

Le Vigneron

A newsletter for the grape growers and wine makers of Oklahoma

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Inside this issue:

<i>New Additions</i>	1
<i>GMSC Update</i>	1
<i>Feedback Needed</i>	2
<i>Dr. Damon Smith</i>	2
<i>Winter Preparations</i>	3
<i>OK-AR HIS Meeting in Tulsa</i>	3
<i>New Website from OSU</i>	3
<i>Viticulture Education Program</i>	4
<i>Miscellaneous Information</i>	5
<i>Vineyard Photos</i>	6
<i>Vineyard Photos</i>	7
<i>More Miscellaneous Info</i>	8

New Additions to OSU Grape Program

It is mid-September as I write this and we are in harvest mode. Almost all the varieties are later than usual due to the Easter Freeze. Most of our vinifera grapes are unharvestable, if there are any at all. The best harvested grapes have come from hybrids or American types with later budbreak, ‘Chambourcin’ and ‘Cynthiana’ in particular. I have noticed quite a bit of crown gall on ‘Chardonnay’ and maybe on others as well. Crown gall has been a significant problem this year with many growers seeing the effects of the disease. This disease is largely manifested through freeze damage, but that being said, southern areas of Oklahoma are not excluded. I have seen significant crown gall problems in Stephens and Pittsburg counties on vinifera grapes. In light of this disease problem, I am pleased to announce the addition of Dr. Damon Smith to the Oklahoma Grape Team. He is an Assistant Professor and Extension Plant Pathologist at Oklahoma State University. He started on October 1 and will help us get to the bottom of controlling diseases like crown gall. He will also participate in the Grape Management Short Course and be available for your disease-related questions. Another new item for us is a new website exclusively for the OSU Grape Program. It is bursting with good information and will be updated regularly. Past issues of this newsletter will be available there, as will links to other grape-related sites, research results from our OSU vineyards, as well as fact sheets and other extension materials. Also keep a look out for extension workshops and courses in the future on the website. Speaking of extension, the OK-AR Horticulture Industries Show will be in Tulsa this year with a great program. I outlined the speakers on Page 3 of this issue. It is a two-day event with the first day covering various small and tree fruits and the second day totally devoted to grapes. Come on out for a great meeting with lots of information.

2007 OSU Grape Management Short Course Update

Eric T. Stafne

The 2007 OSU Grape Management Short Course is over, with September being the last class. With the smaller class size we were able to spend more time in the vineyard looking at different varieties, trellis systems, and the numerous diseases and insects that plagued us this year. The common problem of attendance during the summer months may force me to change when the course is taught. Even though it is beneficial to see the vines as they grow and develop during the year, if a student does not come to class, then they cannot benefit from that experience. I will need to think on this as to how to maximize the learning atmosphere and the timing of information delivery.

Feedback on Potential Idea for “Grape Data Collection Network”

Eric T. Stafne

Last issue I initiated the possibility of creating a Grape Data Collection Network for Oklahoma. This idea was brought up at the OGGWMA summer meeting at the OSU Cimarron Valley Experiment Station. Since we don't have the capability at this point to have research vineyards across the entire state, growers that collect important data will definitely be a great asset to researchers at OSU. Here is what I proposed in the last issue: Step 1 is to find out the level of interest for this type of network, Step 2 if the network is of sufficient interest we work on developing a list of important data to collect and put it into a paper and electronic form that can easily be submitted, Step 3 would be to hold workshops around the state for those interested in participating on how, when, and why to collect the data, Step 4 would be a trial run (probably 1 year) on how the network works, and Step 5 would be to publish the collected data on a yearly basis in this newsletter and/or other forums for the good of all grape growers. Unfortunately I only had two responses, both positive, but two growers willing to participate does not constitute a “network”. I was disappointed with the lack of response to this inquiry, so for now I will not pursue this initiative.

Introducing Dr. Damon Smith, Extension Plant Pathologist

Damon Smith is a native of Western New York and was raised in the heart of the Finger Lakes Region. Throughout his high school career Damon was actively involved in the Boy Scouts of America and achieved the Rank of Eagle Scout. After graduating from high school Damon attended the State University of New York at Geneseo (SUNY Geneseo). At SUNY Geneseo Damon concentrated his efforts in the study of plant sciences while he conducted undergraduate research entitled “Effects of Light Emitting Diodes (LED) on Plant Growth.” In May of 2001 he graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology. In August of 2001 Damon accepted a graduate research assistantship from the Department of



Plant Pathology at North Carolina State University under the direction of Dr. Barbara Shew. He obtained his Master of Science degree in Plant Pathology in the spring of 2004. The title of his thesis was “Biology and Epidemiology of *Sclerotinia minor* on Peanut (*Arachis hypogaea* L.). Damon began his Doctoral degree program at NC State University in August of 2004 under the direction of Dr. Barbara Shew and Dr. Turner Sutton. His research was focused on improving the management of Sclerotinia blight of peanut by the development of regression-based disease advisories, fungicide spray programs, and pathogen detection methods. He completed his Doctoral research program in August of 2007. Damon enjoys motorcycling, running, biking, fishing, and camping and many other outdoor activities in his free time.

Things to do Now to Prepare for Winter

Eric T. Stafne

Fall is here and winter is just around the corner. With the cold temperatures coming, it is important that fruit crops are prepared. Irrigation should have been shut off in September to allow plants to acclimate to the lower light conditions and cooler temperatures. Plants native to North America tend to do this better than our imported plant types. For example, American grapes, such as 'Concord' or 'Cynthiana' will tend to start responding to shorter daylengths as well as cooler temperatures to prepare for dormancy. European grapes like 'Chardonnay' and 'Merlot' respond primarily to cooler temperatures. Therefore, American grapes get a headstart on dormancy, whereas European grapes are at higher risk of being damaged in an early fall freeze event. Another important task to do is to remove grow tubes from around plants. Many grape growers use these during the growing season to protect plants from herbicide damage and sunscald, but also to speed up the growth of the plant. They work great during the growing season, but if they are left on during fall they will not allow the plant to acclimate normally because the tube heats up with the sunlight and creates a small microenvironment that will be warmer than the outside air. However, once night arrives, the temperature inside the tube will become equal to that of the outside air. The extreme changes from day to night temperatures can cause damage. This is also true during the winter. Another thing that should not be done is to fertilize fruit crops too late in the season. Nitrogen fertilizer will induce growth of green, succulent tissue that cannot acclimate quickly enough in the fall and thus will not go fully dormant. Often this growth is damaged or killed during the winter and can predispose the plant to stress and pest infestations. The best thing to do to prepare fruit crops for winter is to keep them healthy and happy throughout the year by planting them on a good site, provide adequate water, control insects and diseases, fertilize when necessary, train and prune appropriately, crop load thin if needed, and clean out debris that may be a source of inoculum for future years. Preparing for winter is just as important as managing for a good harvest.

Oklahoma-Arkansas Horticulture Industries Show 2008

Eric T. Stafne

In 2008, the Oklahoma-Arkansas Horticulture Industries Show will be held in Tulsa at Tulsa Community College on January 4 and 5. This is a highly informative meeting for growers of all crops, but I believe this year will be especially useful to fruit growers. On Friday, January 4 a "Fruit School" will be held, with experts covering apples, peaches, blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, and pecans. The second day of the fruit session, Saturday, January 5, will be entirely devoted to grapes. The tentative speaker line-up includes: Dr. William McGlynn (OSU), Dr. Edralin Lucas (OSU), Dr. David Tuggle (OU College of Medicine), Dr. Donn Johnson (University of Arkansas), Dr. Phil Mulder (OSU), Dr. Damon Smith (OSU), Chris Lake (Stone Bluff Cellars), and Dr. Eric Stafne (OSU). Topics to be covered will vary from health benefits of wine to current insect and disease issues to proper management techniques. This is an excellent educational opportunity for fruit growers in general and grape growers in particular. This will also count toward the Viticulture Education Program. As I was responsible for garnering speakers this year, I scheduled an entire day just for grapes. This doesn't happen every year, so take advantage of it! Not only will you get to hear great talks and interact with the experts, but a proceedings of the meeting comes with your registration fee. If you are interested please contact me by email or phone (contact info on page 8).

New Grape and Wine Website from OSU

Eric T. Stafne

The new OSU website focusing on grape and wine issues for Oklahoma is now available at: <http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/grapes/grapes.html>. The address may be changed in the future, but I will keep you updated. The site is still in the process of being put together, but we have shifted most of the information from the old page and added a new design to make it more reader friendly. The website will be updated frequently, so make sure to bookmark it for constant use! This, and past, newsletters will also be available for reading anytime. As time goes by we will add more photos and more of our research findings. We also invite you to participate by sending us digital photos that you think will enhance the learning experience for others, as well as to apprise us of your festivals, tastings, and other important goings-on. There will also be information on the upcoming 2008 Grape Management Course, the Viticulture Education Program, and other various events. Please send us your comments and suggestions for ways to improve the website. A big thanks goes out to Richelle Stafne, a research specialist at OSU in Dr. William McGlynn's program for doing all the work in designing and updating the new website.

Viticulture Education Program for Grape Growers Administered by OSU

Eric T. Stafne

Viticulture Education Program

This program is a cooperative effort among Oklahoma State University – Stillwater (OSU-S), Oklahoma State University – Oklahoma City (OSU-OKC), Tulsa Community College (TCC), and the Oklahoma Grape Growers and Winemakers Association (OGGWMA). It is administered by OSU-S.

This is a two-tier professional education program. The Basic level provides college training in the fundamentals of horticultural science, plus applied training in viticulture and related techniques through OSU Cooperative Extension. The Advanced level provides further college training in horticultural science and related disciplines, plus further applied training through OSU Cooperative Extension. There is a five-year total time limit to complete the program. The Basic level would need to be completed in two years, and the Advanced level would need to be completed no more than three years after completing the Basic level.

The list of approved courses and workshops may change over time. Participants should obtain approval from OSU-S prior to enrollment in courses or workshops other than those specifically listed. Knowledge testing will be required at completion of short courses and Extension workshops. A grade of “C” or better will be required in all college-level courses. Participants who anticipate matriculating towards a college degree in horticulture at OSU-S, OSU-OKC, or TCC should contact an academic advisor at the appropriate institution for guidance in college course selection. Those intending to eventually pursue at B.S. in horticulture should contact Dr. Brian Kahn, Department Undergraduate Advising Coordinator at OSU-S.

OSU-S will collect a one-time program registration fee of \$25. Any additional fees for courses, workshops, conferences, pesticide applicator testing, etc. will be paid directly by program participants to the appropriate entities. Participants are responsible for documenting attendance at events, and agree to provide transcripts for purposes of verifying satisfactory completion of required college courses. Participants completing each level of the Viticulture Education Program will be duly recognized with a framed certificate at the annual conference of the OGGWMA.

For more information, or to register for the program, participants may contact me or:

Viticulture Education Program

c/o Ms. Stephanie Larimer

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Miscellaneous Information

Workshop on Frost and Freeze in Missouri

The Institute for Continental Climate Viticulture and Enology at the University of Missouri will host a day and a half workshop on grapevine frost/freezing injury and prevention December 5 and 6, 2007 on the University campus in Columbia. This event will feature several nationally-known speakers who work with grapevine cold injury and frost protection methods. The workshop agenda and registration forms can be found on our website at <http://icve.missouri.edu/events/>. For more information or if you have questions please contact Eli Bergmeier at 573-882-8802 or bergmeiere@missouri.edu or me (contact information below). Please note that seating is limited to the first 165 registrants, so register early to guarantee your seat at this important workshop.

Study attributes billions in positive economic impact to OSU agriculture division

The annual impact of Oklahoma State University's Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources to the Oklahoma economy can be measured in the billions of dollars, and its ability to improve the quality of life for state residents may well be priceless. That is the inference of a private not-for-profit applied science and technology development firm, which recently completed an impact assessment of DASNR and discovered the division is generating dividends in wheat, livestock and turfgrass economic impacts alone that total more than \$750 million annually. DASNR is comprised of the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and two statewide agencies: the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station system and the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. The assessment gave the division top marks for its ability to positively affect "the profitability and sustainability of Oklahoma's staple crops, vertically integrated livestock industry and agribusiness sectors while working proactively to develop new products and opportunities that diversify and strengthen Oklahoma's economic base."

Southern SARE Grants

The calls have been released for the 2008 Southern Region SARE Producer Grants and 2008 Southern Region SARE On-Farm Research Grants. Proposals for both programs are **due by November 15, 2007**.

Southern **SARE PRODUCER GRANTS** are only open to farmers and/or ranchers or producer organizations. Any farmer/rancher or producer organization in the US SOUTHERN REGION is eligible to apply for the grants which have maximums of \$10,000 for individual producers and \$15,000 for producer organizations to be used within two years. **Typically these are much more likely to get funded if they work with an Extension Educator or Specialist.**

Southern **SARE ON-FARM RESEARCH GRANTS** are **open to Extension**, NRCS and NGO personnel who work with farmers. Any Extension, NRCS or NGO personnel who work with farmers in the US SOUTHERN REGION are eligible to apply for a SSARE On-Farm Research Grant. Applicants must work with at least one cooperating farmer or rancher and can apply for up to \$15,000 to be used within two years. The ON-FARM RESEARCH proposals will be accepted only through an online submission form which can be found at <http://www.southernsare.org>

While all SARE proposals must promote agricultural practices that are profitable, environmentally sound and good for rural communities, these two grant programs have identified nine broad focus areas. Proposals are invited that address: soil health, beneficial insect habitat, alternative crops/livestock, organic agriculture, marketing, sustainable grazing systems, improving the sustainability of existing farming practices, appropriate technology, and agroforestry. The Southern Region is comprised of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Full information and instructions can be found in the calls for proposals. A copy of the calls for proposals can be obtained on the web at: <http://www.southernsare.org> or by sending an email request to info@southernsare.org or by calling (770) 412-4787.

Interesting Developments at the OSU Vineyard — 2007

Eric T. Stafne

Everyone has heard the saying, “Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words.” Well, here are some interesting pictures of grapevine problems observed at our vineyard at Perkins.

Post-Freeze Damage



Bunch Rot



Downy Mildew — Top of leaf



Downy Mildew — Bottom of leaf



Black Rot — Foliar



Aerial Roots from Cold Damage



2,4-D Injury



Grape Berry Moth Damage



Black Rot — Fruit



Green June Beetles



Discussing Crown Gall



Checking Brix



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We welcome feedback and suggestions. Any responses can be mailed or emailed to the addresses on the left. We will strive to provide useful, pertinent, and timely information.

Initially this newsletter will be published 4 times per year in January, April, July, and October. If warranted the timing can be amended to better serve the grape growers and wine makers of Oklahoma.



'Vigneron' is the French word for someone who grows grapes for use in wine making.

More Miscellaneous Information

New Book on Winter Injury

This is a new book edited by Tom Zabadal (MI State Univ) and co-authored by Tom Zabadal, Tim Martinson and Martin Goffinet (Cornell), Imed Dami (Ohio State) and Mark Chien (PSU). It is a synthesis over 100 years of collective research and knowledge about the problem of winter injury. It is the closest thing I know of to a definitive text on the topic. Given the problems that vineyards have experienced over the past five years, including the Easter Freeze this spring, winter injury and cold hardiness continues to be an important topic for all growers to understand and practice. While we had series of mild winters from 1995-2004, recent winter injury events clearly indicate that we cannot rely on climate change to help get our tender varieties through the winter. In fact, winter injury may be the single most important limiting factor to high quality wine production, sustainability and profitability in Eastern North America. Because it is so unpredictable and random in its effects growers often do not pay close enough attention to managing it. But its severity can be managed if proper steps are taken. This book gives an excellent overview and explanation of how to understand, recognize, manage and recover from winter injury. Tom Zabadal and his staff at MSUE were outstanding in pulling it all together. Dr. Martinson, Goffinet and Dami provided much of the critical information needed to make this book as contemporary and relevant as possible. I think every serious wine grower in Oklahoma would benefit from reading this. The book is MSUE Extension Bulletin E2930 and can be ordered at <http://www.emdc.msue.msu.edu/viewitem.cfm?INVKEY=E2930>. The cost is \$15.

Kerr Center Grants

The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture is again soliciting grant proposals from agricultural producers across Oklahoma interested in conducting research or demonstration projects. Grants can be funded for up to \$3,500 for a two-year project and up to \$7,500 for a three-year project. To apply for this grant, a farmer/rancher should request an information packet from the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture at 918.647.9123, or download it from www.kerrcenter.com/HTML/opg.html. Preproposals must be received at the Kerr Center by October 31, 2007. Selected preproposals will be asked to complete a full proposal application. Full proposals will be due on December 14, 2007. Award notification will be made by January 16, 2008. Farmers are encouraged to link up with extension personnel, other state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and/or other farmers or specialists to assist with executing and analyzing their projects.