

GRAPE PRESS

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The Quarterly Newsletter of the VIRGINIA VINEYARDS ASSOCIATION

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SLF ADVANCES IN VIRGINIA



Photo above, Bob Garsson; below, courtesy of Douglas G. Pfeiffer

The ever-encroaching spotted lanternfly (SLF), which poses a threat to vineyards, was the focus of an integrated pest management seminar sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension and hosted by King Family Vineyards in Crozet on Aug. 1. Above, Virginia Tech fruit entomologist Douglas G. Pfeiffer provides information during the outdoor seminar. At right, an older photo shows spotted lanternfly nymphs on a grapevine elsewhere in Virginia. For more info on the newly expanded quarantine area and helpful resources, see **Page 7**.



President's Corner

VVA Focuses On Planning For Future

By Skip Causey
Potomac Point Vineyard & Winery

On behalf of the Virginia Vineyards Association's Board of Directors, I want to thank everyone who helped put together the 2022 Technical Meeting and all those who attended.

Our first meeting post-COVID-19 restrictions was a great success. Those who attended enjoyed:

- Panel discussions and tastings of both Albariño and Tannat.
- Updates from regions around Virginia.
- Updates on the spotted lanternfly and its increasing territory.
- Updates on research regarding downy mildew and other diseases.
- Updates from the Virginia Wine Board, Wine Marketing Office, and the Wineries Association.
- The announcement of Shep Rouse as VVA Grape Grower of the Year.
- A well-attended display and demonstration of vineyard equipment hosted by Barbourville Vineyards in Barbourville.
- And, of course, the long-missed

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Look for your Commercial Wine Grape Report survey to arrive — we're making it easier than ever to complete.

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Plan for Our Webinar: H-2A Guest Workers

The VVA will sponsor an introduction to the H-2A program in November. Grower's Datebook has the details.

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A Q&A With the VVA Grower of the Year

Shep Rouse recalls how he got his start in the grape-growing business and developed today's award-winning vineyards.

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Who Will Take Over Your Vineyard?

Two Virginia Cooperative Extension agents are offering advice to help owners ensure a successful transition.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNERS

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opportunities for networking with fellow vineyard folks and friends.

We are already in the planning stages for the 2023 Winter Technical meeting, so look for updates in your email and **online on our website**.

Grower of the Year Nominations

If you'd like to nominate someone for the 2022 Grape Grower of the Year award, please send the information to Tracy Kirkman at **vavineyardsassoc@gmail.com**.

We are also accepting nominations for the Tony Wolf Lifetime Achievement Award. Tony retired this year as Virginia's viticulturist, and the VVA Board unanimously voted to honor his 36 years of dedicated service to the Virginia wine industry by adding his name to this award, thereby giving it even more prestige.



VVA President Skip Causey

VVA Strategic Plan and Board Vacancies

The VVA Board is in the process of revamping our strategic plan to better align with the newly released Virginia Wine Industries Strategic Plan. We will be meeting after the harvest this year to tie the two together. A quick review showed that we are close in our directions.

If there are any areas that you would like to see us focus on in the coming years, please let us know and feel free to get involved with the VVA Board.

We do have three board seats coming open this year: President, Treasurer, and one at-large position. Several of you reached out to us last year about running for the board or helping out in other ways.

Please contact any of the board members for information about what it's like to serve on the board and what kind of commitment is involved. We normally meet once a month (except in harvest season) for a couple of hours, sometimes in person but usually virtually.

We are also increasing the size of some of our committees, which also can be a great place to help.

Please email me directly at **skip@potomacpointwinery.com** with any questions or requests.

Spotted Lanternfly

In July 2022, Virginia expanded the quarantine zone for spotted lanternfly, which now includes 12 counties and 9 cities within these counties (plus Lynchburg). These counties include Albemarle, Augusta, Carroll, Clarke, Frederick, Page, Prince William, Rockingham, Rockbridge, Shenandoah, Warren, and Wythe.

The Virginia Wineries Association asked for our help with a webinar in July explaining more about the expanded quarantine and what to do if spotted lanternflies are detected.

With help from fruit entomologist Dr. Doug Pfeiffer and Theresa Dellinger from Virginia Tech, David Gianino from VDACS, and Grace Monger, the Nelson County CE agent, this hour-long webinar did a great job getting the word out about how to handle travel into and out of the quarantined area.

VDACS has set up a quick and easy process for individuals to get certified for this process.

It is recommended that a minimum of one person from each company should be certified, but we suggest that every employee and contractor you have entering or leaving these counties should get this certification.

At \$6 per person to cover the cost of certification, it is a steal if it can slow or stop the spread of this pest. This certification is also good for crossing into neighboring states where quarantines are in place. See page 7 of this issue for links and more information from VDACS.

The VVA and the VWA will continue our outreach and education about the spotted lanternfly. We will provide more detailed updates and strategies at our Winter Technical meeting next year.

Several VCE agents are also sponsoring onsite trainings. Contact your local agent to find one in your area.

Harvest 2022

I hope everyone's 2022 harvest goes smoothly with great quality and a plentiful crop. So far, the vineyards I work with are excited about the possibilities of their fruit and we hope to make some award-winning wines. Good luck, and we will talk again after harvest.

Cheers!

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Take Part in the Va. Wine Grape Survey

VVA Focuses on Obtaining Comprehensive Picture of Industry in 2022

By Skip Causey
Potomac Point Vineyard & Winery

The VVA is again processing the Virginia Commercial Wine Grape Report. We were very happy with the huge response in 2021, which led to the most comprehensive report in years.

We have heard from many growers who now feel they can trust the information provided and this is a result of the quality of the data we received.

Thanks again to all who submitted their surveys. Our goal is to keep this survey as simple and quick as possible.

Information for the report is collected in two stages each year. The first part, a vineyard survey, was scheduled to go out

in August this year, and this survey will offer an option to simply reply “no change” if you have not had any changes to your vineyard since last year. Even last year, the survey took an average of 2 minutes to fill out.

We are hoping for a 98 percent response rate on the acreage of grapes, and we need your help!

The second stage, a crush pad survey, will be out in November. The focus of this survey will be on ease of completion. For small or mid-size wineries, it is still a quick survey, and we are working with the larger wineries to transfer their data directly into the form’s spreadsheets for a quicker input.

We have also purchased a more comprehensive system for this online

data input and management, and we will be reaching out directly to these larger wineries soon to arrange the submissions.

We didn't have as fulsome a response from the crush pad survey as we did with the vineyard survey, so we are continuing to streamline the process to encourage more participation.

With more complete data in 2022, we can feel more confident about the numbers and have less need to extrapolate the results to account for the missing data. We need your help to show the full size and extent of our industry.

To view the 2021 Commercial Wine Grape Report, as well as reports from previous years, go to <https://www.virginiawine.org/resources?category=1>.

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► **NORTHERN VA.** “The weather in July was certainly wetter and warmer than June.”

By Dean Triplett
Greenstone Vineyard

The late spring and midsummer of 2022 has so far been uneventful here in western Loudoun County with two exceptions, which I’ll get to in just a bit.

While the month of May came and went without a late frost, it was wetter than average, with over 6 inches of rain. This made for some increased concerns regarding Phomopsis. Early spraying with Manzate or other appropriate chemicals kept this in check for most of us.

June was relatively mild with only six days in the 90s. Rainfall, especially here at my vineyard, was fairly light with less than 3 inches recorded. Because of the decent weather, flowering went well for most of the vineyards I’ve seen.

Fruit set, at least at my place, seems to be much better than last year. For growers that have been diligent in their spray program, vineyards are very clean so far. I have heard of small pockets of downy mildew in at least one vineyard, but they seem to have been able to get on top of it.

I am very fortunate to have Cana Vineyards and Winery of Middleburg as one of my clients, and I asked Melanie Natoli, winemaker and vineyard manager, to comment on the season so far. Here are her comments from June 7:

“A wetter start to the season led to more Phomopsis than I’m used to seeing, but since then the canopy has stayed clean. The weather has been a bit sporadic with popup afternoon thunderstorms. It seems like the late July/August weather started in early June this year. I did have some quick downpours during bloom, so fruit set

wasn’t perfect, but I don’t expect a decrease in yield.

“At the last vineyard meeting, Tremain Hatch mentioned that the first generation of grape berry moths were out and sure enough, the next day I found evidence in my vineyard. They are a typical pest that I need to spray for every season. The Japanese beetles have also arrived, but the population is manageable and the damage minimal. It’s rare that they cause enough of an issue to spray here.

“We’re at berry touch in the clusters and much of the heavy canopy management is done for the season. There’s just a few leaves to pull and some hedging as needed until the bird nets go up around veraison.”

I can second Melanie’s comments on Japanese beetles this year. I have one

See NORTHERN on page 5

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► **NORTHERN VA. (cont.)**

NORTHERN, from page 4

section of Albarino that is close to a large field. This section of the vineyard always sees Japanese beetles first. I added one dose of Assail along with my fungicides on this section and that pretty much took care of the problem.

I also put down one spray of BT powder for grape berry moth. Unlike Melanie's experience, in my vineyard, grape berry moth is a very cyclical insect, seeming to attack my Muscat Ottonel and Albarino primarily. My vineyard, like Melanie's, is in very good shape.

I've had no serious issues with disease this year, including Black Rot, which was a problem for me in 2021.

I have put on 14 sprays so far, sticking

to a pretty tight 7-8 day schedule. That, along with the great work by my vineyard team, has the place looking good. The electric netting around the property has been installed, hedging needs to be done one more time and bird netting will go up shortly.

The weather in July was certainly wetter and warmer than June. As I write this on July 31, we've had 12 days above 90 degrees, topping out at 95 just six days ago. Leesburg got over 5 inches of rain (some areas received upwards of 7-plus inches) so far for the month with more falling today.

But by and large, most of the rain events have been the afternoon thunderstorm varieties and very hit or miss. The lone exception was July 9 when most of the area got about 2 inches of rain.

The two exceptions to the "uneventful" rule I mentioned earlier occurred in the evening of July 12 and sometime on July 17.

The 12th brought a brief but powerful storm with slightly larger than pea-sized hail. Damage has been reported by several growers near me but fortunately has not been extensive. I'm estimating that I only have 1 percent or less berry damage. And the timing of the storm was such that any damaged berries should fall off before veraison. At least that's my hope.

Then, on the 17th, I was out of town when a fairly powerful storm with high winds came through. When I returned the next day, I was greeted by the sight of one portion of a Muscat Ottonel row lying on the ground with a broken end-post assembly along with a broken line post two panels in. Again, I got lucky in that my vineyard workers had the row back up off the ground with new posts in two days. The posts that broke were 25 years old, so I guess I got my money's worth out of them.

The long-range weather forecast for August has us receiving slightly above-average rainfall with average temperatures. One interesting note is that our region hasn't had a 100-degree day since 2016. If the forecast holds up it looks like we won't have one this year either.

However, even though we haven't had the extremes of heat that so much of our country, and the world, are experiencing, we are still having warmer than average night temperatures. This has been a steady trend for quite some time now.


I haven't seen signs of veraison yet, but I'm expecting the early varieties to start any day.

We're rapidly approaching the keep your fingers crossed, maintain your spray schedule, get your critter deterrents in place, and stay optimistic portion of the season! Most of us have been fortunate so far; let's hope it stays that way. Here's wishing everyone a great vintage 2022!

Editor's Note: Dean Triplett is a regional reporter for Grape Press, covering Northern Virginia. We hope to feature more news about Northern Virginia's vineyards and wineries in future columns. Please contact Dean at gsvineyard13@gmail.com if you'd like to provide information for upcoming columns about growing conditions, new plantings or anything else you think would be of interest to other growers.

The advertisement features a background image of a vineyard with rows of grapevines and a dirt path. At the top center is the Double A Vineyards logo, which consists of a stylized letter 'A' with a leafy branch extending from the top right and roots extending from the bottom left. Below the logo, the text reads "DOUBLE A VINEYARDS".

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► **EASTERN VA.** “The vineyards ... had relatively good set.”

By **Gonzalo Ortiz**
Rustic Vintage

This summer here in the Eastern Edge of the Northern Neck has been warm and wet. May brought four and a half inches of rain with three days over 90 degrees F. June brought seven inches of rain with six days over 90 degrees, and July brought over 12 inches of rain and 15 days over 90 degrees.

The vineyards that I visited here in the Eastern part of the state had relatively good set and were relatively free of downy mildew. I would have thought with the rain and high humidity in these last couple months that I would have seen more downy mildew in the vineyards that I have visited, but that was not the case. The pride and professionalism of the growers here in the Eastern side of the state is evident by the consequences of being on top of their spray programs.

Thankfully, from the vineyards I have seen up until now, the consequences of this heat and rain have been, for the most part, that grass needed to be mowed more regularly and vines needed to be hedged multiple times, but not molds, fungus and shattered clusters.

Getting the canopy wires up, laterals hedged and leaves pulled on time is very important in years like this so that spray is properly penetrating into the canopy to cover all the leaves and ensure that the clusters are sufficiently covered. Hopefully, rain and temperatures in August and September will temper down so that the regional vineyards can have a prosperous harvest.

I do not have producing vines on our vineyard here on the Northern Neck so the consequence of the high volume of rain and high temperatures for us has been faster growing young vines. Because the vines have been growing so quickly and have been wet for so much of the time, I've had to provide more

protection than I expected for downy mildew.

Grass and weed competition has been high, but is now welcome to sufficiently slow down these young vines into the fall. I believe if I can keep downy at bay, we'll be able to get the grow tubes off quickly. And if we do not have much rain in September and October, we'll have good lignification of our young vines and I'll be able to begin establishing their trunks this winter.

I wish only the best to all vineyard owners and operators in having a smooth, clean harvest and in finding homes for all their harvests.

Editor's Note: Gonzalo Ortiz is a regional reporter for Grape Press, covering Eastern Virginia. Please contact Gonzalo at eastvagrowers@gmail.com if you'd like to provide information for upcoming columns about growing conditions, new plantings or anything else you think would be of interest to other growers.



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What Growers Should Know As Spotted Lanternfly Advances

A look at essential resources and the expanded quarantine area

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) announced July 8 that Virginia's Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine has been expanded to include an additional nine counties and nine cities.

The new counties included in the quarantine are Albemarle, Augusta, Carroll, Page, Prince William, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Wythe. The cities added to the quarantine are Buena Vista, Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Lynchburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, Staunton, and Waynesboro.

Frederick, Clarke and Warren counties, plus the city of Winchester, were previously included in Virginia's Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine and will remain so until further notice.

VDACS said in a news release that the quarantine expansion is based on survey data indicating that spotted lanternfly has become prevalent in these cities and counties.

The Virginia Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine was established in 2019 to slow the spread of this invasive insect pest to uninfested areas of the Commonwealth. VDACS said that the quarantine also helps businesses avoid additional restrictions that could be placed on the movement of products from spotted lanternfly-infested areas to states and regions where the insect has not been detected.

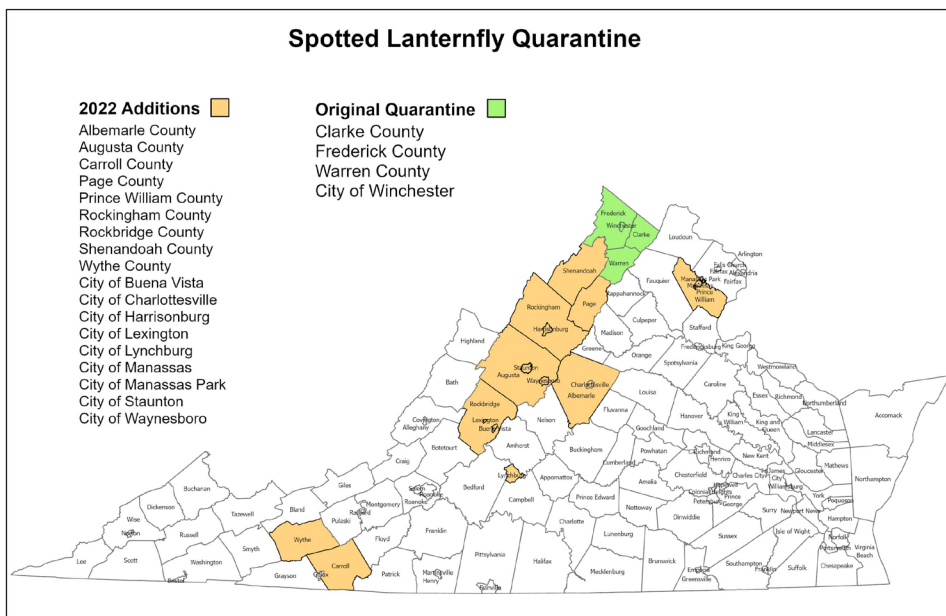
In its release, VDACS also said:

To slow the spread of the spotted lanternfly, businesses in the quarantined area are required to obtain a permit from VDACS and inspect regulated articles to ensure that the articles do not contain any life stage of the insect.

Regulated articles are those which are considered to be a risk for movement of spotted lanternfly to uninfested areas and include, but are not limited to:

- Any life stage of the spotted lanternfly;
- Live or dead trees; nursery stock; green lumber; firewood; logs; perennial plants; garden plants or produce; stumps; branches; mulch; or composted or un-composted chips, bark, or yard waste;

See SLF on page 8



July 2022: Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services/Office of Plant Industry Services

MORE INFORMATION

■ **Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) guide:** "Spotted Lanternfly in Virginia Vineyards." English and Spanish versions. www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/ENTO/ENTO-323/ENTO-323.html

■ **A VDACS compilation of resources,** including SLF permit training enrollment and a permit application. www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services-spotted-lanternfly.shtml

■ **The 2022 VCE Pest Management Guide:** Horticultural and Forest Crops addresses SLF. www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/pubs_ext_vt_edu/en/456/456-017/456-017.html

■ **VCE guide: "What Virginians Need to Know About the 2022 Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine Expansion."** www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/ENTO/ento-319/ENTO-512.pdf

■ **For more information** on the quarantine and permit, email spottedlanternfly@vdacs.virginia.gov.



Courtesy of Douglas G. Pfeiffer

Updates on Spotted Lanternfly in Va.

SLF, from page 7

- Outdoor industrial or construction materials or equipment; concrete barriers or structures; stone, quarry material, ornamental stone, or concrete; or construction, landscaping, or remodeling waste;

- Shipping containers, such as wood crates or boxes;

- Outdoor household articles, including recreational vehicles; lawn tractors or mowers; grills; grill or furniture covers; tarps; mobile homes; tile; stone; deck boards; or

- Any equipment, trucks, or vehicles not stored indoors; any means of conveyance utilized for movement of an article; any vehicle; or any trailer, wagon.

Businesses located within the identified quarantine area must follow the requirements of the spotted lanternfly quarantine. One

requirement is for businesses to obtain a permit in order to move regulated articles out of the quarantined area.

This permit will also allow for the shipment of regulated articles into or through states that have restrictions on the movement of regulated articles from Virginia's spotted lanternfly quarantine.

The permit application is available for download at www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services-spotted-lanternfly.shtml.

Online training is required prior to submitting the permit application. There is a fee of \$6 per person for the training, but no fee for the permit.

Once training is completed, businesses must submit the completed permit application to VDACS.

The quarantine also requires residents and visitors in the area to inspect regulated

articles for spotted lanternfly and ensure those articles are free from the invasive insect prior to leaving the quarantined area. Residents and visitors are not required to obtain the spotted lanternfly permit, but are strongly encouraged to learn how to identify spotted lanternfly and kill the pest insect when found.

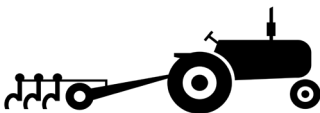
The first U.S. sighting of a spotted lanternfly was in Pennsylvania in 2014, with Virginia's first discovery occurring in Frederick County in January 2018.

The spotted lanternfly is a native insect of Asia and prefers feeding on Tree of Heaven, but will also feed on grapes, peaches, apples, maples, walnuts, hops, cucumbers, and basil.

Additionally, spotted lanternfly has the potential to be a serious nuisance pest to homeowners when it is present in high numbers.



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GROWER'S DATEBOOK

*Highlighting events that may be of interest to members of the Virginia wine industry.
For more info as well as registration details, click on the link or event.
For more happenings, check out the VVA website.*

Seasonal Grape Data Now Available

The first 2022 report of the Sentinel Vineyards project is available at <https://ext.grapepathology.org/sentinel-vineyard-project-2022-report-1>.

The project is a collaborative effort between Virginia Tech's Viticulture and Enology team and a network of industry partners to collect, analyze and disseminate data on the status of the grape growing and winemaking season. The goal is to provide information, including metrics on disease, weather conditions and fruit chemistry, that producers can use in their decision-making.

Trade Show and Conference Set for March



The 2023 Eastern Winery Exposition and Conference will be held March 14-16 at the Lancaster County Convention Center in Lancaster, Pa.

The largest industry event east of the Pacific States, the exposition features a trade show and Eastern-focused conference. Because the VVA is an association partner, our members are entitled to a 10% discount on a session pass.

For more info, go to easternwineryexposition.com.

PVCC Schedules Fall Viticulture Classes

Registration is open now for fall classes in viticulture and enology through the Workforce Services Division of Piedmont Virginia Community College in Charlottesville. Classes include vineyard site selection and an introduction to viticulture. www.pvcc.edu/wine.

Nov. 21 Webinar To Focus on H-2A Guest Worker Program

Are you having a hard time finding vineyard workers? More and more growers are using the H-2A guest worker program to accommodate their vineyard labor needs.

In a free webinar, "An Introduction to the H-2A Guest Worker Program," to be held on Nov. 21 from noon to 1 p.m., Jennifer Poole, Executive Secretary of the Virginia Agricultural Growers Association, will outline the pros and cons of using H-2A workers and explain the application process. There will be a question- and-answer period at the end.

This program is suitable for vineyards of all sizes.

Look for more info and registration details from the VVA in your email and online at www.virginiavineyardsassociation.org.

later this year. If you have questions, contact jeanette@vinesmith.com.

Information listed here is current at the time of publication, but for all events, be sure to check directly with each organizer for the latest on any changes or cancellations. Do you know of an event that would be of interest to Virginia wine grape growers? Contact cgarsson@gmail.com.

Q&A With the VVA Grower of the Year

A Lifetime of Learning

Shepherd Rouse, who was named VVA Grower of the Year in May, is one of the true pioneers of the Virginia wine industry. Starting with five acres of Vidal vines that he planted in 1989, Shep has expanded his vineyard to 17 acres. His wines have won numerous awards, including the Virginia Governor's Cup on two occasions. Along with his wife, Jane Millott-Rouse, he owns Rockbridge Vineyard & Brewery in Raphine, which produces more than 6,000 cases of wine a year.

Earlier this year, Shep talked with Grape Press co-editor Bob Garsson about the path he took to his vineyard in Raphine, and about some of the lessons he's learned along the way. Here's some of what he had to say.

Q. I read that you discovered wine while in Europe many years ago.

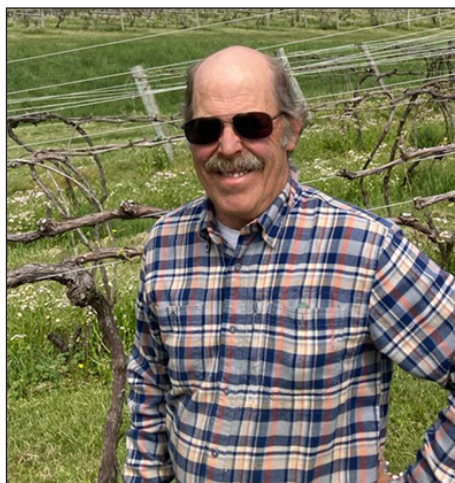
I went to Germany for the first time in the spring of 1974, while I was in my sophomore year at Washington and Lee, for a German language semester. I was more of a beer drinker then, but one person in the group I was in wrote a paper on wine. As part of that, we went to a historic cellar in Würzburg, Germany, and did a wine tasting. I drank sweet German wine, and it impressed me significantly. Three years later, after I graduated, I went back to Germany on a Fulbright scholarship in environmental science. At that point I had decided I was going to get into wine seriously, and I became a serious wine connoisseur — or at least a German wine connoisseur.

I wasn't really into dry wine at that point, but then, just at the end of my stay in Germany, I got exposed to red wines. We went to Florence, Italy. We had Chianti with our lunch every day, and that sort of got me over the hump.

When I got home, I realized that I needed to go out to California to really get a full perspective and ultimately to get a degree from UC Davis. So, I moved to California in 1978, and spent eight years there working in vineyards. I was at UC Davis for two and a half of those years. I spent a lot of time working as a carpenter because I could make good money, which is great when you're a poor student. I worked the '78 crush and the '79 crush, but I realized that I wasn't going to climb the ladder going job to job. I needed to get better credentials.

Q. So your vineyard training came from both the classroom and on the job?

I had taken the classes at Davis, but it



Parke Rouse

Shep Rouse of Rockbridge Vineyard & Brewery

wasn't until I bought my property in Raphine and planted grapes in the spring of '89 that I really got the hands-on training.

In my first season, two things happened. First, we planted and had a rainy summer, which is great for new vineyards, but come August, you'd better have mancozeb or captan in your spray program. And I didn't. And then we had the coldest December I had ever seen. It snowed on the 13th of December, and we had ice and snow on the ground until the 30th. And the voles went nuts under the ice, girdling the vines. And boy, was I glad I had unrooted Vidal. If it had been grafted vinifera, it would have all been toast.

Q. It sounds like Vidal has worked pretty well for you.

It's a great variety, by far the best variety to grow in Virginia. It's pretty susceptible

to downy and powdery and Phomopsis, but it tolerates cold winters. In the winter of '94, it got down to 12 below zero here. Not an inversion freeze, just a serious mass of cold air. I still got seven tons to the acre the following season, and those vines were fifth leaf then. It's also pretty rot resistant because it's got thick skins and the clusters are loose. The rot resistance and the cold tolerance are pretty important. I got away without leaf pulling for the first 25 years I grew it, but 2018 and the past year convinced me, you have to leaf pull to protect your investment. Because if you have a closed canopy and you get constant moisture, there's not a lot you can do.

Q. What varieties did you plant after Vidal?

The second variety was Chambourcin. I had leased a vineyard about three miles from here that was planted in '82, seven years before I planted mine. That vineyard had five varieties: Seyval, DeChaunac, Riesling, Chambourcin, and Lakemont. The Lakemont taught me one essential thing about vineyard management. It was so susceptible to Phomopsis that the only way you could keep it clean was to cane prune it. If you tried to cordon it, forget it. You have too much inoculum in the old bark.

Q. Aside from Vidal, which grapes do you think do best in Virginia?

Chambourcin. I love Chambourcin. And I love DeChaunac. It's very unheralded. The plants are beautiful, the shoots are reddish green, the biggest problem is that you have to shoot thin it twice because the basal buds are insanely fruitful. And you've got to thin the crop. But it's tough. The only problem is early budding.

Q. How does the Riesling do? That's not a common grape in Virginia.

I grow it at 2,000 feet of elevation. At that elevation, it's very cold in the winter and you have trouble with vascular injury to your trunks and cordons. You have to use replacement canes regularly, and one of Riesling's strengths is its ability to produce good, strong replacement canes that you can lay down. And what I'm encountering today is that instead of cutting off the old cordon that is usually too long and has only two good spur positions, we just wrap the cane around the old

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Entomologist Named AREC Director

Dr. Kevin Rice has been named Entomology Specialist and Director of the A.H. Smith Jr. Agricultural Research and Extension Center, effective Aug. 10, 2022.

The Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech has announced that Dr. Rice will fill the entomology position vacated by the retirement of Dr. Chris Bergh in March 2022, and the AREC directorship vacated by Dr. Tony Wolf's retirement in February 2022.

Dr. Rice had served as Assistant Professor of Entomology in the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Missouri. His research and extension programs focus on sustainable management of insects in agricultural and natural ecosystems.

Prior to joining University of Missouri in 2018, he was a postdoc at the Appalachian

Fruit Research Station with USDA-ARS in Kearneysville, W.Va., where he examined foraging and visual ecology of invasive species in small fruit production. He has also served as a postdoctoral scholar at Penn State University in the Department of Entomology, and as an Extension Agent at the University of Arizona.

Dr. Rice completed his PhD degree at The Ohio State University, his M.S. at Auburn University, and his B.S. in Biology at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, N.C.

He has extensive experience in his field and a strong record of scholarship and graduate



Dr. Kevin Rice

student mentoring, Virginia Tech said in its announcement. He has obtained extramural funding from federal agencies and private industry in support of his research and extension programs.

Dr. Rice has held several leadership roles, including State Extension Specialist in Missouri where he was lead Biopesticide Expert for the Minor Use Foundation where he directed field trials across 30 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and collaborated with the Asian-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions, Economic Community of West African States, Center for Agriculture and Bioscience International, USDA-Foreign Agricultural Service, and American Embassy personnel.

He has also served on several national professional society, departmental and university committees.

He can be reached at rkevin@vt.edu.

A Lifetime of Learning Among the Vines

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cordon. It takes time to cut the old stuff out. You have to look at it for a couple of minutes to assess it. I love doing that, except I hate doing it when I'm under a time limit.

And then, we have Vidal. Six years ago, I decided we were going to change that bloc over to another variety. And so, we sawed the vines with a chainsaw as close to the ground as we could and lo and behold, they all grew back, and I had a change of heart about the Vidal at that point. So, it's pretty simple pruning, it doesn't take a lot of cane laying down, it's just cut the spurs.

Q. How much have you mechanized?

My son and I do all of the tractor work — mowing, spraying. Really a bummer that there aren't enough vineyards around here to have co-ops to buy vehicles that are small enough to fit down vine rows, for example, for lime spreading. We do it with a trailer. You fill the trailer with lime and drive down the rows with two guys in the back shoveling lime.

There are so many different things you do once a year, it's hard to justify spending a pile of money on equipment. We spread urea by hand also. I have two guys sit on a pallet on the front-end loader, each with a bag of urea. And they each grab a handful and throw it on the base of the vine as we pass. We can do 16 acres in five hours.

Q. Do you spend more of your time in the cellar or in the vineyard?

In the summer I spend a lot of time in the vineyard, but it's become less. I used to work 70 hours a week, and now I work about 25. In April, when it's pruning time, I work a lot in the vineyard, and in September when it's harvest, I work a lot in the cellar. I would say it's about equal. The administrative stuff I do is only about 10 percent of my time. And I should be out selling it, but I hate that.

Q. What are the biggest challenges Virginia growers are going to face going forward?

I'm a little worried about climate change and its impact on growing grapes. Over the last two summers, I've seen much wetter conditions. Last summer it looked like perfect weather and then all of a sudden, about the 20th of August, it rained a lot and just at the wrong time. Some varieties that were just becoming ripe at that point were hit pretty hard.

As far as extreme cold, we haven't seen extreme cold like we used to. I remember in '89, I had a half bottle of Chardonnay on my porch in Charlottesville, and it froze solid. In '94, that was the year we had 12 below zero here. And in 1996, Rapidan and Scottsville had temperatures of 20 below zero. Luckily, the vines at Rapidan were covered above the graft union with snow.

Q. How about new pests or diseases?

I haven't seen it. Actually, Japanese beetles have become less of a problem than they used to be. Bees at harvest, you always have that. And then there's fungal pressure. Last year was probably the heaviest powdery mildew pressure I've seen in 30 years of growing grapes in Virginia. We didn't have any rain. The beauty of rain with powdery is that it washes the spores away.

But anyway, I've seen so many different combinations of weather over the years since I came back from California. In '86, we thought we were going to have a phenomenal vintage in southern Albemarle and then we got five days of rain from a hurricane around the 24th of August. That was the worst impact I've seen.

Other problems include fungicide resistance, but that's always been the case. You can't depend on one material too much. Sulfur is pretty much undefeated for powdery mildew control, but a lot of the high-priced stuff works for only a few years. And there's also an issue about what kind of prices grapes can be sold for. I know a lot of independent growers that have decided that just selling grapes on the open market to wineries or to wineries that they have contracts with is difficult because you don't get as much out of it as you do if you grow the grapes and make the wine.

But for growers with well-sited vineyards that are prudently managed, high-quality grapes with good average yields can be produced here in Virginia.

Arranging Your Vineyard's Future

By Rachel Henley and Crysti Hopkins
Virginia Cooperative Extension

With most farm wineries and vineyards in Virginia being family owned and operated, it is very important to take the time to discuss the future.

Many of us do not want to face the realization that we are not going to be able to operate our family farm winery or vineyard business forever. But much as we go annually to the doctor, we should be working each year to ensure the success of our business into the future.

Not only do we need to examine our businesses financially, but we also need to examine the core values of everyone involved in order to operate efficiently into the future.

Let's start with the biggest, most telling question: What is the goal of the owner generation? Do the owners want to keep the land in the family? And apart from the land, do they want to keep the business (i.e., the vineyard and/or the winery) in the family?

The answer to these questions determines the path a family should take. If the owner generation only wants the land to stay in the family, then an estate plan is all that is needed.

But if the owner generation wants the family business (i.e., the farm winery or vineyard) to stay in the family, a succession plan is imperative.

In order to prepare a succession plan, all family members involved in the business, plus possible heirs to the property and key employees, must be involved. Oftentimes there are surprises: not all family businesses will have a family member who is willing or able to take over the business.

Sometimes the best choice to transition ownership may be someone unrelated to the family, but key to the operation. Taking time to talk with family and articulate what

you want is often the hardest and most time-consuming step.

Even the most highly efficient family business can benefit from an outside facilitator, coordinator, or consultant to help walk everyone through this sometimes contentious process. Often, families jump to the conclusion that they need an attorney to work on this part of the process, but if you can work with a coordinator to define your goals for the business, then your work with an attorney can be done much more quickly and more efficiently.

Another question to ask is whether the family farm winery or vineyard business is economically viable. The question of passing down a business may not be the topic of conversation if the business is not self-sufficient.

It is also important to thoroughly examine whether the family business will continue to be profitable after any changes that might be proposed by new ownership/management.

The long-term care of the owner generation must be considered as part of the long-term economic viability of the farm winery or vineyard. This is especially true if most of the owner's assets consist of the farm, the age-old "land poor" statement. As their living expenses may increase with age, compensation may need to be drawn from the farm.

Personalities, strengths and weaknesses should be considered while developing your business and succession plans. Families and businesses function in two different ways. It is important to put your business hat on while at work and put certain operating systems into place to hold everyone accountable.

Operational business meetings as well as strategic meetings are essential. Job descriptions and performance evaluations are imperative. It is also important to recognize the owner generation's vast knowledge and experience. But relinquishing control can be

hard for some. Developing a job description for the owners after they transition into an advisory role will be helpful to give purpose to those whose identity is and will always be as a farmer.

It is very important, then, to develop a farm/business management transition plan and follow it. This is a fluid document that can and should be updated as life events occur, enterprises change with the farm winery or vineyard, and family members enter and exit the business.

Having someone on your team that can help handhold, prod, and cheerlead all family business members will be instrumental in the success of your family farm winery or vineyard business transition.

Please seek and take advantage of the resources available to you to help you through this important process. Luckily for Virginia farmers, there are now multiple certified farm succession coordinators across the state that recently completed this certification through the International Farm Transition Network.

The Virginia Farm Succession Professionals Network has also been started to bring together industry professionals, including attorneys, CPAs, lenders, land conservancies, extension agents and others to better serve you.

For more information, please don't hesitate to contact us:

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Editors's Note: Rachel Henley and Crysti Hopkins work for the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and Virginia Tech as extension agents and co-chairs for the Agribusiness Management & Economics program team within VCE. In their positions as co-chairs, they have taken on the issue of succession planning as a personal and professional interest.

New Helpline Offers Mental Health Support to Farmers

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) has announced the official launch of an AgriStress Helpline to provide agricultural producers with mental health support.

The helpline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and has interpretation services for 160 languages, VDACS said in

a news release. Farmers can call or text 833-897-2474 to speak directly with a healthcare professional. Crisis specialists have access to a Virginia specific curated database of agricultural and health resources.

"The physical demands of farming, isolation, weather variability, fluctuating input cost and commodity prices can all impact

mental health. Stigma and privacy concerns associated with obtaining mental health services may cause some producers to refuse to seek out these very important resources," Matthew Lohr, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, said in a news release. For more information: www.vdacs.virginia.gov/press-releases-220819-agristress-hotline.shtml