



**A NEWSLETTER FROM THE GULF COAST WINEGROWERS ASSOCIATION**

Fall 2024, Vol.1:3

Bob Hensz, Editor

**Table of Contents**

<b>President's Note .....</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>EPA and Mancozeb .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>From the Editor .....</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Nutsedge.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Post Harvest Checklist .....</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Classified Ads.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Mighty Muscadines.....</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Calendar of Events .....</b>	<b>8</b>

**GCWA Officers and Directors – 2024**

**OFFICERS:**

- President: Jim Brooks**
- Past President: Kimbrough Jeter**
- Vice-President: Virginia Rodriguez**
- Secretary: Larry Cress**
- Treasurer: James Kasperek**

**DIRECTORS:**

- Dawn Aschenbeck**
- Paul Darst**
- David Fleming**
- Mike Gamble**
- Art Delgado**
- Greg Cargle**
- Larry Cress**
- Joseph Klenke**
- David Eskins**



## *From the President's Desk*

Howdy to our Gulf Coast Winegrowers Association Family and Friends.

Harvest is done, wines are aging, and vineyards are slowing down. A few of you lost some grapes to weather and critters; but, most of us had wineries happy to take our remaining healthy grapes this year. I was glad I could help most of those that contacted me for buyers. Our intent is to make our GCWA Website supportive of connecting grape growers with winemakers in the future.

Not much rain in the last couple of months, so most of us have been irrigating to keep our vines healthy and carbo loading for next year. Time to get that last spray in, and knock back any residual Downy, Phomopsis, or Black Rot before our leaves finish fall and shoots do final hardening. It is not unusual for your older, or diseased leaves to start falling, and the newer healthier leave to hang on a few more weeks. As it cools down, I cut back on my irrigation, which discourages new growth and lets the shoots harden. Then off to sleep,

Oct and November are our "BREAK" times as Gulf Coast Winegrowers, and though our Winemakers are still elbow deep in fermenting, racking, and maybe even bottling some of early harvest Blanc Du Bois vintages, hopefully everyone will enjoy well deserved vacations.

As things slow down, now is a good time to assess your vineyard, trellis, irrigation, and spray equipment. Winterizing is important to clean off all the caustic chemicals from our sprayers, flush irrigation lines before draining (to prevent winter freeze damage), pressure wash our harvest and fermentation bins and presses, and inspect and inventory our vineyard chemicals.

If you're like me, and have trellis damage from our last hurricane, then after I rough prune in December which removes the heavy dormant wood, I will reset end posts and pull up drooping cordon wires and leaning t-posts. I am glad to say I finally have some new replacement trunks and cordons on my previously freeze and drought damaged vines. Of course more labor and time will be required to retrain these vines, which means I "gotta" start winter pruning earlier.

Speaking of Chemical Inventory, we will do our annual chemical bulk order in December, and plan a chemical pickup tailgate in early January once Jared, Nutrien Ag Solutions, has the inventory on hand. Expect an email from me with an order form/spreadsheet attached for your use. If you need any help with developing a vineyard spray program, or questions on chemical use, we are all here to help, as well as contacting our new AgriLife Viticulture Specialist, Daniel "Danny" Hillin.

Danny and I have started brainstorming for our CGWA Winegrower program for 2025. We would like to better meet the needs of all our Grape growers and Winemakers. Your input is important to our developing a comprehensive GCWA Organization. We are planning a November Tailgate, as a meet and greet for Daniel and our members. A chance for him to share some of his Viticulture experience and get familiar with our unique growing region needs, then develop a focused 2025 Viticulture Program.

A quick reminder of the upcoming GCWA Events in which I hope you can participate: 13 Oct 2024, Texas Wide Non-Commercial Wine Show at Austin County Fair; November Meet & Greet Tailgate (date tbd); December Vineyard Chemical Order Submissions; January Chemical Pickup Tailgate; and, our Annual GCWA Watson Field Day on Friday, 31 Jan 2025.

Please renew your GCWA Memberships online at our [www.growwine.org](http://www.growwine.org) website. If you have yet to join or renew digitally, please do so, and create your own personal web page.

COL(R) Jim Brooks,  
President, GCWA  
[www.growwine.org](http://www.growwine.org)  
[Catspringvineyards@gmail.com](mailto:Catspringvineyards@gmail.com)



## *Random thoughts from the Editor*

*Bob Hensz*

Welcome to our Fall edition of the Gulf Coast Winegrowers Association newsletter. By now harvest for 2024 is all in the rear view mirror and we are attempting to get an idea of what we all did well and what needs improvement. Although the weather is still hot and we are having little to no rain, the vines are hardening off getting ready to go to sleep for the winter. Hopefully, instead of spending all your time in the vineyard, you can take a break for an afternoon nap every once in a while. Still we need to keep up with weed control and monitor the vines for disease. Fall in the vineyard is also a very special time. We think about fall leaf color changes in the Northeast and mountainous areas, but don't forget about the changes of grapevine leaves. I have seen some really beautiful grapevine leaves and appreciate every view I can get of these colorful changes.

Our president, Jim Brooks, starts with some notes about this year's season, and goes on to discuss a few ideas on getting ready for next year. He includes a note about chemical pickup and plans for the GCWA and tailgates with Danny Hillin.

Speaking of Danny, he has a great checklist for post-harvest vineyard management. He only has four items, but these are very essential for a good crop next year, so read through carefully. Fran Pontasch, our Viticulture Program Specialist Emerita, brings us up to speed on the possibility of losing Mancozeb. Yep, you heard right, possibly losing Mancozeb and all associated products that contain this compound. Pay particular attention to this information packed article.

Justin Scheiner tells us about a Muscadine grape breeding project that Texas A&M, along with a group of other universities are involved in. This *Vitis x Muscadinia* cross may open new doors for grape growing in Texas, so read on and stay tuned for updates on this project.

Just for fun, Fran Pontasch made an interesting and amazing discovery about nutsedge. So, before you put down this edition, read about that plus take a look at the calendar of upcoming events.

*Happy Reading!*



## ***Post-Harvest Vineyard Management Checklist***

*By Danny Hillin, Viticulture Program Specialist – Gulf Coast*

The period between harvest and leaf-fall is critical for setting the foundation for following season's vine growth, overall yield, and grape quality. During this time, vines replenish carbohydrate and nutrient reserves, which are stored in the roots, trunk, and cordon arms to support early-season growth from budburst to flowering. Healthy, functional leaves are vital as they produce carbohydrates through photosynthesis. Therefore, minimizing leaf loss due to water stress, pests, diseases, and mechanical harvesting until leaves naturally fall is essential.

### **1. Water and Nutrients: Fueling Next Season's Growth**

Post-harvest care involves maintaining a healthy canopy and that means healthy leaves, which supports the vine's ability to restore its carbohydrate and nutrient reserves before dormancy. Continued adequate irrigation during this time is essential to ensure leaves maintain optimum levels of photosynthesis, and new root tissue grows to search for and mine soil nutrients that will be redistributed to the woody tissues before leaf-fall.

That being said... late summer and fall weather in Texas is anything but easy on the vines, so be careful not to over-irrigate or over-fertilize, as this can cause unneeded stress, delay dormancy and encourage unwanted vegetative growth too late in the season, leading to possible freeze damage potential.

### **2. Defending Against Disease: Protecting Future Vines**

Early defoliation caused by disease weakens the vine's ability to store carbohydrates and proteins for the following season. If disease control was effective during the growing season, additional sprays may not be necessary. However, in the Gulf Coast with the high disease pressure, post-harvest treatments might be needed. If you are unsure of what product to use to control pests and diseases in your vineyard? Check out our free [Texas Grape Pest and Weed Management Guide](#).

### **3. Weed Out the Competition: Weed Control and Soil Protection**

The post-harvest period is ideal for addressing weed control and considering late fall and winter cover crops for soil protection. Common grasses like Bermuda grass and Johnson grass can be carefully targeted with herbicides after vines have been harvested, to reestablish proper weed control under the canopy if needed. Additionally, planting cover crops such as wheat or rye can help prevent soil erosion. If you are interested in learning more about vineyard soils, check out our free publication [Understanding Vineyard Soils](#).

### **4. End-of-Season Review: Vine Health and Vineyard Performance**

We made it through another year and now it's time to assess your vineyard performance. Look for signs of vine stress, such as red or curly leaves, which may indicate viral infections, and tag those vines for further testing. Make note of any areas of increased disease incidence this year and take care to clean the vines and the vineyard floor of any debris that could allow disease to overwinter. You can also identify any missing vines and plan for replacements, fix irrigation lines that were damaged, and repair any trellis that is in need. Additionally, review the season's management practices and reflect on key areas such as canopy control, water management, fruit set, nutrition, and disease control to improve future outcomes.

Finally, visit your wineries to taste unfinished wines and speak with the winemakers to provide your valuable insight into how the growing season impacted the final product. Use this time to review the vintage and discuss potential improvements for the coming season.

Don't forget to take some time to enjoy a glass and appreciate all the hard work that you and everyone else has put into this year to make it a success.

*Cheers!*

*Danny, daniel.hillin@ag.tamu.edu*



## **Mighty Muscadines**

*Justin Scheiner, Ph.D.*

*Associate Professor and Extension Viticulture Specialist*

Not everyone gets as excited about muscadines as I do, but that may change in the future. If you're not familiar, muscadines are one of our thirteen species of native grapes, but are actually in a different genus than all of our other native grapes and European grapes (*V. vinifera*). Because muscadines have one more pair of chromosomes (20) than bunch grapes (19) hybridization is difficult often ending with sterile offspring (like a mule). Therefore, improving muscadines through breeding and selection has meant crossing muscadines with muscadines rather than other species of grapes. Now with over one hundred years of breeding and selection there are over 50 named muscadine cultivars and very recently the first seedless muscadines have entered the picture.

Why grow muscadines? In my home vineyard in College Station, I grow muscadines and muscadines only. Unlike my peaches, apples, and other fruit, I do not spray my muscadine vineyard at all. I do lose around 10-15% of my crop to grape berry moth and fruit rots but they are still very productive and satisfy a niche market. Even if you're not a fan of the flavor or the skin, which varies quite a bit from one variety to another, muscadines still have a lot to offer. The reason I can get away with not spraying mine is that as a native grape, they have excellent fungal disease resistance.

Historically, it has been difficult to understand and exploit the genetic sources of disease and pest resistance in muscadines because of difficulties in crossing them with other types of grapes. Now with modern plant breeding tools, we are able to more successfully hybridize muscadines and identify genes that provide resistance to diseases like downy mildew, powdery mildew, and even black rot. Muscadines also represent sources of resistance to Pierce's Disease, nematodes and more.

Beginning next spring, researchers at Texas A&M will be joining forces with eleven other universities and institutions on a four-year research project titled "Through the Grapevine: Developing *Vitis x Muscadinia* Wide Hybrids for Enhanced Disease Resistance and Quality". This collaborative research project will be supported by a \$7 million grant through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. There are six major objectives focused on genetics, breeding, pathology, quality, marketing and production. Within each category there are specific objectives such as identifying 10 disease resistance genes targeting powdery mildew, downy mildew, black rot, and grapevine leafroll-associated virus 3 that can be used by grape breeders around the world. Next spring Texas A&M will establish two research vineyard blocks with new muscadine and *Vitis x Muscadinia* hybrids to evaluate their characteristics in Texas. This will ultimately lead to new muscadine and hybrid grape varieties for wine and the fresh market and new sources of disease resistance for future breeding efforts. Imagine growing winegrapes that were resistant to downy mildew. I look forward to that day.

For more information on the research project visit: <https://news.uark.edu/articles/71217/grant-of-7-million-to-support-effort-to-improve-grape-disease-resistance-quality>



Muscadine and *Vitis x Muscadinia* hybrid selections with differences in size, color, seedlessness, flavor and synchronous whole cluster ripening.



## EPA's Interim Decision to Remove Mancozeb

by Fran Pontasch

Our go-to fungicide, Mancozeb, controls the most common fungal diseases in the Gulf Coast. It is labeled to control black rot, Phomopsis, downy mildew, and bunch rot. EPA has made an interim decision to cancel mancozeb use on all types of grapes – table, juice, wine, and raisin. The final decision has not been made public.

Every 15 years pesticides undergo registration review, by federal law under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). During its most recent review, the EPA identified mancozeb as unable to perform its intended function “without unreasonable adverse effects on human health or the environment.”

The report on EPA's review decision discusses risks based on the “margin of exposure” (MOE) with concerns about skin exposure when handling mancozeb, even with restricted entry intervals (REIs), greater than 30 days. “To address risks to workers entering treated grape fields, the Agency is proposing to cancel mancozeb use on all types of grapes (including table, wine, juice, and raisin).” An REI long enough to reduce exposure would, in their words “render mancozeb use on grapes impractical.”

Mancozeb, Captan, and Ziram are multisite fungicides targeting fungal diseases in multiple ways. They are important chemicals to use in preventing disease resistance to single site fungicides like Pristine, Abound, Ridomil, etc. Also, they are cheaper than single site fungicides. Single site fungicides target a single metabolic pathway to control a disease. A pathogen can more easily develop resistance to one site than to multiple sites that attack the pathogen.

As noted in the document, “Extension sources cite the importance of early season control of grape diseases (black rot, Phomopsis disease and downy mildew) (Hartman, 2024). Mancozeb is highly effective in controlling these three diseases (Gauthier, 2019). Other multi-site fungicides registered for use in grapes include captan, copper, and ziram. However, the Agency recently proposed cancellation of ziram (EPA, 2024a). Copper has poor efficacy in controlling these three diseases (Gauthier, 2019). Captan is effective in controlling Phomopsis and downy mildew but has poor efficacy in controlling black rot disease (Gauthier, 2019; Gold, 2021). Therefore, if mancozeb were unavailable, growers would have to rely primarily on single site fungicides (e.g., myclobutanil) for effective control of black rot increasing the risk of resistance. Further, single site fungicides are generally more expensive than mancozeb (Kynetec, 2021a), resulting in additional costs of fungicide treatment.”

The full 111 page document can be downloaded at: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0291->

This article, found at that website, might also be of interest: *Registration Review: Assessment of Use, Usage, Benefits and Impacts of Potential Mitigation for Foliar Uses in Apples, Pears, Almonds, Walnuts, Mango, Papaya, Grapes, and Cranberry.*

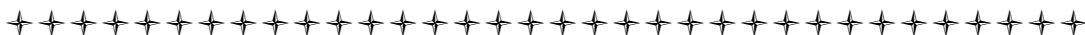
9/30/2024



### Nutsedge is Really Tough!

*Fran Pontasch*

This nutsedge was found growing out of a rock one day while pulling weeds. It’s no exaggeration – they really can pop-up anywhere.



***Classified Ads***

This section is for members to advertise equipment items for sale and for equipment and supply items wanted. This is not to advertise grapes for sale or labor wanted, or for harvest personnel you want. Please limit this to equipment and supplies. Send your for sale or wanted items to [rhensz70@gmail.com](mailto:rhensz70@gmail.com)



**Gulf Coast Calendar**

**2024**

**October 13 Austin County Fair Non-Commercial Wine Competition:** Austin County Fairgrounds, American Legion Hall, 988 E. Main, Bellville, TX. Rules and entry forms plus additional information can be found at <https://austin.agrilife.org/wine/>

**December, Date TBD – Chemical Order**

**2025**

**January Date TBD, Chemical Pickup**

**January 31 Gulf Coast Watson Field Day 2025 – Cat Spring Agricultural Hall**