

FGCU Food Forest

Plant Database

Muscadine Grape (*Vitis rotundifolia*)

Origin: Southeastern United States

Description: The muscadine grape grows on a large woody vigorous vine that climbs and clings with coiled tendrils that wrap tightly around anything they can reach. The grapes (technically berries) have thick black, dark purple or bronze skins, and soft

Uses: Landscape screens and food

Harvest: Muscadine grapes start

Flower: Muscadines are dioecious, different plants. The small, greenish

Tolerance: Muscadine grapes grow

drained sandy loams with a pH of 5.5 to 6.5. The plant may be injured by minimum winter temperatures of 0° F, and should not be grown in

frequently go below 10° F.



General Description: The Muscadine grape, or Muscadine, grows on a large vigorous vine that climbs and clings with coiled tendrils that wrap tightly around anything they can reach. The vines are woody, and the slightly lobed triangular leaves are deciduous. Old vines can be 6" or

more in diameter and grow more than 100' into the tops of the tallest pines and oaks. The grapes (technically berries) have thick black, dark purple or bronze skins, and soft musky flavored pulp. Muscadine fruits grow in small clusters rather than in the large bunches characteristic of other kinds of grapes.

- **Native Origin:** The Muscadine grape is native to the southeastern and south-central United States from Florida to Delaware, west to eastern Texas and Oklahoma.
- **General History:** It has been extensively cultivated since the 16th century. Many older varieties were selections from the wild, but the Georgia Agricultural Experiment Station and the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture have introduced a number of improved varieties that have become standard cultivars. The earliest named variety was Scuppernong, found growing wild in northeastern North Carolina in 1810 by Dr. Calvin Jones. Scuppernong has become another name for all muscadine grapes. Commercial production of muscadine grapes is essentially limited to the U.S. Southeast.
- **Distribution:** Muscadines are well adapted to the warm, humid conditions of the southeastern U.S. Its lack of frost hardiness also limits it to this same region, except for some West Coast locations. The plant may be injured by minimum winter temperatures of 0° F, and should not be grown in regions where temperatures frequently go below 10° F. Muscadines can be grown in California and adjacent areas, but are not as well adapted as other cultivated grapes. In coastal areas of the West the lack of sufficient summer heat produces berries that tend to be small and generally lacking in sugar. The vines also do not fare well in the low humidity of many interior sections. On the other hand Muscadines perform satisfactorily in the warmer grape growing regions of California, Oregon and Washington.
- **Season of Harvest:** Muscadine grapes start ripening mid-September to late October. In most cultivars the grapes in a given cluster ripen at different times and must be individually picked. The fruit also tends to fall when ripe. A mature vine can yield 20 lbs. or more of fruit. The grapes keep well, particularly when lightly refrigerated.
- **Uses:** Muscadines are grown on trellises or arbors for their fruit or for the screening effect they produce when in leaf. Well-maintained vineyards can produce up to 15 tons of Muscadines per acre. Muscadines are usually used for juice, wine, jellies and fresh eating. They do not keep very well after picking because the stem scar is usually an open wound, inviting rot and decay. However, some of the newer varieties have dry stem scars and are thus better keepers. New varieties with softer skin also are being developed. Our favorite way to eat Muscadines is to carefully pull them off the vine, nip the stem scar with the front teeth, then squeeze the pulp and seeds into the mouth. Toss the skin to the squirrels and spit out the seeds after skillfully separating them from the juicy pulp.

Muscadine Grape

Scientific Classification

Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Rosids
Order:	Vitales
Family:	Vitaceae
Genus:	<i>Muscadinia</i>
Species:	<i>V. rotundifolia</i>

Sources

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muscadine#Anti-cancer_evidence
<http://www.crfg.org/pubs/ff/muscadinegrape.html>
<http://mobile.floridata.com/Plants/Vitaceae/Vitis%20rotundifolia/260>

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