

YELLOW JACKET WINE GRAPE VARIETIES

FOCH: A French-American hybrid officially known at Kuhlmann 1882; related to Leon Millot. Foch is winter hardy, and matures early. The small red clusters do attract birds. Foch produces good red wines and is widely planted in the eastern United States.

SEYVAL BLANC: This white wine variety can achieve high sugars at relatively high acids if cluster thinned at bloom. The crop is reduced by this step, but poor maturation qualities are avoided.

GEWURZTRAMINER: A white wine variety, it is early ripening, with orange-skinned fruit. It appears to be very winter hardy and can bear large crops. This variety can be harvested at desirable balances with careful monitoring of its maturity in September. The variety has shown significant promise to produce its distinctive aromatic qualities.

MERLOT: In Colorado, Merlot appears to be equally as winter hardy as its traditional blending partner Cabernet Sauvignon. Merlot ripens fairly early and can achieve excellent sugar:acid balances. Since the wines mature quickly for red wines, the variety is becoming increasingly popular with winemakers.

PINOT NOIR: This variety, one of the famous red Burgundies, is generally considered to be the most winter hardy red variety. Unfortunately it has yet to demonstrated an ability to develop adequate color and character in Colorado. One should not rule it out with future experience; however, at this time the variety is best suited to sparkling cuvee' or blanc d'Noir wine styles.

CHARDONNAY: This grape makes the renowned white wines of Burgundy. It is one of the most winter hardy members of vitis vinifera and generally of the highest commercial value. Chardonnay reaches high sugars in Colorado with desirable high acidity. The only drawback to Chardonnay is its slightly earlier budbreak that can result in crop reduction by frost as the variety has poor fruitfulness in secondary buds.

WHITE RIESLING: This major variety of Germany is very winter hardy. It matures fairly late, but reaches 20-22% Brix in the Grand Valley and usually retains 1 percent acid. This is a suitable balance for a wine that can be bottled with residual sugar.

LEMBERGER: This loose-clustered dark pigmented variety show promise for Colorado with very favorable sugar, acid and pH parameters. It is increasingly popular in Washington State and has moderately high winter hardiness under normal Colorado conditions.

CAYUGA WHITE: A hybrid cross between the Johannisberg Riesling and Seyval Blanc grapes. This versatile grape can be made into a semisweet wine emphasizing the fruity aromas, or, using oak aging, into a dry, less fruity wine. Cayuga is winter hardy. It is slow to break bud but ripens early.

CHARDONEL: This cross of Seyval and Chardonnay was developed by Cornell University for its superior wine quality, high productivity and cold hardiness. The wine is delicate with light fruitiness and good body with very little flavor characteristics of interspecific hybrid grapes. Chardonel breaks bud later than Chardonnay and produces medium sized clusters. Thinning may be necessary during years of good fruit set.

DE CHAUNAC: Also known as Siebel 9549, is very prolific, colors very early, but ripens late season and may require thinning to mature the fruit. This variety is extremely hardy, surviving the Grand Junction 1989 freeze of -22 degrees F with no cane or trunk damage and very little latent bud damage. This variety can produce up to 60 pounds per vine and should be considered for low-density plantings.

EDELWEISS: A very hardy, large-clustered, sweet white variety introduced by the University of Minnesota. It has good quality as a desert grape or in the production of a fruity wine as long as it is picked promptly. Edelweiss is a mid-season ripening grape.