



# Growing Hardy Grapes

Imagine dining under a pergola smothered in foliage, sipping a glass of your homemade wine, made from your very own grapes...sounds too good to be true? Thanks to the hardy grape varieties now available, you can create a Tuscan oasis in your own backyard.

## Planting Grapes

Grapes require full sun and warm temperatures to ripen, so choose the sunniest spot available. Amend any hard packed clay with organic matter such as compost or Bell's Soil Booster. Grapes will require a strong support to grow on, such as a trellis, pergola or arbor. Plants should be spaced 10-12' apart.

Remove the plant from its pot, tickle roots to loosen and set into the planting hole. Firm the soil around it. Water plants in with a solution of transplant fertilizer like 10-52-10 or Root Booster.

## Maintaining your Grapes

In the home garden, grapes require very little maintenance. An application of bone meal or kelp will ensure the plants are fed well during the growing season. Grapes are quite drought tolerant once established; average rainfall should ensure the plants are sufficiently watered.

## Choosing a Grape

There are various grape varieties available; following are the grapes most successful in our region:

### **Beta**

This cross between the popular Concord grape and a wild vine was the most widely grown grape for decades. Its popularity arose from extreme hardiness and acceptable juice and jelly quality. At present, there are newer varieties (such as Valiant), which are as hardy and are certainly higher in quality. Wine tends to be quite poor, but jelly is very flavourful.



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### **Frontenac**

Vigorous variety with small blue-black berries forming large clusters. Though not suitable as a table grape, Frontenac is a great choice for red wine. Berries have great cold hardiness, ripening late into fall.

### **Germanica**

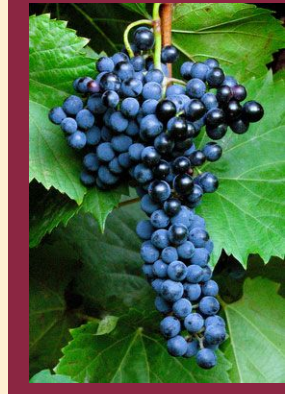
Similar to Concord, but much hardier. Ripens late September. Good for eating, jellies, juices. Zone 3; but benefits from a sheltered location.

### **Steuben**

Seedless blue-black grapes are used for eating fresh, and for making juice and wine. Concord parentage gives this grape a sweet, spicy flavour. Very hardy and vigorous.

### **Valiant**

A cross with a wild vine and a Fredonia (Concord) grape resulted in this introduction from South Dakota State University. A very hardy blue grape that ripens dependably. Small but flavourful berries make great quality juice and jelly, but are unsuitable for wine.



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