Muscadine Cultivar Selection for the Fresh Market

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What is a Muscadine?

Muscadine Grape  Bunch Grape
Early Reports

- Native Americans used the fruit.
- 1565 Spanish missionaries in Florida.
- 1584 Coastal North Carolina.
- Wild and semi-cultivated vines.
- Vineyards since mid-18th century.
Distribution

- Delaware to central Florida; along Gulf of Mexico to eastern Texas. North along the Mississippi River to Missouri & near the Appalachian Mts. from the east & west.

- Where temperatures seldom drop below 10 degrees F.
Why Muscadines?

• Traditional for region
• Alternative crop
• Health considerations
Georgia

$2.7 million average annual farmgate value for grapes (1990-99)---
North Carolina

$2.5 million farmgate value for grapes in 2001—North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
Uses

• Fresh Market*

• Processing
Considerations when Selecting a Fresh Market Cultivar

- Adaptation
- Productivity
- Type of Fresh Market
- Fruit Size
- Fruit Color
- Fruit Quality
- Dry Stem Scar
- Pollinizers
Adaptation

How does the cultivar perform in the specific area where it is to be grown? Vigor?
Productivity

- Acceptable yield
- Reliable production from year to year
Type of Fresh Market

- Once-over---mechanical or hand-picked
- U-pick
- Homeowner
Harvest Season

- Uniform ripening vs. increased ripening period.
- Early to late.
Fruit Size
Fruit Color
Fresh Fruit Quality

- Sugar and acid and their ratios
- Flavor
- Skin thickness
- Seed size
- Pulp texture
- Adherence to the vine
- Uniform ripening
Dry Stem Scar
Pollinizers

- Female or self-fertile plants?
- Marketability of the pollinizer
- 1/8 to 1/4 of vines
- Two or more pollinizer cultivars
Leading Fresh Market
Muscadines in the Southeast

- Carlos
- Dixie
- Fry
- Jumbo
- Nesbitt
- Summit
- Triumph

(Basiouny & Himelrick--2001)
Six Newer Unpatented Cultivars with Promise for Fresh Market

- Alachua
- Florida Fry
- Loomis
- Polyanna
- Scarlett
- Tara

(Basiouny & Himelrick--2001)
Other Fresh Market Cultivars

• 15 newer patented cultivars with promise as fresh fruit types.
• 13 other cultivars which may be found useful by some growers.
• Over 50 other fresh market cultivars still planted but no longer competitive.

(Basiouny & Himelrick ---2001)
Cultivars for Georgia

- 34 fresh market cultivars grown to some extent but only a few are well known.

- Attractive, large bronze fruit preferred for both commercial and u-pick operations.
‘Fry’
Other Bronze Types to Try

- ‘Darlene’
- ‘Early Fry’
- ‘Pam’
- ‘Sweet Jenny’
Cultivars for Georgia

Attractive, large black fruit preferred in some areas
Popular Black-Fruited Cultivars

- ‘Supreme’
- ‘Black Fry’
- ‘Polyanna’*
Pollinizer Cultivars

Commercial Shipping

‘Granny Val’*
‘Tara’
‘Triumph’

U-Pick

‘Cowart’
‘Nesbitt’
‘Tara’
‘Triumph’
Popular Cultivars Grown in North Carolina

- ‘Fry’
- ‘Higgins’
- ‘Scuppernong’
- ‘Jumbo’

- ‘Nesbitt’
- ‘Regale’
- ‘Tara’
- ‘Triumph’
- ‘Cowart’
- ‘Carlos’
Popular Cultivars Grown in South Carolina

- ‘Fry’
- ‘Darlene’
- ‘Sugargate’
- ‘Black Beauty’
- ‘Supreme’
- ‘Summit’
- ‘Scarlett’

- ‘Carlos’
- ‘Cowart’
- ‘Nesbitt’
- ‘Tara’
Cultivar Selection is Crucial for Successful Fresh Market Muscadine Operation