

## Lindsay's Vineyard Chronicles

What's been going on in the vineyard this week?

Thursday August 17

It's been a couple weeks since our last check in, and we're finally reaching the part of the season when our berries start to look like grapes!

Véraison (pronounced **verr-raisin** for Americans, or **verr-ré-zohn** with a nasal <ohn> at the end, if you want to practice your French accent) is the French term for the period in grape (and olive!) growth, where berries move from the hard green stage to the phase where they start to ripen. Skins soften, sugar accumulates, and colors begin to change.

Véraison is easiest to spot in red grape varieties because of the anthocyanin (color) that accumulates at this stage, but it's equally present in white grapes, too. In the white varieties we check for softening skins by giving the berries a little squeeze.

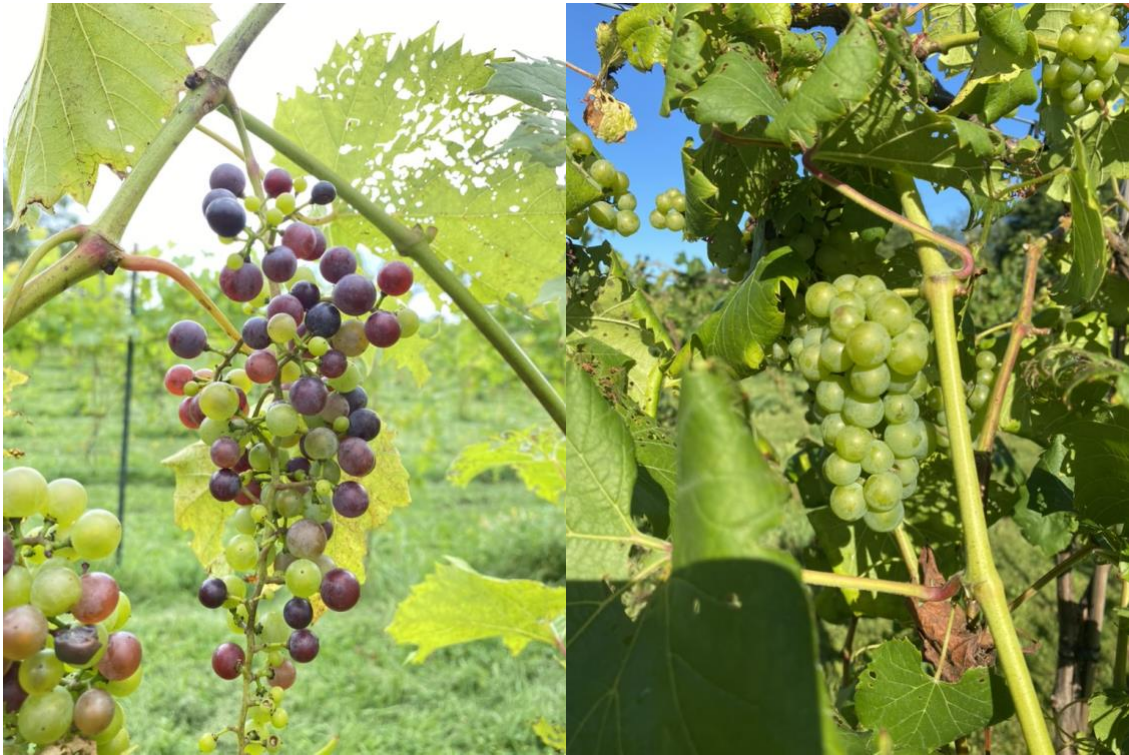


Figure 1: Frontenac Noir (left) is clearly going through something. Itasca (right) swelling up while sugars accumulate

The period from véraison to harvest can last several weeks, and as winemakers we hope for dry weather so it lasts as long as possible. While berries are starting to appear ripe right now because of the color change, the accumulation of sugars happens slowly over the next month or more. As sugar content increases in the berries, the ratio of

acids in the fruit reduces. So, the longer the clusters can hang on the vine, the more balanced our fruit chemistry becomes (and we can make better wine!). Over the next few weeks, we'll be out sampling berries and tracking sugar accumulation in each variety, and we'll decide our harvest dates by that data.

Unluckily for us, birds don't seek the same sugar levels that we do for winemaking, and the changing colors of the berries is a signal to our bird population that the fruit is nearly ready for them to enjoy (high acid and all). Soon we'll be switching on our Bird Gard audio bird deterrent system, so the sounds of raptors and predatory bird species will mingle with the regular vineyard noise.

Lately I've also been accumulating data on how fruitful our vines are this season, to plan for tank space during crush in the winery. Having these data points will also help me track year-to-year the overall health and wellbeing of the vineyard. Seeing small crops on our previously non-producing varieties makes me really excited for the yield increases we'll see in the years to come.



*Figure 2: we're anticipating our first small crops on our Petit Pearl (left) and Brianna (right) vines in the west block*