

# Grapes

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Grapes are one of the easiest fruit crops to grow. Vines can be productive for many years. Texas is home to 13 species of native grapes, but improved grapes can have better fruiting characteristics.

## 🌱 Grow it

### Types and Varieties

- There are many varieties of grapes. The most well-known and difficult to grow are the European varieties. Hybrid varieties are a cross between European and native grapes. Muscadine grapes are native to East Texas, and improved varieties exist. All grapes—except for some muscadine varieties—are self-fertile, so only one vine is needed to have fruit. Female muscadine varieties should be planted with a self-fertile muscadine for fruit production.

### Soils

- Grapes are adaptable to virtually all parts of Texas. They require soils that drain well. If soil pH is above 7.0, iron chelate will be needed for muscadines. If soil pH is above 7.5, iron chelate may be needed for other varieties.

### Planting

- Grapevines are available as dormant, bare-root plants or as potted plants. Plant vines in the spring while the weather is mild. Grapes require full sun or at least 6 hours of sun a day.

### Growth and Production

- Grapes produce new, succulent growth each year called shoots. Once dormant, 1-year-old shoots are called canes. Buds located on canes give rise to new shoots that bear fruit. Older wood on grapes—except for muscadines—will have shedding bark and usually do not produce shoots that bear fruit. Grapes produce one crop each season.

### Training and Pruning

- Grapes are grown on a support structure such as a pergola, arbor, or trellis. The first year, select one or two strong shoots to retain as a trunk. Remove other shoots. In year 2, select two shoots to grow horizontally across the top support structure. Remove other shoots growing from the lower part of the trunk. In year 3, remove unwanted shoots

as needed. Each winter, remove unwanted and excess growth from the previous year. To maintain productivity on mature vines, remove approximately 90 percent of the previous season's growth leaving short segments of cane that contain one or two buds.

### Fertilizing

- Grapes respond to applications of fertilizer—usually one in the early spring and a second in early summer. If vines are overly vigorous, do not fertilize.

### Weed Control

- You must control weeds if first-year grapes are to survive. Mulch—generally organic matter such as bark or limb chips—can reduce the significant challenges that weeds pose for grape plantings.

### Watering

- First-year plants need irrigation to survive. Although established grapes are hardy, they should be watered to achieve top yields. Begin watering as needed in March or April, gradually increasing during the heat of the summer. Irrigate less often in September and stop in October, unless there is a drought.

### Harvest

- Grapes are not fully ripe until several weeks after they change color. Red and black grapes will begin to turn at the onset of ripening, and white or yellow grapes will become lighter green and softer. Many muscadine varieties ripen unevenly, and ripe berries may be picked individually. Ripe muscadine berries will take on a slightly dull appearance and may become slightly soft. Bunch grapes (European and hybrid grapes) ripen evenly so whole clusters may be picked.



Sun:  
Full



Soil:  
Well-  
drained



Planting:  
Spring



Harvest:  
June-Sept.



Life Cycle:  
Perennial

## Buy it

- The best grapes are plump with firm skin and are strongly attached to the stem.

## Use it

### Roasted Cauliflower and Grapes

Course: Side Dish  
Serves: 4

#### Ingredients:

- 2 lb cauliflower florets
- ½ lb red grapes, halved
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 2 tsp fresh or dried rosemary, chopped
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ cup pecans, chopped

#### Instructions:

Place cauliflower florets in a large bowl.

Place the grapes in the bowl with the cauliflower.

Add garlic and rosemary to the bowl of grapes and cauliflower.

Pour olive oil over cauliflower mixture.

Toss well. Spread cauliflower mixture onto a foil-lined baking sheet, add a small pinch of salt and pepper, and place in the oven at 425°F for 25 minutes. Sprinkle chopped pecans across the sheet pan and continue to bake for 5 minutes.



## Store it

- Grapes will keep in the refrigerator for up to a week when stored in a plastic bag.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu).

### Grape and Avocado Grilled Cheese Sandwiches

Course: Main Dish  
Serves: 4

#### Ingredients:

- 8 slices whole wheat bread
- 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 4 slices ultra-thin Swiss cheese
- 8 oz low-sodium turkey breast, sliced
- 1 large avocado, sliced
- 1 cup grapes, sliced in half

#### Instructions:

Place bread slices on a clean surface. Spread mustard evenly on all 4 bread slices.

Layer your sandwiches with 1 to 2 slices of turkey meat, 1 slice of swiss cheese, and sliced avocado. Lastly, top with sliced grapes.

Place the remaining 4 slices of bread on top of the stacks.

Heat a large skillet on medium-high heat. Spray the pan with cooking spray and grill each side of the sandwich for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and enjoy!

## Learn about it

- Grapes are free of fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and are very low in sodium.

*Information gathered by Aggie Horticulture*

