

Early Florida settlers found the fruit of our native Florida grapes to be small, thick skinned, seedy and semi-sweet or downright sour. Continued cultivation, especially over the last 100 years, has allowed for many excellent varieties of grapes to exist and thrive in Florida. In fact, second only to citrus, grapes are the most foolproof Florida fruit crop.

You don't even need an arbor to grow them—grapes can be grown along a fence or can be trellised against the wall of a house.

Three types of grapes can be grown in Florida. The easiest and most common is the **muscadine**: sweet, juicy, bronze or black, disease-resistant grapes. Some varieties are best eaten fresh; others are more suitable for wine. Some people discard the thick, tough skins, and savor the sweet flavor of the juicy pulp. Muscadine grapes can be harvested from July to September. Some varieties have both female and male reproductive portions and do not require a pollinator. Others, however, have only female flowers and must be planted within 25 ft of a self-fertile variety.

As a general rule, when a larger number of grapes are planted, every third plant should be a self-fertile variety to assure good fruit production.

Bunch grapes, thin-skinned grapes that grow in big clusters, ripen in June and July. The best adapted Florida varieties are green, red, blue or purple. They are more susceptible to disease than muscadines. Most varieties are self-fertile; no pollinator is needed.

Developed by the UF, Bunch x Muscadine grape **hybrids** combine the best characteristics of both parents: big clusters of sweet, thin-skinned black grapes, with beautiful, disease-resistant foliage. So far, the Southern Home is the only variety in this group.

Planting

Best growth can be expected when plants are set in full sun in well-drained, improved soil with a slightly acid pH.

Bunch grapes should be planted 10 feet apart; Muscadines should be planted every 15 to 16 feet.

Apply a mulch to stretch the time between waterings and to discourage weeds.

Trellising and Pruning

Grapes require a strong support. This can consist of two 9-gauge galvanized horizontal wires about 3 and 6 feet from the ground, supported on strong 4x4 pressure treated posts placed 18-20 feet apart. (See illustration below)

For the best productivity, prune vines between January 1 and February 15.

During the first growing season, promote the development of the main stem by removing all side shoots as they appear. This stem will eventually become the trunk of the vine. When the vine reaches the first wire, select the two strongest side shoots to train in opposite directions on the wire. After the first year, each lateral arm should be pruned back to 3 to 5 buds.

Plant Problems

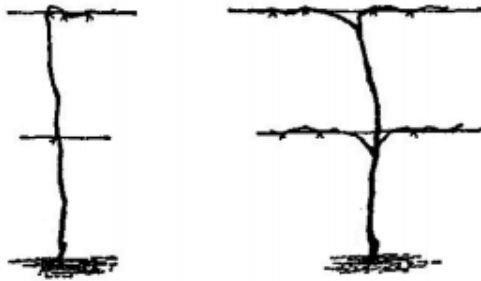
Spray with a fungicide such as **liquid copper** every 2 weeks from the time the flowers appear until the fruit begins to ripen to prevent fruit rot and leaf spot.

The logo for Rockledge Gardens features the name in a teal, serif font. A decorative teal swoosh underline is positioned beneath the word "Gardens".



Grape Pruning (Kniffen System)

(1) Trellis for Kniffen system: wires 3 feet and 6 feet above ground; posts are placed 15 to 20 feet apart



(2) One-year-old grapevine after being pruned, tied in three places to top wire

(3) Two-year-old vine after being pruned: 5 buds left on each lateral cane on top wire; 4 buds on each at bottom wire

Variety	Pollination	Color	Ripens	Best Use/Comments
Muscadine Grapes				
Alachua	self	black	August	eat; excellent flavor; productive; good disease resistance
Albemarle	self	black	August	juice/jelly/eat; excellent flavor; high sugar content
Carlos	self	bronze	August	wine/eat, similar to Scuppernong; vigorous & productive; 16%
Chief	self	black	September	
Cowart	self	black	August	wine/eat; large; good quality; vigorous, productive; disease-resistant; 19%
Delicious	self	black	August	eat/wine; exceptional taste; high yields; disease-resistant; 2007 UF release
Dixie	self	bronze	September	wine/eat, excellent flavor; vigorous, productive & disease-resistant; 22%
Doreen	self	bronze	August	eat/wine; medium size
Fry	female	bronze	August	eat, very large fruit; moderately vigorous; good producer; 21%
Granny Val	self	bronze	August	eat; large
Higgins	female	bronze	September	eat/wine; large; good quality; moderately vigorous; productive; 17%
Hunt	female	black	September	jelly/wine/juice; vigorous; very productive
Ison's Black	self	black		eat/wine; large fruit
Jumbo	female	black	September	juice/jelly/wine/eat; jumbo; delicious; productive; disease-resistant; 16%
Magoon	self	black	Aug-Sep	eat; good quality; highly productive; vigorous; very high sugar content
Nesbitt	self	purple	August	eat; large fruit, good quality; medium vigor; high production; 20%
Noble	self	black	Jul-Aug	wine/juice/jelly/eat; good quality; medium

Pink Hunt	female	pink	September	jelly/wine/juice; vigorous; very productive
Scuppernong	female	bronze	September	eat; medium-large; sweet, distinctive flavor;
vigorous & productive; 17%				
Southland	self	black	Aug-Sep	eat, very sweet, disease-resistant
Summit	self	bronze	June	wine/eat; large; delicious; vigorous, productive
& disease-resistant; 20%				
Tara	self	bronze	Jul-Aug	eat; large fruit
Triumph	self	bronze	August	eat/wine; large
Welder	self	bronze	August	wine/juice/jelly; good quality

Bunch Grapes

Blue Lake	self	blue	July	juice/jelly/eat, tart & spicy; dooryard
Conquistador	self	purple	July	good for all uses; pick your own; fresh market;
wine				
Daytona	self	pink	July	eat; delicious flavor; dooryard
Lake Emerald	self	golden	July	wine/eat, jelly semi-sweet, vigorous
Orlando	self	green	June	seedless
Stover	self	golden	July	eat/wine; dooryard; fresh market
Suwanee	self	light green	July	eat/wine; pick your own

Bunch x Muscadine Hybrid Grapes

Southern Home	self	black	Jul-Aug	eat; excellent production, vigorous; medium size
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