PLANT FACT SHEET

Vitis rotundifolia Michaux

GENUS *Vitis* **FAMILY** Vitaceae

COMMON NAMES Muscadine grape

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves

Fruit can be eaten fresh but are also used for jams, jellies, sauces, syrups and juices. They can be used for wine.

DESCRIPTION

A vigorous deciduous vine. It can grow to 30 m long. They have a tight non shedding bark. The shoots are warty and the tendrils are unbranched. The leaves have slight lobes. The leaves are 6-12 cm long with toothed edges. The leaves are dark green on top and greenish yellow underneath. The leaves are glossy on both surfaces. Male and female flowers occur on separate plants. The flowers are small and green. Fruit occur in small loose clusters of 3-40 grapes. The fruit are round and 2-4 cm across and with a tough skin. These contain up to 5 hard oblong seeds. The fruit can range from green to bronze to red or purple. There are several different cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

They suit warm humid conditions. It cannot tolerate heavy frost. It should not be grown where winter temperatures regularly go below -4°C. They need full sunlight with good air flow. They can grow on a range of soils but do best on well drained sandy soils with a pH of 5.5 to 6.5. They will not tolerate wet ground. Plants are shallow rooted. It suits hardiness zones 5-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are normally propagated by layering as cuttings root with difficulty. In mid summer canes of the current seasons growth are bent down and covered with earth. When these have developed roots they can be cut from the parent. Annual pruning must be severe to keep new fruiting wood coming. The basic framework is for a trunk, permanent arms then fruiting spurs. Current seasons fruiting shoots need to be on last year's growth. Shoots from older wood are normally sterile.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Fruit on a bunch normally ripen at separate times so need to be picked individually. Ripe fruit fall so can be caught with a cloth.

NOTES

There are 60 to 70 species of Vitis.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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