

'Kay Gray'



www.nysaes.cornell.edu

Synonyms: Elmer Swenson 1-63, E.S. 1-63 (1, 3).

Pedigree: E.S. 217 (Minn. 78 x 'Golden Muscat') x open pollination; ('Onaka' is probable pollen parent, which is an old South Dakota cultivar. 'Onaka' was growing next to E.S. 217) (1, 3, 7).

Origin: Osceola, Wisconsin. Bred by Elmer Swenson (1, 7).

Released: 1981 (1, 3); Plant Patent 4493 assigned to Swenson Smith Vines on November 16, 1982 (1, 7).

Type: Interspecific hybrid (includes *V. labrusca* and *V. riparia*) (5, 7).

Color: White

Berry: Medium to large berries (3.5 g) (4). Juicy, slightly crisp and tender (7). Relatively non-fragile skins are white to golden with a mild and fruity *labrusca* flavor (1).

Cluster: Swenson (7) described the 'Kay Gray' cluster as small and compact; cylindrical and uniform, usually with one small shoulder. Also according to Swenson, ripening begins unevenly, but is full at maturity. Cluster weight averages .21 lb (5).

Viticultural Characteristics: Domoto (2) described 'Kay Gray' as very vigorous and having a procumbent growth habit. He also indicated that cluster thinning is not needed.

Disease/Pests: 'Kay Gray' is rated as being slightly susceptible to black rot, Botrytis bunch rot, crown gall, downy mildew and powdery mildew (2, 5). It is uncertain if it is susceptible to Eutypa dieback or Phomopsis cane and leaf spot. It is also uncertain if it is sensitive to injuries from sulfur applications (2, 5) or copper (2).

Wine Quality and Characteristics: Plocher and Parke (4) report that a neutral wine for table use or blending purposes can be produced from 'Kay Gray', and in exceptional years, it can have a flowery nose and stand on its own as a varietal wine. Also according to Plocher and Parke, it is best to harvest 'Kay Gray' at 16° to 18° Brix, prior to full maturity (if allowed to ripen fully, it develops some objectionable aromatics for winemaking). They also stress the importance of avoiding oxidation while processing the fruit into wine.

'Kay Gray'

Season: Early Midseason (late August to mid-September in northern Wisconsin) (7)

Cold Hardiness: Plocher and Parke (4) report 'Kay Gray' as being very hardy, usually suffering little injury with mid-winter temperatures down to -35° F. They note that at extremes, such as -40° F, 'Kay Gray' has been injured at some sites but not others.

Use: Table grape, wine and juice.

Notes: Named after the wife of Elmer Swenson's friend, Dick Gray (former director of the Minnesota Freshwater Biological Institute) (4). Elmer Swenson used this grape as a parent for 'Brianna' and 'Louise Swenson'.

Literature Cited

1. Brooks, R.M., and H.P. Olmo. 1997. The Brooks and Olmo Register of Fruit & Nut Varieties. ASHS Press, Alexandria, VA, USA.
2. Domoto, P. 2008. Grape cultivars for consideration in Iowa. *On:* <http://viticulture.hort.iastate.edu/info/pdf/cultivars08.pdf>.
3. 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.
4. Plocher, T., and B. Parke. 2001. Northern Winework. Northern Winework, Inc. Hugo, MN. pp. 158-159.
5. Reisch, B.I., D.V. Peterson, R.M. Pool and M.H. Martens. 1993. Table grape varieties for cool climates. Information Bulletin 234. Cornell Cooperative Extension. *On:* <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/faculty/reisch/bulletin/table/tableindex2.html>.
6. Swenson, E.P. 1985. Wild *Vitis riparia* from northern United States and Canada. A breeding source of winter hardiness in cultivated grapes. A background of the Swenson hybrids. Fruit Varieties Journal. Vol. 39. No. 1:28-31.
7. Swenson, E. 1982. A grapevine named 'Kay Gray'. U.S. Plant Patent No. PP4,943. (assigned to Swenson-Smith Vines, Inc.).