

Lake Emerald Grape For Florida

By Hedwig Michel

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS of the Florida Grape Growers Association who have helped maintain interest in grape culture in Florida for many years have received the good news that the Lake Emerald grape, a new variety for the home gardener, has been released by the University of Florida Agricultural Experiment Stations. Twenty-four nurseries in Florida, among them the Koreshan nursery in Estero, have been offered limited numbers of cuttings and one-year rooted plants.

L. H. Stover, assistant in horticulture of the Watermelon and Grape Investigations Laboratory at Leesburg, and James M. Crall, associate pathologist in charge, have compiled their experience of many years for the benefit of the growers of home gardens and of commercial plantings of the grape.

In circular S-68, the latest publication of the University of Florida Agricultural Experiment Stations at Gainesville, both experts introduce the Lake Emerald grape and give full instructions on cultural practices. It includes detailed description of the plant, flower and fruit characteristics; yields; resistance to degeneration; uses and limitations of the Lake Emerald grape, and other valuable material.

THIS CIRCULAR was sent out at a most appropriate time. February is the month to establish grape stock. Flowering time of the Lake Emerald can be expected from the end of March to the middle of April, the maturing period throughout July. Eighteen-month-old vines of Lake Emerald bore 15 to 20 pounds of marketable fruit per vine at Leesburg in 1953—an outstanding yield for vines of this age in Florida. Commercial crops at Leesburg in the same year of 30-month-old replants showed comparable good records.

Where other varieties when replanted failed, the Lake Emerald vines went on undisturbed and developed unusually well. No symptoms of degeneration have been found in Lake Emerald grapes or in vegetative offspring. Experiments have been carried on over an area as far north as Gainesville and Hastings, as far west as Jay and far south as Belle Glade and Homestead. No symptoms of

plant degeneration have been detected anywhere.

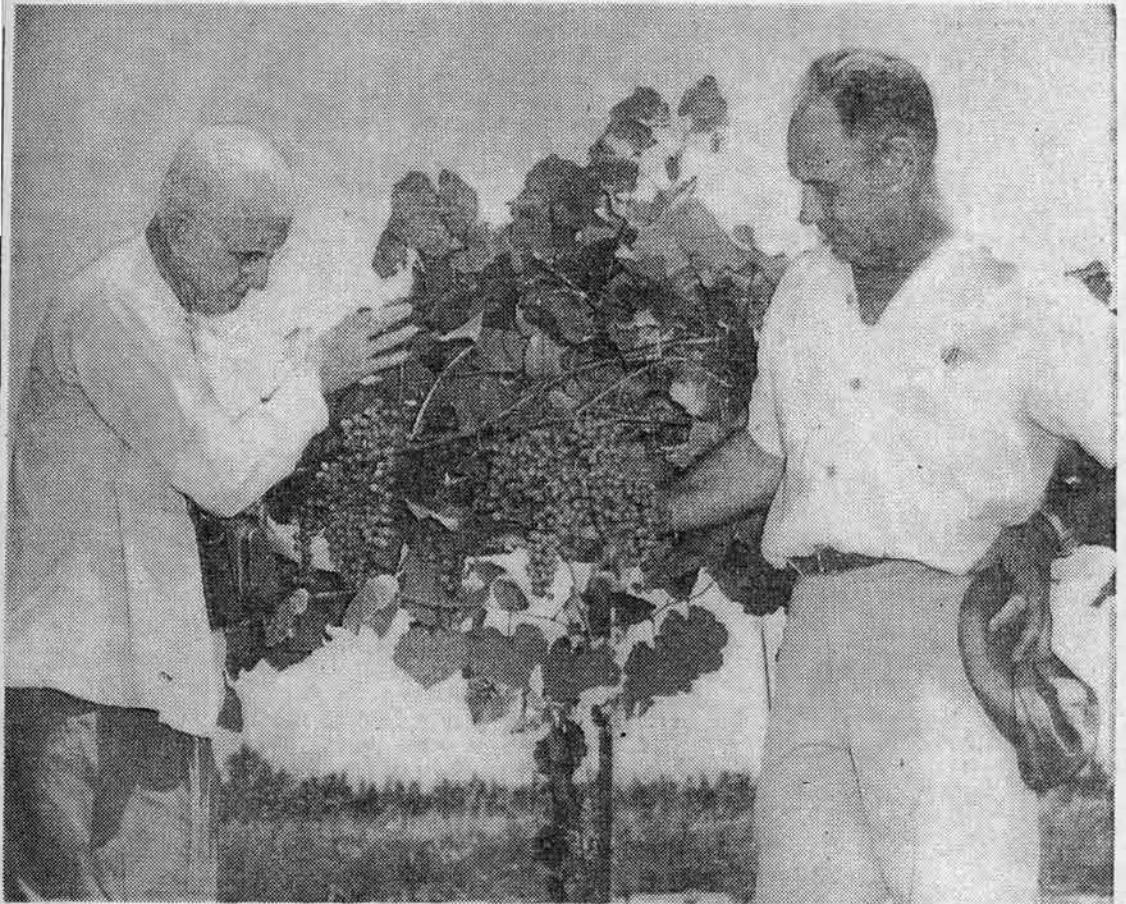
THE LAKE EMERALD grape is regarded primarily as a home garden or arbor grape. The clustered berries when ripened in a diffused sunlight show a light golden color, at which time they should be harvested. The light colored sweet and aromatic juice blends favorably with darker juices. The high sugar content of the Lake Emerald grape promises a particularly desirable juice grape. The yield will be appreciable for the home gardener. However, commercial growers may object to the slightly smaller berries than generally asked for market grapes, and the tendency to wilt readily decreases the importance of the Lake Emerald grape as a shipping variety.

This new grape variety thrives on intermediate, sloping, well-drained sandy loams where clay sub-soils are two feet or more below the surface. Arbors and yard plantings should be established in an open, sunlit area away from competition with trees and shrubs. Vines should be spaced eight or nine feet apart. The commercial vineyard planting is described by the experts as promising when trellised with the Munson canopy post system, with a 30-inch cross-arm at a height of five feet and three supporting wires, one at the center and two at the ends of the cross-arms. The standard three-wire Kniffin trellis, with rows laid out east and west, is also well adapted for the Lake Emerald grape. The growing vines should be thrown over the south side of the trellis to aid in shading. This is a cheaper way than overhead arbors and it results in the production of lighter colored fruits. The most promising overhead trellis, however, is the two-row wigwam, which has proved efficient and inexpensive.

This new variety was produced by crossing a native white-fruited grape, the Pixiola, with the cultivated yellow-fruited variety Golden Muscat, to combine the vigor and hardiness of native characteristics with the desirable fruit characteristics of domesticated grapes.

Lake Emerald is also recommended as valuable rootstock—an important factor in future breeding programs for still better varieties for Florida's condition.

New Florida Lake Emerald Grape To Be Released For '54 Planting



LEESBURG—Prof. G. H. Blackmon (left) head of the horticulture department of University of Florida agricultural experiment stations, and Loren Stover, assistant in horticulture at the State Watermelon and Grapes Investigations Laboratory at Leesburg, examine bunches of ripening Lake Emerald grapes at the Leesburg station. Planting material of the sweet new variety will be released to the public early in 1954.—(Tribune Photo).

LEESBURG — (By Staff Writer) Good news for Central and South Florida grape growers: The new Lake Emerald grape will be released to the public for planting early in '54.

Dr. J. M. Crall, plant pathologist in charge, and Loren H. Stover, assistant in horticulture, at the State Watermelon and Grapes Investigations Laboratory here, report that a limited amount of planting stock of the Lake Emerald variety developed at the laboratory will be available to the public early next year.

"The written applications for planting material will receive priority in the order in which they are received at the station," said Dr. Crall. "However, since the supply of stock will be limited, those persons with experience in grape growing and having proper land and facilities for growing grapes will be given preference over other applicants. Some applications already have been received."

Plots Inspected

Dr. Crall, Stover, who has spent many years trying to develop a

long-living grape stock for Florida, and Prof. G. H. Blackmon, head of the horticultural department at the main experiment station in Gainesville, led a small group of grape growers and county agents through the Lake Emerald plots here.

The Lake Emerald grape, representing a cross between a native wild grape of Florida and the Golden Muscat variety, is emerald in color when ripe and very tasty. Its juice being light in color, it is not considered a starter for putting Florida in the bottled grape juice industry; but it is a fine table grape and makes excellent wine.

"Our oldest Lake Emerald vines are some eight years old, and are in healthy condition," Stover told the visitors to the station.

Result of Long Search

In past years—30 years ago Central Florida grew a lot of grapes—the rootstocks of the better varieties died or dwindled to a useless state in four to six years. It was in the hunt for a marketable quality grape produced on a long-living healthy rootstock that Lake Emerald was developed.

Dr. Crall and Stover said grape growers receiving planting material next year will be supplied with spraying (for disease and insect control) and fertilization recommendations.

At Lady Lake another grower, Joseph Fennell, has produced several new varieties of grapes which show considerable promise. Experiment station scientists, after their trip through the state's plantings of Lake Emerald grapes, also visited Fennell's vineyards—but Fennell did not allow other persons on the tour to inspect his vineyards.

(That gave rise to some speculation that Fennell, who spent years in Latin America and has made long studies of grapes, may have one or more new hybrids that he is not ready to reveal to the public.)

Dr. Charles Demko, at Altoona, with several new grapes of merit, opened his vineyards to all the visitors. Several small home grape arbors were inspected by the group, too.