted by a "State of the Industry" panel discussion Jan. 28 featuring Bitter, The Wine Economist's Mike Veseth, Azur Associates' Danny Brager, Turrentine Brokerage's Steve Fredricks and the Wine Market Council's Liz Thach.

The 2026 symposium marked what organizers said was a broader shift in the American wine and grape industry, as conversations moved from acknowledging market disruption to planning for stabilization and future opportunity.

"This year's symposium reflected a grounded and forward-looking mindset," said Natalie Collins, president of California Association of Winegrape Growers and co-host of the conference. "There was a clear willingness to confront difficult realities, but also a shared focus on problem-solving, collaboration and positioning the industry for what comes next."

The symposium followed a Silicon Valley Bank [analysis](#) suggesting the market is close to bottoming out and that modest growth may return in the next couple of years. Industry sales in 2025 fell by 2% in terms of volume and 1.6% by dollars, but that's an improvement over declines experienced in 2024, according to SVB's 25th annual State of the U.S. Wine Industry Report issued in mid-January.

As the older, wine-focused cohort is aging out and not being replaced at the same level by Millennial and Gen-Z consumers, the top performers will be ones that prioritize the customer and use digital tools to extend that edge, the report observed.

What I'm reading:

- [Farm Income to Fall in 2026 Despite Hefty Gov't Payments](#)

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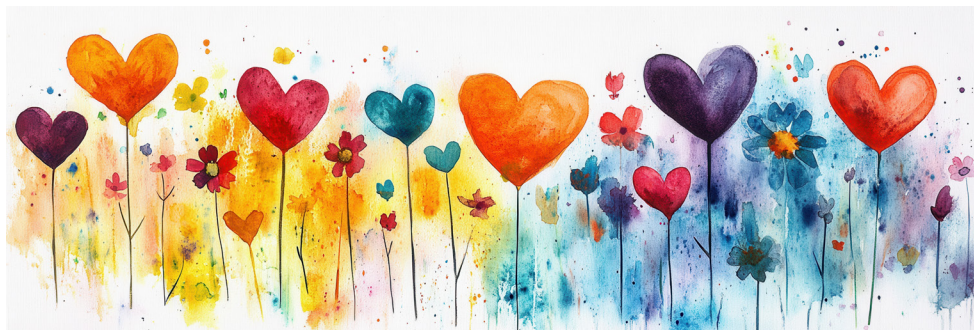


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Viticulture

Jennifer Russo, Viticulture Extension Specialist, LERGP

In the Vineyard

I am glad to see that we are heading into milder weather. The below zero temperatures made it difficult to work out in the vineyard safely. On LERGP's podcast, *Between the Vines*, we invited Dr. Jason Londo to join and discuss the recent cold temps and possible bud/vine damage. Below is a summary of our discussion, but you can download our podcast on your provider site or listen to it on our website. [Click here to listen to the podcast online.](#)

Winter Cold Events and Bud Hardiness: What Vineyard Managers Need to Know

Monitoring Cold Injury Risk and Using Tools to Guide Management Decisions

Winter cold temperatures are a normal and often beneficial part of vineyard dormancy, but extreme cold events can threaten bud survival, vine productivity, and long-term vineyard health. Recent cold temperatures across western New York and other cool-climate grape regions have raised questions among growers about potential cold injury, bud survival, and how to adjust vineyard management moving forward.

This article summarizes current conditions, risk thresholds for common grape varieties, and practical tools growers can use to assess winter injury and guide pruning and crop management decisions.

Recent Cold Conditions and Vine Hardiness

Many vineyard regions recently experienced temperatures approaching or dropping below **-14°F (-25.5°C)**. While extended periods of consistent cold help maintain vine dormancy and reduce winter injury risk from fluctuating temperatures, extremely low temperatures can exceed cold tolerance levels in sensitive grape cultivars.

Cold hardiness varies widely among grape species and cultivars:

- **Vinifera varieties** (e.g., Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc) tend to be the most cold-sensitive.
- **French-American hybrids** generally tolerate moderately colder temperatures.
- **Native American varieties** (e.g., Concord, Niagara) typically have greater cold tolerance.

Research and field monitoring suggest approximate cold tolerance thresholds:

Variety Type	Approximate Bud Injury Threshold
Sauvignon Blanc	Around -7°F (-22°C)
Chardonnay	Around -13°F to -15°F (-25°C to -26°C)
Hybrids	Often below -20°F (-29°C) depending on cultivar
Native varieties	Often tolerate temperatures below -20°F

When temperatures drop below these thresholds, bud injury becomes increasingly likely.

Why Consistent Cold Can Be Beneficial

This winter has been characterized by relatively stable cold temperatures with limited mid-winter

warm spells. This pattern can reduce risk of trunk damage and vine splitting. Rapid temperature fluctuations are often more damaging than steady cold because warm spells initiate water movement within trunk tissues and rapid freeze events afterward can cause trunk splitting and mechanical injury. Consistent cold conditions help maintain vine dormancy and reduce tissue stress, although extremely low temperatures still pose risk to sensitive cultivars.

The Importance of Bud Injury Assessment

Even when regional monitoring indicates moderate injury risk, vineyard-specific conditions such as topography, soil type, and air drainage can significantly influence bud survival. Differences of up to **5°C (9°F)** have been observed between vineyard blocks within the same farm. Growers should consider conducting bud injury assessments, especially in: cold-sensitive varieties, low-lying vineyard blocks, newly planted vineyards, and sites with known frost pockets or variable microclimates.

How to Evaluate Bud Survival

Bud assessment helps determine if pruning or crop load adjustments are necessary.

Bud Cutting Method

Growers can collect dormant canes, bring them indoors, and either:

1. Dissect buds to visually evaluate primary bud survival, or
2. Force buds to grow under warm conditions and evaluate emergence.

If significant bud mortality is observed, growers may consider: leaving additional buds during pruning, delaying pruning until damage levels are confirmed, or adjusting canopy or crop management later in the season. There is an article below from Joe Fiola, University of Maryland viticulture specialist, on how to dissect buds to assess injury.

Cold Hardiness Tools Available to Growers

We touched on this the last crop update, but there are several research-based decision tools available to help estimate cold injury risk.

Cornell Cold Hardiness Monitoring Tools These tools provide weekly or biweekly bud cold hardiness measurements, model-based predictions of bud survival, and field validation data collected from research vineyards. Growers can access two primary resources either by googling Cornell Cold Hardiness monitoring which will get you to the website that Kim wrote about ([Click Here](#)), or the NEWA site. These platforms provide: LT50 data (temperature expected to kill 50% of buds), model predictions, compared with measured field data, and location-based variety-specific hardiness estimates. One can select nearby weather stations or vineyard locations, compare minimum temperatures to cold hardiness predictions, and evaluate freeze injury risk levels. These tools should be used as early warning indicators rather than exact prescriptions, since vineyard microclimates may vary significantly.

Considerations for Newly Planted Vineyards

Young vines can be particularly vulnerable to winter injury. Newly established vines may have lower carbohydrate reserves, less developed woody tissue, and greater susceptibility to bud and trunk injury. However, snow cover can significantly reduce winter injury risk. Research observations have documented up to **20°F temperature buffering** beneath snow cover, highlighting its importance as natural insulation.

Trunk Injury Risk

Trunk splitting and vascular damage typically occur when warm winter temperatures initiate sap movement and rapid temperature drops following the warm periods. Because this winter has remained consistently cold, trunk injury risk appears relatively low so far. However, growers should continue monitoring conditions through late winter and early spring, when temperature fluctuations are more common.

Looking Ahead: Late Winter and Early Spring Risks

Even when vines survive mid-winter cold events, injury risk remains through early spring. Once vines begin to lose cold hardiness during warming periods, they become more vulnerable to late cold snaps. Growers should continue monitoring weather forecasts and bud hardiness reports through early April.

Final Thoughts

Current winter conditions have generally supported vine dormancy and may reduce trunk injury risk. However, extremely low temperatures may still cause bud injury in sensitive varieties. Combining regional monitoring tools with vineyard-level assessments provides growers with the best strategy for minimizing winter injury impacts and maintaining vineyard productivity.

Below is a great article written by my colleague at Maryland, Joe Fiola, on how to assess bud damage.

Updated: April 30, 2021

By [Joseph Fiola, Ph.D.](#)

Assessing Grapevine Bud Damage

Damage from low winter temperatures is arguably the greatest risk to sustainable profitable winegrape production in the eastern US. The majority of Maryland vineyards have not experienced a significant amount of low-temperature damage over the past decade or so, however some vineyards have experienced damage this winter (2013/2014). The following “Timely Vit” will give an overview of how to assess the damage and how to modify your pruning based on the assessment. Please see the previous “Timely Vit” in the series on “[Understanding Grapevine Bud Damage](#)” for an overview of how vines attempt to prevent damage, the conditions which influence the level of damage, and types of damage.

When temperatures below 0° F take place, it is prudent for growers to collect canes and assess bud damage prior to pruning. Here are some guidelines for bud damage assessment and pruning adjustment.

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How to assess the amount of low-temperature damage to buds (Handle sharp objects with CARE!!)

- 1) Collect enough canes so that you have about 100 buds from the block or variety that you are checking.
 - Collect buds for damage assessment for each variety separately and for each block of the same variety separately (for example Cabernet Sauvignon on top of hill and Cabernet Sauvignon on the bottom of the hill.)
 - The first 2-10 buds from the bottom of the cane (closest to the cordon/head) are critical.
- 2) Bring the canes indoors and allow them to warm at room temperature for a minimum of 24 hours. This allows the damage to develop and makes it easier to differentiate between healthy and injured buds.
- 3) Use a sharp razor blade to cut cross-sections of the bud until you can tell if the large primary bud is healthy (green) or injured (brown) (all green in figure 5.)
 - First, cut about 1/3 down from the top of the bud (figure 2.)
 - Use this to assess primary bud damage (large bud in the center of figure 3.)
 - Second, cut about 2/3 down from the top of the bud (figure 4.)
 - Use this to assess secondary bud damage (secondary left of primary; tertiary right of the primary.)
- 4) Count the number of dead or injured buds, and divide by the total number of buds sampled to get the percentage of injury.
 - Use a data sheet to record and compute bud mortality by variety and block.



Figure 1. Side view before cut



Figure 2. First cut



Figure 3. Top view after first cut

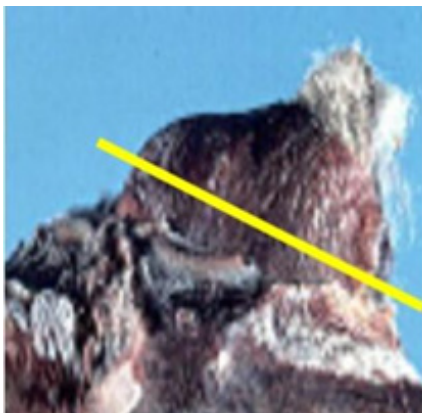


Figure 4. Second cut in yellow



Figure 5. Top view after second cut

If there is damage to buds you can modify your normal pruning practices and leave proportionately more buds to try to compensate for the damage and get back to a “normal” or desired crop level.

How to adjust pruning based on an assessment of low temperature damage to buds.

- 0-15% dead primary buds – Do not change normal pruning practices.
- 15-35% dead primary buds – Increase the number of buds retained by 35%.
- 25-50% dead primary buds – Increase the number of buds retained by 50%.
- >50 dead primary buds – Minimally prune. Prune away only those nodes which will intrude into the space of adjacent vines or which will produce fruit so low that it hangs to the ground.
 - If damage is >50% there is a high likelihood of cordon and cane/trunk damage.
 - There will also be a higher likelihood of Crown Gall damage to the graft union area
 - Watch those vines closely in mid-spring to assess the extent of cane/trunk damage and Crown Gall.

The following resources were utilized for the information in this “Timely Vit.” For more information on assessing bud injury:

- [Anatomy of Grapevine Winter Injury and Recovery \(pdf\)](#)
Martin C. Goffinet, Cornell University, Department of Horticultural Sciences, NY State Agricultural Experiment Station
- [How Grapevine Buds Gain and Lose Cold-Hardiness \(Grapes 101\)](#)
Tim Martinson, Cornell University, Viticulture and Enology
- [Winter injury to Grapevines and Methods of Protection - Bulletin E2930](#)
Genotype determines a vine’s maximum cold hardiness potential. Environment - soil, weather, topography and pests - and grower management determine how much of that potential is realized.
Michigan State University Bookstore (pdf format)

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PA Update

Megan Luke, Penn State Extension Viticulture and Tree Fruit Educator

Respirator Fit Test Program 2026

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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.**

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Updates and Information

Kimberly Knappenberger, Viticulture & IPM Extension Support Specialist, LERGP

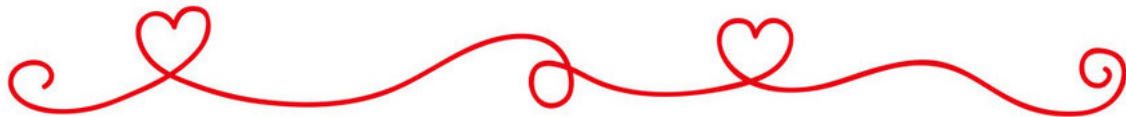
	1/29/26-2/12/26			Low Temps		High Temp
	Avg temp	High temp	Low temp	1/30/26	2/9/26	2/10/26
Burt (Lakeside Tabor)	17.1	35.8	-1.7	6.8	-1.7	35.8
Newfane (Chateau Niagara)	16.5	39.7	-3.1	5.9	-3.1	39.7
Ransomville	17.1	44.4	0.5	6.2	0.5	44.4
Lockport	16.2	45.7	-2	4.1	-2	45.7
Brant	14.7	49.6	-7.8	-4	-7.8	49.6
Versailles	12.4	50.4	-16.2	-10.1	-16.2	50.4
Hanover	13.1	49.9	-12.7	-8	-12.7	49.9
Silver Creek (Route 5)	14	50.7	-13	-11.2	-13	50.7
Silver Creek (Double A)	13.6	50.4	-11.4	-11.4	-8.9	50.4
Dunkirk (Route 5)	14.7	51.6	-10.7	-9.4	-10.7	51.6
Sheridan	13.7	50	-13.4	-13.4	-11.7	50
Sheridan (Liberty)	15.3	50.4	-7.8	-5.1	-7.8	50.4
Forestville	13.8	48.4	-9.8	-9.8	-9.3	48.4
East Fredonia	13.6	49.1	-10	-7.8	-9.5	49.1
Brocton Escarpment	14.6	49.6	-6.8 (2/8)	-4.8	-6	49.6
Portland	14.3	49.2	-8.4	-4.7	-8.4	49.2
Portland LERGP West	15.3	50.4	-9	-4.5	-9	50.4
East Westfield	14.7	49.6	-6.1 (2/8)	-1.8	-5	49.6
Westfield	13.8	50.5	-8.5 (2/8)	-8.2	-5.7	50.5
Westfield (South)	14.9	51.3	-9.8	-4.9	-9.8	51.3
East Ripley	15	49.8	-8	-3.3	-8	49.8
Ripley	14.7	49.8	-9	-3.2	-9	49.8
Ripley Escarpment	15.6	48.7	-6.7	-0.6	-6.7	48.7
Ripley State Line	14.8	48.9	-6.6 (2/1)	-4	-4.6	48.9
North East State Line	14.8	48.1	-2.1 (2/8)	0.4 (1/31)	-0.9	48.1
North East Escarpment	15.3	50.2	-6.1	-1.2	-6.1	50.2
North East Sidehill	14.8	49.2	-6.8	-0.6 (1/31)	-6.8	49.2
North East Lab	14.8	47.6	-4.8	-1.6 (2/1)	-4.8	47.6
Harborcreek	15.1	51.1	-8.5	-4.2	-8.5	51.1
Harborcreek Escarpment	14.2	48.6	-9	-3.1 (2/1)	-9	48.6
Lake City	14.6	49.1	-13.1	-9.9	-13.1	49.1
Lake City (Mason Farms)	13.9	48.2	-13.2	-11.2	-13.2	48.2

NEWA

I don't have to tell you that it has been awfully cold out there! Our stations do not calculate wind chill, only actual temperatures, but those are bad enough! I put this chart together so you can see what we have experienced across the belt since our last crop update. The range included in these results are from January 29, 2026 to February 12, 2026 at about 9:00AM and are as they are reported to NEWA.

I wanted to be sure to include that much time because we did have one of our lowest temperature events across the region between January 29th and February 1st. The next event was February 8-9th and there really wasn't much of a warm up between those dates, however we did warm up quite a bit right after that last event with highs that we haven't seen for quite a while. It looks like we are having a bit of a warm up ahead next week so hopefully you can get out and get a bit caught up on pruning if the cold weather has kept you out of your vineyards.

Just to reiterate, you can check the bud hardiness in your area on the NEWA website at this link. <https://newa.cornell.edu/grape-cold-hardiness> Be sure to enter your nearest weather station, dates of interest, and the cultivar to see if you have had any high risk freeze events. If you have questions please feel free to reach out!



Join the New York Wine & Grape Foundation!

Membership starts at just \$50 per year for Growers & \$300 for Wineries

"The small investment in membership helps to provide funding for reasearch that pays long lasting dividends that can't be denied. I've been a dues paying member from day one..."

– Jim Joy, JM Joy Farms



Dawn and Bob Betts
Betts Farm

2024 NYWGF Grower Award Recipient

**Boldly,
NY.**
newyorkwines.org

Visit newyorkwines.org/membership to learn more!

Upcoming Events and Mark Your Calendar Days

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-man-
agement](https://cals.cornell.edu/new-york-state-integrated-pest-management)

Veraison to Harvest:

[https://cals.cornell.edu/viticulture-enology/research-exten-
sion/veraison-harvest](https://cals.cornell.edu/viticulture-enology/research-extension/veraison-harvest)

Spotted Lanternfly Pocket Guide:

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