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The Boordy Nursery Grape Book, 1983-1984

Boordy Nursery

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The
Boordy Nursery
Grape
Book
The Story Behind These Grapevines

The classic European wine grapes which are called the *vinifera* thrive in the special climate of California. They are the basis of California’s big wine industry.

But in most of the country east of the Rockies, where conditions are altogether different, they are not at home.

This is not particularly surprising. All plants have their climatic requirements and limitations. Like lots of other things (olives, figs, dates, pineapples, coconuts) these *vinifera* grapes lack the hardiness and disease resistance necessary to cope well with our continental extremes. They fail to produce good crops reliably, and in most parts of the country they do not survive.

That is why growing wine grapes and producing good table wine has not been more general in the United States until recently.

Which is where the French hybrids come in. These are crosses between the classic European sorts and certain tough native American species. The purpose was to combine the wanted European wine characteristics with the improved hardiness and disease resistance of the American parents. These were bred by the French for their own use—to make good wine while combatting adverse conditions wherever found and reducing production costs.

It turns out that in this country as well as in France and other parts of Europe the hybrids can grow and produce where the *vinifera* won’t, or where they require elaborate and special care. Boordy Nursery was the first to introduce these hybrids commercially over here, and today they are yielding good wines both for the market and in family vineyards where winegrowing was previously unknown. They have opened a new chapter in American winegrowing.

*Note.* The little men seen marching back and forth across the cover are on their way to Boordy Nursery. (From a wrought-iron sign over our front door.)
The List of Varieties

The family of hybrids is large and varied. Among them are varieties suitable for practically every section of the country. But remember that the finest grapes and most famous vintages of Europe have behind them several thousand years of experience. You can expect good wine from the hybrids, in the European style, but do not expect to equal the “greatest” wines of Europe.

Hybridization has enriched every important branch of agriculture. Such work continues with grapes, in this country as well as in Europe. But it takes many seasons to discover the weaknesses and strengths of new hybrids. We hold our listing to those so far found most satisfactory, adding a new one occasionally, or eliminating an old one.

The varieties are identified by the name of the hybridizer plus the number assigned by him to the original seedling in his test vineyard. Some have picked up a name as well, and in such cases name follows number in the catalog.

Descriptions refer to “cane pruning” and “spur pruning”. These terms will be explained later on.

Grapes for Red Wine

Asterisk indicates our leaders—safest and surest for the amateur who wants good wine without too much experimenting.

**BACO NO. 1 (Baco Noir).** Early, hardy, disease resistant, ultravigorous, moderate crops. When properly handled, its wine somewhat recalls red Bordeaux. Its great vigor can make it hard to manage in commercial plantings, but is no obstacle in family vineyards and makes it ideal for decorative trellis or arbor. Cane pruning.

**BURDIN 8753.** Burdin's goal has been hybrids giving wines comparable to Beaujolais, and this one perhaps comes closest. Vine has vigor, is reasonably hardy and produces well. Requires careful spraying against mildew.

*FOCH.* Extra early, originating in Alsace. Widely adapted, especially valuable for short-season areas of rigorous climate, and remarkably disease resistant. Good wine quality and reliability promise an important future. Cane pruning. Hybridizer's number is Kuhlmann 188-2.

**JOANNES-SEYVE 26-205 (Chambourcin).** Mid-season, wine of very superior quality. Grown in the French Loire Valley and Savoie. Hardy and relatively disease-free, but spray treatments cannot be neglected. Short cane pruning.

**LANDOT 4511 (Landot Noir).** Very vigorous, early mid-season, moderate disease resistance. Our wine of this variety won a silver medal at the Bratislava Wine Exposition in 1975. Short cane pruning.

SEIBEL 7053 (Chancellor). Early mid-season, hardy. A compact grower and one of the heaviest producers, combining quantity with good quality. Widely planted in southern France, basic in our vineyards. Spur pruning.

SEIBEL 8357 (Colobel). Mid-season, hardy, vigorous, moderately productive, good disease resistance. A teinturier grape giving 10 times the color intensity of normal red wines, used for blending in small proportion to adjust color. Every vineyard should have a few. Cane pruning.

SEIBEL 9549 (de Chaunac). Early, hardy, disease resistant, good vigor and highly productive. Much planted in New York State. Cane pruning.


SEIBEL 13053 (Cascade). Extra early, before Foch. Very reliable, and one of the best for short-season areas. Blends well with the other red-wine hybrids and by itself makes a fine rosé. Short cane pruning.

SEIBEL 14596 (Bellandais). Very vigorous, and a heavy producer of huge bunches. One of the best for the Southwest and other fairly dry, long-season areas. Short cane pruning.

SEYVE-VILLARD 5247. Bushy habit of growth; early, hardy and healthy, large crops of big compound lavender-colored bunches. Used for rosé or for blending. Fermented free of the skins, the free-run juice makes a delightful Vin gris. Short cane pruning. Limited quantities available.

SEYVE-VILLARD 18-315 (Villard Noir). Late mid-season, very heavy producer, disease resistant. Now the most widely grown red-wine hybrid in southern France, well adapted over here in all but short-season areas. Wine heavy-bodied and very good. Spur pruning.

Grapes for White Wine

Asterisk indicates our leaders—safest and surest for the amateur who wants good wine without too much experimenting.

BURDIN 4672. Early mid-season, dependable producer. When fully ripe yields a delicately fragrant white wine with a touch of what the French call the “goût d’Alsace.” We consider it a real comer, though it has not been widely tested. Our supply is limited. Cane pruning.

JOANNES-SEYVE 23-416. A new addition to our main list. After nearly two decades of vineyard observation and more than a dozen trial vintages we are convinced that it has an important future throughout the northeast and middle west. Great vigor of vine, hardy, virtually free of disease. Large loose bunches of oval, pale pink fruit. Good sugar/acid balance, delicately aromatic wine.

MEYNIEU 6. Early mid-season. A hybrid from Bordeaux turning out to be a rustic and steady producer of white wine recalling “Graves.” We foresee a future for this one too. Cane pruning.

*SEIBEL 4986 (Rayon d’Or). Trim, handsome vine, healthy and hardy; fruit greyish-pink at maturity, in beautiful winged branches, to be picked promptly when ripe. Very regular producer, wine of high quality, and one of the basic grapes in our own white wine production. It virtues are only now beginning to be discovered. Spur or short cane pruning depending on vigor.

*SEIBEL 5279 (Aurore). Very early. Now the leading white wine hybrid in the Finger Lakes region and other short-season areas, for still wine or champagne. Very vigorous, and hardy, not so well adapted to warm, humid conditions. Wine pale, fresh, delicate. Delicious for eating or fresh juice. Cane pruning.

*SEIBEL 9110 (Verdelet). Early mid-season. Fruit exceptionally beautiful, with loose well-formed bunches of pinkish oval berries. Good table grape, pleasantly fragrant wine. Short cane pruning.

*SEYVE-VILLARD 5276 (Seyval). Early-mid season. Medium vigor, no serious cultural defects, highly productive, compact grower. At this point, the jewel among the white wine hybrids for its combination of superior wine quality, excellent cultural characteristics and broad adaptability. Our all-around favorite, and our biggest seller, with a great future. Spur pruning.

*SEYVE-VILLARD 12375. (Villard Blanc). Mid-season. Remarkably vigorous vine and a heavy producer of large compound clusters. Does best in areas and seasons of low humidity. Not for short season areas, but otherwise widely adapted. Remarkable tonnage has been reported from some locations, especially the southwest. Spur pruning.
**SIEGFRIED.** Early mid-season. A Riesling hybrid from Germany easily mistaken in the vineyard for the true Riesling. Differences: ripens earlier than Riesling, far more resistant to downy mildew—and is not up to the true Riesling in wine quality though the wine is good. Also much hardier. Cane pruning.

*Vidal 256.* Late-season. Originating in the French Cognac district, it is a hybrid of Trebbiano, the Italian white chianti grape, which it resembles in both wine and vine. Good vigor, big producer, mildew resistant (mildew being the bane of the Cognac district), one of our best. Foliage sometimes shows spots of mite damage which, however, are self-healing. Short cane pruning.

**White Rogue.** Owing to a labeling mix-up years ago, the identity of this one was lost. We list it because it has tested out so admirably—one of the earliest, extremely vigorous and productive, winter-hardy, disease resistant, good wine quality. A boon where the growing season is short and winters are difficult. We suspect that it is one of Baco’s white hybrids. Cane pruning.

### Grapes for Eating

The following wine grapes are also suitable for table use: Seibel 5279, Seibel 9110, Seibel 13047, Seyve-Villard 12309 and Seyve-Villard 12375 and the pink Joannes-Seyve 23416. The others have fine flavor but are ill adapted for table use because of small berry size, tough skins or compact bunches, traits unimportant in winemaking. All of them yield delicious jellies and fresh juice, very different from the familiar American equivalent.

In addition, we propagate a few of the following table grapes for home use (not in quantities for commercial planting):

**Seedless Varieties.** Our favorite is *Suffolk Red*, bearing big clusters of bright pink seedless fruit, delicious. Also two whites, *Himrod* and *Romulus*. All have abundant vigor but only moderate hardiness and are rather capricious bearers. All are worth a trial.

**Steuben.** A much improved American type, trouble-free and inclined to ramble; good crops of handsome lavender bunches with an agreeable spicy flavor. Cane pruning. Its vigor makes it fine for arbors. We do not propagate the standard American types such as the Concord and Niagara.

*S.V. 20-365* (*Dattier de St. Vallier*). Typical European table grape: large golden-yellow ladyfinger berries carried in big loose bunches. Fairly winter hardy, but a gamble in humid conditions. Late mid-season. Spur pruning.

### Vinifera and Rootstock Material

If the classic *vinifera* grapes are to have any chance of success in the east, they must first be grafted on phylloxera-resistant rootstocks. We do no commercial grafting and we do not offer any of these grapes, our specialty being the hybrids. In spite of the odds against success, there are micro climates where some of the glamor *vinifera* such as Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Riesling can survive; and they do well in parts of the deep southwest.
But it is foolhardy to make an extensive planting before thorough trial, and only grafted vines from a specialized source should be tried.

But we do propagate some of the standard rootstock varieties on which *vinifera* vines (and in some cases, others) are grafted the world over. These do not produce edible fruit but are intended to be grown as mother vines, i.e., as sources of cutting wood for those who wish to try their hand at do-it-yourself grafting. Those available are named on the separate Supplementary List.

## Establishing A Vineyard

Your vines will arrive packed with moist material to keep the roots in condition. If planting must be delayed, hold vines in original package in a cool place for a week or 10 days. Any slight mold that develops in the package is harmless. If delay is longer, open package, spread out roots and trench the small vines until planting time in light soil with tops exposed. They must not be allowed to dry out.

*Vineyard layout.* On a sloping location, plant across the slope to reduce erosion. East-west orientation is desirable but not necessary. Plant vines 6 feet apart in the rows; 8 feet for the most vigorous sorts. Alleys between the rows are 8 to 10 feet, not narrower. Slope not vital, but avoid frost pockets.

*How many vines?* Planting 6’ x 8’ means 48 square feet per vine. Planting 8’ x 10’ means 80 square feet per vine. An acre equals 43,500 sq. ft. You can compute the number of vines per acre after making due allowance for turning room, margins and cross alleys. The number runs from around 450 to 850 per acre. Number of vines for a small home vineyard is computed the same way.

*Estimating yield.* We are often asked this question, and there is no firm answer because of the many variables. A ton of grapes yields 175-185 gallons of wine; a quarter-ton about 45 gallons. Then the variables enter. Production per acre may run from 2 to 6 tons depending on such factors as winter damage, frost and hail damage, nature of growing season, proper pruning, care in cultivation, disease and insect damage and other accidents, grape variety, etc. Boasts about grape yields are about as reliable as your neighbor’s statement about the fish that got away. Average yield in the Napa Valley is 2½ tons. It is best to assume the low figure and be pleasantly surprised later, but excessive production reduces quality. It also enfeebles the vines, delaying the hardening of the wood and exposing them to the risk of severe winter damage.

*Pruning.* Grapevines require drastic annual pruning, undertaken in late winter or early spring. “Bleeding” of late-pruned vines is not harmful. The many training systems cannot be described here, but a few are illustrated. Essentially they boil down to two types of pruning: *cane pruning* and *spur pruning.* The point to remember is that grapes are borne on “one year wood”, the woody canes which were the green shoots of the previous season. The bearing
1st Season: from newly planted vine let one shoot develop to form trunk. 2nd season: tie and trim back young trunk, and when growth begins rub off all but the top 3 or 4 shoots, which will become canes. 3rd season: cut back the canes to short 2-bud spurs, letting those buds develop but rubbing off all other growth. 4th season: for cane-pruned varieties, prune to 1 cane and 1 spur; for spur-pruned varieties prune back again to four spurs leaving no cane.

Planting and First Season. Keep young vines from drying out during planting. Give soil a final cultivation just before planting to kill weed seedlings, then lay off row. Dig hole and plant vine so the place where the top growth begins is just above ground level. Trim off the top growth to leave two buds only.

After growth begins and danger of frost is past, rub off all tender young shoots except the strongest one, which will become the permanent trunk and should be tied to a lath or stake as it grows during the season. Rub off any suckers that may develop from the base, to concentrate all growth in the one shoot, or cane. Keep clean cultivated and water if necessary. Apply a general garden spray several times the first season.

Wood of some varieties yields most heavily from the 3 to 4 buds closest to the trunk; so these are pruned by cutting back several canes to “spurs” of three or 4 buds and trimming off everything else. These varieties yield heavy bunches, and the spurs give sufficient crop. Canes of other varieties bear best from the 4th to 10th buds, counting from the trunk. These are pruned by cutting back 1 to 4 canes to leave 8 to 10 buds each, the number of such canes depending on the vigor of the vine, then trimming off everything else and tying these “bearing canes” to the trellis wire. In cane pruning, 2 short spurs are also left well placed near the head of the vine in order to provide properly located “one year wood” for the following year.
Pruning variations. 1, prune back to 2 lateral canes and 2 renewal spurs. 2, umbrella pruning for vigorous cane-pruned varieties, looping single bearing cane over middle wire and leaving renewal spur. 3, double umbrella pruning (2 bearing canes and 2 spurs) for ultra-vigorous varieties. There are numerous other variations, but they all come down to either spur pruning or cane-and-spur pruning. Do not ever allow the vines to over-bear.

Second Season. If main shoot made less than three feet of growth, prune back again to 2 buds, thus assuring growth of an extra-strong trunk even though a season is lost. If vines have made more than 3 feet of growth, set trellis posts every 3 vines in the row and put on bottom trellis wire (No. 9 smooth galvanized) 36 "-42" from the ground. Use galvanized staples, and leave play since wire expands and contracts. Line posts may be lighter than end posts, which must be set firmly and secured with guy wires or braces. Tie cane securely to wire in early spring while vine is still dormant, cut off all lateral shoots and prune back to 1 bud above wire.

When growth begins and frost danger is past, rub off all shoots from the base of the vine up the cane, except the top 3 or 4. Let these develop throughout the season, tying loosely to the wire. If they try to produce fruit, pinch off the small bunches before they blossom. Adopt a regular fungicide/insecticide spray schedule. Keep clean cultivated.

Third Season. Vines are ready to bear first crop. In early spring, cut back the four shoots of the previous season, now woody canes known as “one year wood”, to stubs, or spurs, of 2 or 3 buds each. For cane-pruned varieties, one of these spurs may be left instead as a short cane of not more than 6 buds and tied to the wire. Shoots from the buds that are left will produce a crop of 2 to 4 bunches of grapes per shoot. Suckers emerging during the season from elsewhere on the young vine must be rubbered off. Spray and cultivate regularly. A second wire placed 12 inches above the bottom one is desirable; it serves as a catch wire as the growing shoots lengthen. Routine fungicide/insecticide spraying becomes vital.
Subsequent Seasons. For spur pruned vines, cut back again to 4 spurs of one-year wood that is placed as close to the head of the trunk as possible, and remove all other growth. For cane-pruned vines, leave 2 spurs and 2 canes of 5 to 10 buds, depending on vigor. Tie the bearing canes horizontally along the bottom wire or else loop the canes over middle wire, as shown in illustration. Continue program of cultivation, suckering and fungicide/insecticide spraying. Turf may be substituted in the alleys for clean cultivation, but the strip under the trellis rows must be kept clean.

Trellis Note. Only two wires are mentioned in the above text. But most growers use a third wire, as shown in the sketches. This is also a catch wire, to which shoots attach themselves or are tied as they lengthen. The reason is that shoots and foliage should be trained well up in the air and off the ground to keep them from interfering with cultivation and also to improve the ventilation of the vines. Grapevines are by nature climbers if they have anything to cling to. Some growers use two wires, one on each side of the vineyard posts, in place of the single second wire. As shoots lengthen they are stuffed between these two wires, to encourage vertical growth and reduce the need for tying.

Spraying. This has a double purpose: to protect against (1) fungus diseases and (2) insect damage. Failure to follow a spray routine compromises your entire crop. Materials commonly used are harmless in application when instructions are followed. So is their residue since they are biodegradable and lose their fungicidal and insecticidal power after a few days. For information consult your county agent or a good book on grape growing or general fruit growing.

Books on the Subject

We call attention to two books by Philip M. Wagner which together form a library of grape growing and wine-making.

Grapes Into Wine: The Art of Wine-Making in America, by Philip M. Wagner. Knopf, 1982. $6.95. (Supersedes Mr. Wagner's standard work on wine-making. American Wines and Wine-Making.) A text for the serious amateur and small commercial producer, as well as for wine drinkers who wish to broaden their background


These may be had through your bookseller or direct from us. In ordering from us, please add $1.35 each for postage and handling.
Supplementary List, 1983-84
Available only in 10s or fewer. Limited experience with some of them. All make good wine in congenial locations. See this list also for rootstock material.

WHITE WINE

BURDIN 5201. Early mid-season. Superior wine with "gout d'Alsace" when well ripened. Good disease resistance but lacks vigor except in rich soils and does better when grafted. Culturally inferior to Burdin 4672, but worth trial for its wine quality. Short cane pruning.

JOANNES-SEYVE 12428. Medium vigor and hardiness. Cane pruning.

CAYUGA (GW-3). A white-wine hybrid from the New York Experiment Station at Geneva. It is a cross of SV 5276 x Schuyler, a table grape. It is culturally o.k., its wine is of good quality.

LANDOT 2281. Midseason, Good vigor, productive, fair disease resistance. Spectacular long, shouldered clusters. Superior wine without special characteristics. Short cane pruning.

SEIBEL 13047. Early, with S. 5279 which it resembles, though more disease resistant. Fruit in long loose bunches. Dual purpose grape, for both eating and wine. Cane pruning.

SEYVE-VILLARD 12309 (Rouca-neuf). Late mid-season, for the South and Southwest. Strong grower, moderate producer, large bunches of oval fruit turning pinkish. Both wine and table. Spur or short cane pruning.


RED WINE

BURDIN 7705 (Florental). Early mid-season. A Gamay hybrid, wine a counterpart of French Beaujolais, but a weak grower and requires grafting. Short cane pruning.

SEYVE-VILLARD 18283 (Garonnais). Midseason. Very vigorous, disease-free and a steady producer, grown in the Garonne Valley of France. Short cane pruning.

BURDIN 11042. Twelve testing seasons have shown this to be above average in both winter hardiness and disease resistance. Mid-season. Moderate vigor. Smallish bunches dictate cane pruning.

ROOTSTOCKS

COUDERC 1613. Generally satisfactory in non-calcareous soils. It is one of the few showing resistance to nematodes.


TELEKI 5BB. Very vigorous. Widely used throughout northern and central Europe and well adapted to the north eastern quadrant of the United States. Prefers deep soils and suffers in hot, dry areas. Accepts grafts well.

TELEKI 5C. Very vigorous. Adapted to the more northerly areas. Not as widely used in Europe as 5BB. Tolerates lime, as does 5BB.

RUPESTRIS ST. GEORGE. Most vigorous of all, and the principal rootstock in California because its plunging root system adapts it to dry conditions. Accepts grafts very easily. Known in France as Rupestris du Lot.

AxR No. 1. Wide area of adaptability, except for calcareous soils. Very vigorous, grafts easily. Tolerates dry conditions. Used a great deal in California.
Looking Ahead

We call attention to the white-wine variety Joannes-Seyve 23-416, finally promoted to our main list, where a description will be found. Still very scarce; hence limited to 100 per customer at most.

Another white-wine variety, still scarcer, is a German hybrid originated at Geisenheim, a cross of S.7053 x Riesling Clone 239 and called GM 322-58. It has proved culturally satisfactory in Maryland, but its wine is certainly not the peer of a superior German Riesling. We still reserve judgement on wine quality. Limit 20 to a customer.

Our current nursery planting includes greatly enlarged quantities of three white varieties and one red, in response to last season’s demand: SV 5276 (Seyval), Vidal 256, Seibel 4986 (Rayon d’Or) and SV 18315 (Villard Noir). Judging by the volume of orders already received this was not a mistake. Order soon if you want to be sure.

We remind our friends that the best time to begin thinking about routine maintenance, repairs and new equipment is immediately after the vintage. Then bottlenecks and other production problems are still fresh in mind. Important decisions, especially those involving imports, should really be made in late winter before the spring rush begins.

Our business in equipment for the smaller commercial wineries, which is an outgrowth of the nursery, keeps increasing. We do not publish an equipment catalog, but a call or card will get a prompt response. We have represented Friederich Freres (filters, precision pumps, straight line and rotary fillers, semi-automatic corkers) for decades. Likewise Zambelli, whom we continue to represent by arrangement with WATP, for crushers, stemmers presses, must pumps, transfer pumps and so on. Likewise Mearelli for dejuicers, continuous presses and much else. Let us know your needs.

THE BOORDY NURSERY

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