‘Vanessa’

Iowa State University

Synonyms: GF 136, ‘Vanessa Seedless’, Vineland 65164 (8).

Pedigree: ‘Seneca’ x New York 45910 (‘Bath’ x ‘Interlaken Seedless’) (7, 8).

Origin: Canada. Horticultural Research Institute of Ontario (Vineland Station); developed by O.A. Bradt and K.H. Fisher (7, 8).

Cross/Selection/Test: Cross made in 1965; selected in 1972 and tested as Vineland 65164 (7).

Release: 1983 (7).

Type: Interspecific hybrid (includes *V. labrusca* and *V. vinifera*) (7, 8).

Color: Red (7).

Berry: Fisher and Bradt (7) described the ‘Vanessa’ berry as medium sized and spherical; bright deep red and with a moderate bloom and seedless. They noted that the flesh is firm; the skin is adherent and the flavor of the berries can be described as mildly aromatic, but generally not of *labrusca* type. Fisher and Bradt (7) also reported that there are small vestigial seeds in the berry, but these have rarely shown signs of lignification (4% of seeds were hard). They added that berry splitting is usually not a concern.

According to the University of Minnesota (11), the characteristic that separates ‘Vanessa’ from other eastern seedless introductions is it’s crisp texture; and Reisch et al. (9) reported that it’s fruit quality is among the best of the red seedless types.

Rombaugh (10) noted that if the weather is dry all season long, the fruit can have astringent skin. However, if one good rain occurs after the fruit ripens, the astringency disappears. He added that this is likely connected to its place of origin.

Cluster: Medium sized (average cluster weight is .24 lb) (3); loose to well-filled (12); and with a small shoulder. Clusters do not shed readily and berries adhere tightly to pedicels during handling (7).

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Viticultural Characteristics: Moderately vigorous and with a procumbent growth habit (4). Bordelon (2) reported that vigorous vines have shown poor fruit set and loosely filled clusters; but cane girdling, gibberellic acid treatments, or thinning may be used to increase cluster compactness and improve berry size. Domoto (4) noted that cluster thinning may be needed at bloom to improve berry size. He also reported that it is not productive on secondary buds. It also hardens off slowly in the fall (4).

Reisch et al. (9) suggest that grafting may be desirable on many sites to increase vine size. They caution however, that vines grafted on Teleki 5C at trials in Fredonia, NY have shown poor fruit set with very small berries.

Disease/Pests: ‘Vanessa’ is rated as highly susceptible to black rot (1, 3, 4, 9) moderately susceptible to downy and powdery mildews (1, 3, 4, 9); and slightly susceptible to Botrytis bunch rot (1, 3, 4, 9), crown gall (3, 4, 9) and Phomopsis cane and leaf spot (1, 3, 4, 9). It is uncertain if it is susceptible to anthracnose or Eutypa dieback. Domoto (4) noted that it is not sensitive to injury from sulfur, but is slightly sensitive to injuries from copper applications. Fisher and Bradt (7) noted it was moderately resistant to phylloxera. Domoto (4) noted that it seems to be attractive to grasshoppers and is sensitive to injuries from 2, 4-D and dicamba drift.

Wine Quality and Characteristics: Typically used as a table grape. At the Horticultural Research Institute of Ontario, analyses carried out on whole berries showed an average of 16.5° Brix; 5.8 g/L titratable acidity; and pH at 3.59. They added that the sugar/acid ratio is 30.4, indicating a sweet taste (7).

Season: Early (early to mid-August in Iowa) (5, 6)

Cold Hardiness: Moderately hardy (-10° F to -15° F) (4). ‘Vanessa’ vines at Vineland Station in Ontario have survived -17.8° F with only 15% primary bud kill and no trunk damage (7).

Use: Seedless table

Notes: Like other seedless types, it does require winter protection in the upper Midwest states, such as Minnesota (11). Storage potential is good (7, 9).

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