

## **Vineland's new seedless grapes to hit market in 2020 as fruit breeding programs grow**

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After years of testing and development, Canada's [Vineland Research and Innovation Centre](#) is preparing to release its long-awaited seedless table grape variety next year.

"The first commercial planting occurred in 2018 and the fruit will come on in 2020," explains Michael Kauzlaric, technology scout and leader of grower outreach at the center.

In the meantime, he says: "There are vines available now for growers to plant."

According to Kauzlaric, this grape variety differs from the standard variety available on the market now - Sovereign Coronation.

Vineland's grape variety has a different harvest window from the former, allowing the industry to "extend the harvest time frame".

Additionally, he says it has performed well "on quantity" as well as surviving Canada's extreme summers and winters.

It also has a number of characteristics that are appealing to consumers; for example, "its eating qualities are really good and it's seedless."

In order to capitalize on all the category has to offer, Kauzlaric says: "that variety will have some branding behind it to try and increase margins for the growers".

A seedless grape to meet a growing market need

When it comes to the fruit's development, he comments that it was in response to a market need.

"There's been a big drive in Canada's imports; it's a big marketplace for a lot of grape imports. The program at Vineland started based upon Canadian industry interests trying to keep up with changing consumer eating habits and a changing marketplace."

According to him, this means: "A lot of the focus is on importing genetics - new table grape varieties for testing."

The testing is a continuous cycle at the center, he explains.

"We've planted some newer varieties from other breeders this spring so it's kind of a recycling process now. Every year we're trying to get some new varieties in; then new varieties start producing fruit, so every year it's a new process in the test block.

"So we just didn't stop at five varieties; we planted more and we're going to be planting more next year. It's just a continual process of introducing new grape varieties from international breeders."

Kauzlaric says the developing varieties are all seedless. Additionally, they consist of a range of colors, including red, green, black, and bi-color.

This was a very conscious choice, he explains. "Consumers are always searching for the next coolest thing and we're trying to keep up with the different mix of varieties that come in the Canadian market now."

When it comes to future development, he says Vineland is expanding. Specifically, the center is importing new genetics to test out in Canada that haven't yet been exposed to its climate.

"At the end of the day we're looking to make sure growers are more profitable with the varieties they plant," he says.

## Vineland's apple breeding program moves to Stage 2

Beyond Vineland's seedless grapes, it is also developing new apple varieties.

Kauzlaric says researchers have moved some selections to Phase 2 of testing at the center, and are now "looking at the international space to welcome any interested parties if they're interested in testing in Phase 3."

Explaining the duration of each stage, he says Stage 1 usually takes about four or five years. Stage 2 could be two, three, four years. And Stage 3 could be three, four, or five years "depending on the risk".

In his words: "We're kind of at an in-between for apples; nothing has been sent to commercial growers for testing yet. But we're definitely looking into that space."

He explains one of Vineland's mandates is to be recognized internationally.

"We've had a lot of visitors to see our apple program at the moment. We haven't committed to anybody yet so we're still building on the plan of how to move forward," he notes.

"My goal is to try to get some test trees out to commercial growers in 2020 or 2021 and let Stage 3 happen with the commercial growers. But that's quite ambitious."

Peach and nectarine varieties supply market gaps

Vineland has also released a number of [new peach and nectarine varieties](#) through a licensing agreement with Adams County Nursery.

Kauzlaric says these fruits have received a lot of interest.

"For the Canadian side, the industry is really reacting positively because these newer varieties are filling a marketplace gap where there was limited variety availability during that harvest time.

"So we're seeing a really good response and growers are happy with their planting."

He elaborates that "it seems like our Canadian marketplace always thinks the earlier the better, so the majority of the varieties fit that early market space where they harvest earlier than what's on the market."

Beyond their strategic harvest times, Vineland's peach and nectarine categories have a few other advantages. They are better color and are better tasting than the standard right now, he says.

"We've been trying to capture all the requirements and desires what consumers are looking for - better color, better eating-quality, more sugar."

These varieties aren't only available in the domestic market, though.

"Some of these varieties have been sent to the U.S. or Europe or down in South America as well, so they're still in their evaluation phase in those different territories."

Vineland to expand into berry markets?

Looking ahead, he comments: "We're always looking at different opportunities, different species, and seeing where there is a marketplace pull rather than push.

"We're not looking to push something into the market, it's challenging uphill battle at that time."

Specifically, he says berries might be a category that Vineland considers expanding with.

"On the high-tech greenhouse berry side of things, there seems to be an increasing space in Canada.

"A lot of strawberries are being grown in high tech greenhouses, and raspberries, blackberries and currants might be something that Vineland will look into for the near future."

He remarks that international trends would influence this decision.

"A lot of Canadian growers have been following what's been happening in Europe in the berry world because there's definitely an opportunity to fill certain gaps in the market place during the year.

"Once the imported berries are in kind of a lull, some of the local production can fill in those gaps. And retailers and consumers are always quite strong on buying local."

Of course, the final move always goes back to what would work best for the consumer, he emphasizes.

"We're looking at what consumers are interested in eating ten years from now and trying to make the most strategic choice."

[https://www.freshfruitportal.com/news/2019/08/15/canada-vinelands-new-seedless-grapes-to-hit-market-in-2020/?pk\\_campaign=130365c64f&pk\\_source=mailchimp&pk\\_medium=email&pk\\_content=278942&pk\\_cid=5cf2adb51d&utm\\_campaign=130365c64f&utm\\_source=mailchimp&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=278942&utm\\_term=5cf2adb51d](https://www.freshfruitportal.com/news/2019/08/15/canada-vinelands-new-seedless-grapes-to-hit-market-in-2020/?pk_campaign=130365c64f&pk_source=mailchimp&pk_medium=email&pk_content=278942&pk_cid=5cf2adb51d&utm_campaign=130365c64f&utm_source=mailchimp&utm_medium=email&utm_content=278942&utm_term=5cf2adb51d)