‘Lemberger’

**Synonyms:** ‘Lemberger’ is known by many names: ‘Limberger’ in Germany, ‘Blaufränkisch’ in Austria, ‘Franconia’ in Friuli and ‘Kekfrankos’ in Hungary (1).


**Pedigree:** ‘Gouais Blanc’ x an unknown variety (possibly ‘Blauer Zierfandler’) (7).

**Origin:** Austria (8). According to Ciocco (4), it probably originated in vineyards on the lower stretches of the Danube River. He stated the grape was documented in Austria in the second half of the 18th century and in the 19th century, a “wine improvement society” advocated replacing high-yielding varieties with high-quality grapes (such as ‘Lemberger’) in the Kingdom of Württemberg, Germany.

**Introduction:** N/A

**Type:** *V. vinifera* (8).

**Color:** Blue (5).

**Berry:** Medium sized (5).

**Cluster:** Large and long (9). Average cluster weight is .30 lb (5).

**Viticultural Characteristics:** Fiola (6) described the vine as having medium-high vigor and upright growth habit. He added it has early bud break and ripens late, leaving it susceptible to frosts at both ends of the season. One hundred ten days from bloom to harvest (5).
**Disease/Pests:** ‘Lemberger’ is rated as being highly susceptible to black rot, crown gall, downy mildew, Eutypa dieback and powdery mildew; and slightly susceptible to Botrytis bunch rot (1, 5, 10). It is not sensitive to injury from sulfur applications and it’s uncertain if it is sensitive to injury from copper applications (1, 5, 10).

**Wine Quality and Characteristics:** Fiola (6) reported that wine has been described as balanced and has been done in a rosé style as well as used for medium bodied reds having soft tannins and black pepper overtones. Coccio (4) reported that the olfactory descriptors most often assigned to these wines are notes of black cherry, loamy earth, and ground spices. He noted that on the palate, the wine is decidedly more acidic than tannic, and has medium to full body with a noticeably “fruity” character.

In a three year study involving testing of experimental wine grapes in Washington, Carter et al. (3) reported that ‘Lemberger’ averaged moderate soluble solids at 23.7° Brix; moderate pH at 3.4; and was somewhat high in titratable acidity at 8.1 g/liter.

**Season:** Late Midseason (5)

**Cold Hardiness:** Slightly hardy at 0°F to -10°F (4). Vines have survived -13°F (6). Read (9) reports that ‘Lemberger’ has withstood winters at three eastern Nebraska research sites with good vine vigor and fruit set.

**Use:** Wine

**Notes:** According to Hawkins (7), wines made from this grape reportedly have low levels of histamines. It is the normally higher amounts of this compound found in many other red wines that can cause allergy headaches in some people. Coccio (4) added that ‘Blaufrankisch’ and ‘Kekfrankos’ mean “French Blue” in their respective native languages.

**Literature Cited**


