

Mission Grapes (*Vitis vinifera*) - Vitaceae family

Spanish: *Uva misionera*

O'odham: *Ujdwis-je'e*



MOSES THOMPSON TEACHING MANZO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ECOLOGY CLASS UNDER THE GRAPE ARBOR

In Mission Garden

There are grapevines in the Spanish Colonial orchard, framing the Mahsig Ramada, lining the central path north of the field crops, and climbing over the arbors in the Mexican Garden and at the kitchen. The exuberant bright green vines make the Garden feel like Eden, and the arbors afford deep shade in high summer, which is truly a welcome respite. We are demonstrating the three most common methods of shaping grapevines: the traditional arbor, the goblet and the espalier forms. There are also several vines of Arizona's native wild grape (*Vitis arizonica*).

In Your Garden

Mission Grapes thrive in the Sonoran Desert climate and soils, but they are hosts to the grape leaf skeletonizers (*Harrisina brillians*), a moth whose larvae feed on grape leaves. Practitioners of organic agriculture here in the low desert clean off and discard affected leaves, or spray periodically with BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). Grapevines are also susceptible to thrips, which don't do as much harm, but can make leaves mottled and dry.



GRAPES MUST BE PRUNED EVERY YEAR DURING THE WINTER



For fruit production grapevines must be pruned every year during the cold season when the plants are defoliated. As grapes begin to form in spring, additional pruning of tips helps concentrate energy into the grape clusters, which can be protected from birds with transparent cloth bags, starting in June.

In addition to food, grapevines can serve to cool south-facing facades and provide a shady outdoor gathering place in summer, without blocking welcome summer sun in winter when they are leafless. This is an ancient traditional method of sustainable climate control, still widely practiced throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East.



MISSION GRAPES HANGING WITHIN REACH UNDER ARBOR

Harvest



GENE EINFRAK MADE THE GARDEN'S FIRST MISSION GRAPE WINE

Mission Grapes ripen here in mid July. The tight clusters of small, round, purple, or green-to-purple grapes are sweet and seedful. Mission Grapes can be eaten fresh off the vine, squeezed into fruit juice, or dried into raisins."

Traditionally, they were juiced to make sweet, low acid amber-colored "altar" wine called *Vino Generoso*. The mission *padres* also made cordials by infusing brandy with herbs, spices and grape juice, thus creating the region's first potent alcoholic beverage.





RANIA AND AFAF HARVESTING GRAPE LEAVES
TO MAKE DOLMA

In Middle Eastern cuisine grape leaves are prized for making stuffed grape leaves, and unripe grapes are added to many dishes to provide a sour or umami flavor.

Origins

Fertile Crescent farmers grew wild grapevines in their gardens some 10,000 years ago. Phoenicians spread knowledge of viticulture throughout the ancient Mediterranean. Missionaries of the Spanish colonial empire introduced "Mission Grapes" into Arizona in the late 1690s. The varietal formerly known as Palomino Negro in Spain and Listan Prieto in the Canary Islands, became simply *uva misionera* (Mission Grape).

Cultivars in Mission Garden

Mission Grape: sourced from the USDA UC Davis Germplasm repository

San Borja Mission: San Borja Mission, Baja California

Capital Reef Niagra White Concord: Collected in old homestead in Capital Reef National Park, Utah

Mission San Gabriel, California

San Ignacio, Baja California Sur, Mexico

Mission San Antonio, California

Palestinian Grape, Israel

Tularosa Vineyards Mission Grape, New Mexico. First planted in what is now the United States of America in 1629 in Senecu, New Mexico. Probably the oldest grape stock planted in the U.S.

Los Olivos White Concord, California



MISSION GRAPE





CAPITAL REEF NIAGRA WHITE CONCORD

Fun Fact

The name Carmen is derived from the Arab word *karm*, which means grapevine as well as vineyard and garden.

Further Reading

"The Story of Mission Grapes - Arizona's First Varietal," Gary Nabhan, 2012; *Gardens of New Spain. How Mediterranean Plants and Foods Changed America*, William Dunmire, 2004; *Ancient Agriculture: Roots and Application of Sustainable Farming*, Gabriel Alonso De Herrera; *The Origins of Fruits and Vegetables*, Jonathan Roberts, 2001.



FORMER OPERATIONS DIRECTOR BILL O'MALLEY FOUND A QUAIL NEST UNDER VINES THE FIRST SEASON AFTER PLANTING IN 2012

