

'Bluebell'



University of Minnesota

Synonyms: Minn. 158 (6).

Pedigree: 'Beta' x unknown variety of Eastern U.S. (likely *V. labrusca*) (6).

Origin: Excelsior, Minnesota. Bred by A. Wilcox at the University of Minnesota Fruit Breeding Farm. Selected in 1923 (6).

Introduction: 1944 (1)

Type: Interspecific hybrid (including *V. labrusca* and *V. riparia*) (6).

Color: Blue

Berry: According to Hemstad (3), berries are medium in size and have a dark blue slipskin. He also described the flavor as juicy with a pleasant, fresh flavor. Both Hemstad (3) and Marshall (5) noted that cracking of berries in wet fall seasons can be a problem.

Cluster: Medium clusters, somewhat loose (3); with a pronounced shoulder (5).

Viticultural Characteristics: Vigorous, with a procumbent growth habit (2, 5). Domoto (2) also indicated that cluster thinning is not needed. May show iron chlorosis on some soils where pH is above 7.0 (7).

Disease/Pests: Only slight susceptibility to black rot, Botrytis bunch rot, downy mildew and powdery mildew (2). Marshall (5) noted that anthracnose has been seen in very wet fall seasons.

Wine Quality and Characteristics: Not typically used for wine, but wine made from it is typically has very *labrusca*-like qualities (5).

Season: Early Midseason (early to mid-September) (2, 5) and is capable of hanging on the vine longer (5).

Cold Hardiness: Very hardy (below -20° F) (2).

Use: Table, juice, jelly.

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Notes: Currently being rediscovered by growers and nurseries (4). Hemstad (3) indicated that 'Bluebell' does not ship or store well, but makes excellent pink juice and can also be used for jelly.

Literature Cited

1. Brooks, R.M., and H.P. Olmo. 1997. *The Brooks and Olmo Register of Fruit & Nut Varieties*. ASHS Press, Alexandria, VA.
2. Domoto, P. 2008. Grape cultivars for consideration in Iowa. *On:* <http://viticulture.hort.iastate.edu/info/pdf/cultivars08.pdf>.
3. Hemstad, P., University of Minnesota. *Personal communication* (2007).
4. Hoover, E., and P. Hemstad. 2000. *Growing grapes for home use*. University of Minnesota Extension Publication F0-1103.
5. Marshall, J., Great River Vineyard and Nursery. Lake City, MN. *Personal communication* (2008).
6. National Grape Registry (NGR) website: <http://ngr.ucdavis.edu/>. Supported by University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, Services, and National Clonal Germplasm Repository of the USDA Agricultural Research Service.
7. University of Minnesota Cold Hardy Grapes website: <http://www.grapes.umn.edu/bluebell/>.
8. Whealy, K. 1993. *Fruit, Berry and Nut Inventory*. Seed Saver Publications, Decorah, IA. pp. 330-331.