ITASCA: A Great White Hope?

or, The Grape Formally Known As:

MN 1285

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Grape Breeding & Enology Program
U of MN Cold Climate Fruit Breeding

• Program began in 1906
• Breeding of Grapes, Apples, Berries, Trees
• Located in Excelsior, MN
• About 10,000 vines, 7,000 new seedlings/year
• NOT “GMO”, but classic hybridization through specific cross-pollination and isolation...
• Frontenac, La Crescent, Marquette, etc.
My! What nice clusters you have!!...
Itasca (Frontenac Gris X MN 1234)

- Cross made in 2002
- Selected in 2009
- Harvest mid-September
- Very Hardy
- Disease Resistant
- No Phylloxera
- High Quality Fruit Chemistry
- A great white hope??
Origins of the name **Itasca**

- The name of the source-lake for the Mississippi River, made from combining the Latin words *veritas* “truth” and *caput* “head”.

- Native American legend, also, mentions **I-tesk-ka**, the daughter of Hiawatha, whose tears of anguish at being spirited away to the netherworld reputedly formed the source of the Mississippi.

http://www.britannica.com/place/Lake-Itasca
Itasca, the vine

- Growth habit is open and manageable
- Shoots can grow either upright or procumbent (downward)
- Vines can be vigorous
- Cold-hardiness is excellent
Itasca, the vine

- Great disease resistance
- Fruit exposure is good, can benefit from minor adjustments
- Canes of 10-12 buds perform well after harsh cold events
- Spur pruning also works well
- Vine Spacing: 6 feet with ≤2.5 % OM, 8 feet for ≥3 % OM
Young MN 1285 vine, planted in 2011

Some upright shoots
Pictured in 2015
The before and after
Itasca is extremely hardy
% Primary bud survival after polar vortex

2014

- Brianna
- Castel 19637
- Edelweiss
- Frontenac
- Frontenac blanc
- Frontenac gris
- MN 1285
- La Crescent
- Marquette

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

2014
Disease resistance is very high
Itasca’s fruit is easy to expose
Itasca can grow vigorously

Leaves are Fig-leaf shaped and curl under naturally
Kicker shoots on the trunk will help “de-vigorate” the growth.
Itasca after Pruning 2016

Kicker shoots pruned off, back to short spurs
Itasca the fruit

• The fruit ripens nicely by mid to late September.
• Clusters are cylindrical and often shouldered or winged, structure is moderately compact.
• Berries take on a beautiful golden hue when ripe.
Itasca the fruit

• Some clusters exhibit a few rosy-colored berries.
• Juice TA chemistry can come in under 10 g/L
• Brix can reach 25%,
• pH of 3.05 – 3.35
Sun-ripened, Golden Fruit of Itasca
Winged Cluster of Itasca
Itasca achieves Great Fruit Quality

2012 Numbers - Brix: 26.0  pH: 3.35  TA: 9.33
Juice Chemistry

- Brix: 24.7 - 28.2
- pH: 3.04 - 3.31
- TA: 9.5 - 10.8 g/L
- 95 - 145 g clusters
# Fruit Quality Traits of MN Cultivars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genotype</th>
<th>°Brix</th>
<th>TA (g/L)</th>
<th>pH</th>
<th>Bud Survival % in 2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Itasca*</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>10.85</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontenac</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>15.33</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>27.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Front. Gris</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>15.62</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>25.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>La Crescent</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>14.49</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marquette</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>12.85</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Itasca, the wine & wine making

- **Aromas and flavors:**
  - Apple, Quince, Melon, Citrus, Pear, Gooseberry, Star fruit & Mineral
  - Beautiful golden color
  - Medium bodied
  - Full-flavored, rich, intense
  - (Like warm-climate Sauv. Blanc)

- **Winemaking:**
  - Whole-cluster pressing
  - De-stem & Cold-soaking
  - “Designer” yeasts
  - Barrel ferment, or partial...
  - Full MLF or partial
Itasca is a Grower-Friendly Vine and a Winemaker’s Grape at the Same Time.
Itasca, a great grape!
Itasca – Available in 2017
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Questions ???

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