

'Maréchal Foch'



Iowa State University

Synonyms: Kuhlmann 188.2; 'Foch' (9).

Pedigree: 101-14 Mgt. x 'Goldriesling' (although some argue it is derived from Oberlin 595 x 'Pinot Noir') (9).

Origin: Alsace, France. Bred by Eugene Kuhlmann; Oberlin Institute, Colmer (9).

Introduction: 1920 in France; to the United States in 1951. Philip Wagner brought it in from Brights Wines in Ontario (2).

Type: Interspecific hybrid (includes *V. riparia*; *V. rupestris*; *V. vinifera*) (9).

Color: Black

Berry: Small, blue-black, round (7)

Cluster: Short (7 to 10 cm); winged; cylindrical (7); and tight (4)

Viticultural Characteristics: Domoto (4) described 'Maréchal Foch' as having low vigor and a procumbent growth habit. He reported a very early bud break making it prone to frosts (4). According to Domoto (4), cluster thinning is not needed but basal shoot thinning is. Because of its small clusters and berries, Galet (7) recommended pruning it long in order to get sufficient yields. A significant amount of heat is needed to fully mature fruit and central Minnesota is on the fringes of that area, with full ripening possible only in the best years (10).

Disease/Pests: 'Maréchal Foch' is rated as highly susceptible to *Eutypa* dieback; moderately susceptible to anthracnose (1, 4), black rot (1, 3, 4) and powdery mildew (1, 3, 4, 11); slightly susceptible to *Botrytis* bunch rot (1, 3, 4, 11) and downy mildew (1, 3, 4, 11). Bordelon et al (1) rates it as slightly susceptible to crown gall, but Domoto (4) considers it moderately susceptible, stating that it is more prevalent in colder conditions. It is reported to be sensitive to injury from sulfur applications (1, 3, 4) and Domoto (4) added that it is not prone to injuries from copper applications. He found the cultivar to be moderately susceptible to injury from 2, 4-D and susceptible to injury from dicamba. He noted the small black berries are attractive to birds.

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Wine Quality and Characteristics: Very good quality red wines have been made from ‘Maréchal Foch’. This variety is versatile, and capable of producing fruity light reds to full bodied wines. Wines are said to have a ‘Burgundy’ character while having a somewhat herbaceous flavor and purplish color (7). May require carbonic maceration or hot-pressing to enhance quality (8).

Season: Very Early (late August in Iowa) (5, 6)

Cold Hardiness: Hardy (-15 to 20° F) (4)

Use: Wine, juice

Notes: Often referred to as ‘Foch’ and is a sibling of ‘Léon Millot’. Named after Marshal Ferdinand Foch (1851-1929) who served as Allied Supreme Commander of the British, French and American armies in France during World War I. Foch isn’t known for any direct involvement in wine, but in a burst of patriotic fervor after the war, the French grape scientists who bred the new variety, named it after the aging general (12).

Literature Cited

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‘Maréchal Foch’

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