‘FAITH’, ‘HOPE’, ‘JOY’ AND ‘GRATITUDE’ SEEDLESS TABLE GRAPE FOR LOCAL MARKETS

Four new seedless table grapes have been released by the University of Arkansas. Brief descriptions of these are provided, and more detailed data on performance is available.

Faith (A-2412) is a blue, non-slipskin, seedless grape that ripens early, late July to early August in Arkansas. It has a largely neutral flavor with slight fruity flavor in some observations. Berries average 4 g, and cluster weight ranges from 150 to 250 g, medium in size. Soluble solids content averages 19% and skin is edible. Fruit cracking was usually not found after summer rainfall during ripening or at maturity for Faith. Vines usually have moderate vigor and yield and exhibit good hardiness in Arkansas. This new variety should complement Jupiter for the early local market for table grapes. Negative aspects include uneven set of berries in some years resulting in reduced cluster fill, occasional seed traces that can harden in some years, and a slight skin astringency noted occasionally.

Hope (A-2053) is a white (green) seedless grape with a fruity flavor and high yields. Berries average 3 g. Seed traces are seldom seen with Hope. Soluble solids content averages 19%, and berries are non-slipskin. Texture is soft. Only slight fruit cracking was seen following rainfall. Harvest of Hope was usually August 20th. Clusters are usually very tight and range from 300 to 330 g. Yields were usually 35 to 50 lb/vine. Vines are moderate in vigor. Negative observations have included excessively tight clusters and a moderately thick skin.
Joy (A-2494) is a blue, non-slipskin, seedless grape with exceptional fruity flavor. The skin is very thin, likely the thinnest of any Arkansas-developed grape. Fruit cracking during rainy periods near or at harvest has rarely been seen. Berry weight averages 3 g and clusters weight is usually near 300 g. Average harvest date is August 11th in Arkansas. Vine yield is usually moderate to high, and vines have moderate vigor along with consistently good vine health. Shortcomings include a very soft texture, occasional variable berry set resulting in some “shot” berries, and shatter of ripe berries at maturity noted in some years. Occasional hard seed traces were seen with Joy.

Gratitude (A-2505) has an exceptional crisp texture with seedless, green (white) berries. Berry weight averages 3.5 g and clusters can weigh up to 500 g. Skin is very thin and in most years no seed traces were found. Soluble solids content averages 19%, and flavor is neutral, similar to most Vitis vinifera table grapes. Fruit cracking was not observed, an exceptional characteristic for a crisp, thin-skinned variety grown in an area with rainfall near maturity and harvest. Clusters are usually very tight. Productivity is moderate. Negative characteristics for Gratitude include occasional winter injury to vines and tight cluster fill.

All vines were grown in west-central Arkansas, where winter temperatures normally were 5 to 10°F in most winters. Fungicides were applied to the vines each year to control common grape diseases found in the eastern United States. Vines were not exposed to Pierce’s disease during development or testing.