

Table Grapes (Vitis vinifera)



Italian Grapes

Italy accounts for 21-percent of all grapes harvested on earth, making it the largest producer of grapes in the world today. Italian table grape production is concentrated in southern Italy, primarily in the regions of Apulia (65%) and Sicily (25%). People in Italy consume approximately 19 pounds per capita of grapes annually, compared eight pounds consumed by Americans. In 2003, the United States imported 1,100 tons of grapes from Italy. In the past most of the Italian table grapes production was seeded, nowadays more and more seedless varieties are grown: Thompson, Superior, and Crimson acreage is growing exponentially.

Italian Table Grape Varieties

Vittoria: Vittoria grapes originated in Romania, and are a cross between the Cardinal and Aluz Ali varieties. The consistently large fruit gained popularity in Europe throughout the last decade. It is an early variety, commonly harvested from mid-July to mid-August. The berries are large and cylindrical-conic, with clusters that are generally winged. The color is straw-green, and the general appearance is impressive.

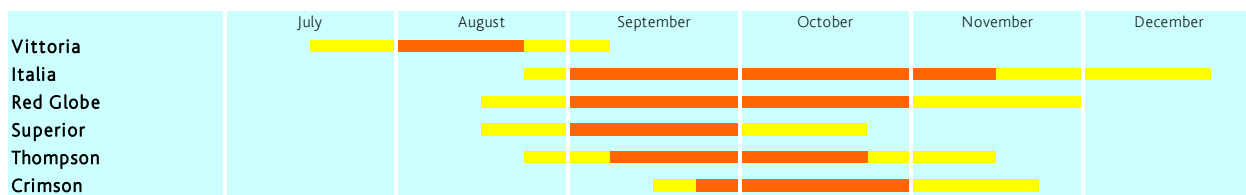


Italia (Muscat): Italia grapes are a crossbreed of Bicane and Hamburg Muscatel grape varieties. This variety is one of the most popular table grapes in the world—primarily because of the appearance and flavor. Italia grapes are very hardy, and can therefore withstand commercial handling and shipping. The large consistently sized fruit is a lovely golden-yellow color, and the fruit has a delicate, pleasant musky flavor.



Red Globe: Red Globe grapes originated in California, but grow well in other parts of the world, including in Italy. The variety gained popularity in Europe during the second half of the 1990s, spurring an increase in production. The beautiful clusters of Red Globe grapes contain plum-size seeded berries.

Seedless varieties: The Italian climate, particularly in the region of Apulia, seems to be particularly appropriate for seedless varieties like Superior, Thompson, and Crimson. The Mediterranean climate, with warm days and cold nights and a light breeze that takes the humidity out of the vineyards, allows also the seedless grapes varieties to develop a large berry size and a good sugar content. Italy will play a major role in the seedless grapes production of the Northern Hemisphere in the next years.



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Italy grows numerous other seeded grapes varieties, including Regina, Pizzuttella, Black Magic, Palieri, Cardinale, Lavallée, as well as several seedless varieties.

	Vittoria	Italia (Muscat)	Red Globe
Color	Light green turning to yellow (Paglierino)	Paglierino to yellow	Red
Weight per cluster (g)	800	850	950
Grapes stones per berry	3	3.5	3.5
Sugar (Brix)	15-18	16-21	14-18
<u>Berry diameter:</u>			
Equatorial (mm)	22	24	26
Polar (mm)	31	27	28

The growth hormone for the grape berry is produced by its seed. This is why seeded grapes are generally larger in size than unseeded varieties. Without seeds, hormones must be delivered forcefully from the outside, through sprayed treatments. The implication here is factual—only seeded grapes can be considered naturally grown grapes. With seeds, life continues naturally.

History and Background

Grapes are one of the most recognizable of all fruits, and the oldest cultivated plant in the world. Compared to most other fruits, grapes cease to ripen once they are harvested. Grapes grow in any of three colors—green (referred to as “yellow” in Italy, and often called “white” in the United States), red (also commonly called “ruby”) and blue-black. There are hundreds of varieties in production around the world, with each variety boasting its own distinct color, taste, texture and history.

Nutritional Information

Grapes are about 80-percent water, but they also contain various nutrients, including 270 milligrams of potassium and 25-percent of the daily value for vitamin C (in a one-cup serving). Seeded grapes also contain fiber, and some experts believe that other compounds found in some or all varieties of grapes offer additional nutritional benefits.

According to a recent study at the University of California, red seeded grapes are rich in quercetin, a newly discovered anti-cancer agent that studies have shown can suppress malignant cells before they form.

Additional studies indicate that the mineral “boron,” which is found in grapes, grape juice, raisins and apples, may retard bone loss in women after menopause. Boron also helps women on estrogen replacement therapy keep the estrogen in their blood longer.

Another study, conducted at the University of California at Davis, shows that antioxidants in seeded grapes may help to prevent “bad” LDL cholesterol from

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oxidizing and clogging arteries. The primary source of antioxidants is found in the grapes' seeds. Grapes without seeds are low in antioxidants.

Studies conducted by the American Physiological Society on grape-seed extract indicate a benefit to post-menopausal women by reducing salt-sensitive hypertension. OPC antioxidants (oligomeric proanthocyanidins) in grape seed extract may also help prevent heart disease and other chronic diseases, according to research conducted by the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Ampelotherapy—the "Grape Cure"

Since the beginning of time, grapes have been utilized as not only as a tasty and choice food, but also as a natural medicine. The Grape Cure possesses a whole series of physiological characteristics from which a vast spectrum of therapeutic indications is obtained. Seeded grapes are particularly appropriate for this cure. Eating five to six pounds of seeded grapes per day will detox the body, and result in weight loss.

The physiological properties of the seeded grape can be summarized in:

- Increase in diuretics and better elimination of toxins
- Lowered acid content in urine
- Increase of the intestinal peristalsis
- Reduction of intestinal fermentation
- Increase in liver and bile function

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