



Grape Variety Profile:

Champanel

Justin Scheiner*

Champanel is a Pierce’s Disease (PD) tolerant hybrid grape cultivar. It was developed by T.V. Munson in 1893 as a cross between the native Texas species *Vitis champinii* and the Worden cultivar. Worden is a *Vitis labrusca* hybrid grape, similar to Concord. As such, Champanel resembles Concord in appearance and flavor but is better adapted to the growing conditions in Texas.

Champanel has a procumbent (downward) growth habit with pubescent shoots and leaves. These fine “hairs” grow densely on the back side of the leaves, giving them an aesthetic silver or light grey appearance. The leaves of Champanel can be quite large—6 to 8 inches across (Fig. 2).

Champanel is a vigorous grower and should be trained to a high wire system that allows the shoots to cascade downward. Champanel is very popular for arbors and other structures due to its attractive appearance and fruit. Champanel grapes make excellent jelly and are often used to make a fruity-flavored red wine.

Champanel is typically grown as un-grafted or own-rooted vines. It has been used as root-stock due to its tolerance to a wide range of soil



Figure 1: Two year old Champanel vine displaying a downward growth habit.



Figure 2: Large leaf and cluster of Champanel.

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conditions and possible tolerance to cotton root rot.

While Champanel has good resistance to most fungal diseases, anthracnose can cause losses in the Eastern Texas with wet conditions in the spring (Fig. 3). The most common insect pest of Champanel is the grape leaf folder moth.



Figure 3: Fruit loss from an anthracnose infection.



Figure 4: Folded leaf (left) from a grape leaf folder larvae (right).



Figure 5: Heavy grape leaf folder infestation on Champanel.

This moth often heavily infests the leaves of Champanel and the wild mustang grape (*Vitis mustangensis*). The grape leaf folder moth lays its eggs on leaves. After emerging, the larvae fold the leaf over themselves with silken webbing (Fig. 4). This provides protection as they grow and consume leaf tissue until adulthood. Infestation of grape leaf folder usually occurs from mid-July to August in most areas of the state. This pest generally does not greatly injure vines but gives them an unsightly appearance (Fig. 5). It may be controlled with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) or other insecticide products.

Champanel vines have a moderate yield, producing 10 to 20 pounds of fruit with a spacing of 8 to 10 feet between vines (Figs. 6 and 7). The clusters of Champanel are small to medium



Figure 6: Three year old Champanel vine with a large crop of unripe fruit.



Figure 7: Champanel fruit at veraison, the onset of ripening.

sized (Fig. 8) with large, slip skin berries (Fig. 9). A typical cluster has up to 30 berries. At maturity, Champanel berries generally contain lower soluble solids (sugar) than European grapes (*Vitis vinifera*)—an average of 14 to 18%. At maturity (Fig. 10), Champanel berries generally contain lower soluble solids (sugar) than European grapes (*Vitis vinifera*)—an average of 14 to 18%.



Figure 8: Champanel grapes at maturity.



Figure 9: As a slip-skin, the pulp and skin are easily separated.



Figure 10: Champanel grapes at maturity.

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