Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.
DEAR SIR:

Last winter, as I foretold, saw a larger fruit acreage planted than ever before, particularly of grapes and the coming winter will see another increase.

A year ago, I had just over 4,000 grape vines growing and these were sold before the end of November and I brought in from eight to ten thousand vines from California. This year I have between eleven and twelve thousand growing and already nearly two thousand of them have been sold for winter delivery and it now looks as if they would all be sold before October.

These vines have been trained to one extra strong cane 4 feet high ready to go onto a trellis. With the strong root system, which continuous irrigation, cultivation and spraying induces, this method insures almost no loss in transplanting, a rapid and strong starting out of the vine, an occasional bunch of grapes in the next June and a small but fair crop in the following June. Of course it is necessary to soon put up the first wire of your trellis and to rub off all buds which come out below the head.

The California vines cannot be delivered till the middle to end of February because they must become dormant for a short time there and the transportation here occupies a month. Last year, I transplanted these 4 foot vines of mine in January and they did splendidly. They utilized the winter months which because of the warmth of the ground in the Valley, are fine for root growth, to get so well established that at the end of February, they at once started out in a strong growth. This year, I intend to commence digging as soon as the first frost and to deliver the larger lots early in January. This is also a period of much less work than later in February.

Because of the smallness of loss in transplanting, adaptation to the Valley's soil and climate, the strength and vitality of their root system and the quickness with which they develop strong vines and fruit, my vines are easily worth five to ten times what the California vines cost.

As these vines have gone into a number of Texas catalogs and as a large part are already sold for delivery later, I would advise an immediate order if you wish to be sure of getting some of these vines.

PRICES

1st, BY THE ACRE—For $100.00, payable a quarter on order, a quarter on Dec. 1st, and balance on delivery of vines; I will go to your land, examine its soil and lay, make a written report on it and if furnished a contour map, lay out its ditches and where the grape rows should go, give you written directions as to preparing the soil, furnish the vines with direction as to planting, make trellis and care for first year and with them will furnish 200 cuttings Tamarix Plinosa and 25 banana suckers per acre to plant as wind-breaks.

2nd, PER VINE, VALLEY GROWN—As long as they last, I will sell you my vines grown at La Granja for 25c each, $2.40 per dozen, $15.00 per 100 save the few with special prices on them, payable half on order and balance when vines are delivered. I will have a few seconds at 20c each, $1.80 per dozen and $10.00 per hundred.

3rd, PER VINE, CALIFORNIA GROWN—These I will deliver in February at 20c each, $1.80 per dozen, $10.00 per 100 and in quantities, having them come direct to you, will make, to encourage large planting, the SPECIALLY LOW PRICE of $90.00 per 1,000 and $80.00 per 1,000 over 2,000, $65.00 per 1,000 in lots of 5,000 or over, and $50.00 per 1,000 for 10,000 or over.

4th, PER CUTTING—Cuttings are uncertain in growth save under expert care but of course much cheaper. This year, I will have ample cuttings of the standard varieties and will sell them at 5c each, 30c per dozen, $2.00 per 100 and $10.00 per 1,000. I have had from nothing to 9s per cent of cuttings to grow and advise the planting of the vines.

5th, GRAFTED VINES—For those fearful of the root rot or phylloxera, I expect to be able to get from California, vines of a few standard varieties grafted on either Riparia x Rupestris 3309 or 3309 or 101.14 which it is claimed are resistive to both root rot and phylloxera. There is no phylloxera in the Valley to my knowledge but there is root rot. These vines will cost 30c each, $3.00 per dozen or $20.00 per 100 and I will need to know by Dec. 1st to get them.

6th, MUNSON'S GRAPES—Some few of the wonderful varieties of grapes created by the late Mr. T. V. Munson by crossing vinifera grapes on native and other stock can be grown here and will probably be resistive to both phylloxera and root rot. Until more thoroughly tested out, I cannot advise large commercial plantings but do advise the planting of a few of the finest for planting experimentally and for home use. Unless noted otherwise, these will sell at $1.00 each.

NOTE ON VARIETIES

I am asked what is the best variety of grape. I have between 90 and 90 varieties growing and in five years, will be moderately competent to a lawyer but those planting want information NOW. Here is my best recommendation but with the clear understanding that it has changed and will likely change again on fuller experience and knowledge but it is the best I know now.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A MARKET GRAPE

1. EARLYNESS. For express shipments to Texas and nearby points, a June ripening grape is needed. By the 10th of July, most grown grapes come coming into Houston, San Antonio, Waco, and by the 20th of July, Payetteville, Ark. commences to ship in car lots. These are not the fine vinifera grapes but they answer for grapes and lower the market price.

2. SIZE AND COLOR. New Orleans and many of the Texas cities will take a black or purple grape but in all the northern cities, a white or red grape is preferred. The larger the size of the berry, the more is a grape advanced on the best commercial side. Also large bunches are preferred.

3. LOOSENESS OF BUNCH. A loose bunch packs so much better than a tight bunch that it should always be preferred.

4. FIRMNESS, TOUGHNESS OF SKIN. Adherence. These three points should always be looked for in a good shipping grape.

5. FLAVOR. For home use this is the first qualification but the good looking grapes all have fine flavor and it will take a long time to establish in the market a grape which does not carry as well or look as beautiful even if it has a finer flavor.

I place the different varieties here in the order of my judgment as to their value for commercial planting in the Valley.
FLAME TOKAY. Ripens July 5th-25th. This is a very large, meaty, firm, oval grape, red in color, a good slipper. The bunches are large and flavor full. The vine is a strong grower. As yet we are uncertain whether it will color up the rich strong red which makes it so handsome a grape. The rich color is essential in it in California and acres have been dug up where the soil would not produce this fine grape. If you want to grow any variety of grapes at all, you must try this variety. It is a handsome berry and a good slipper. I advise its planting here. It has the reputation of being a straggling grower but has grown well with me. Also it has trait of dropping berries it lacks strength to ripen and hence the bunches are apt not to be well filled out and the bunches are not as handsome as some others. It is the best raisin grape there is. It is planted in the hottest parts of California. Like the Tokay, no large crop can be expected till the third year.

DATTIER DE BEYROUTH. This while an old grape in Asia Minor, is comparatively new in California but they speak in the highest terms of it and I have eaten some of the grapes here which are superb. It is an immense, oblong, white grape borne in large loose clusters and it ripens in July. It is a strong grower and is said to be a heavy bearer. Despite the fact that only a few vines have been grown in the Valley, my planting next winter, will be entirely of this grape because it is so highly spoken of. Its price is a little higher than the others being $16.50 per 100.

MALAGA. Ripens July 5th-25th. This large, oval, white grape with thick skin, firm flesh and loose bunch is so great a favorite in California that I would have given it first place save for the fact that my vines have fruited very scantily. It may be they need more age to fruit heavily. Individual vines have borne beautiful fruit and a heavy crop.

GOLDEN HAMBURGH or Listan. Ripens June 20th to July 10th. The berry is smaller than any of the preceding four but medium size, round, white and red. The bunch is large and loose. I have had many bunches weighing four pounds. It is a strong grower, will bear a good crop the second year and bears early in the season. But if put on the market at the same date as any of the preceding four, it would not command as high a price because a smaller grape but it is nearly done bearing before the others are ripe. Hence it is a valuable vine to plant for the market.

BLACK HAMBURGH. Ripens June 15th to July 5th. This is a large purple-black berry born in tight clusters which last is a bad characteristic for packing. It is a handsome fruit and because of the earliness of its ripening, commands a good price but if it ripened at the same time as the first four, it would not command as high a price as they will. It is a good grower and very prolific and very early bearing. Vines planted last year, with good care taken of them, produce a good crop a year from the following June. Its price is a little lower than the others, $13.50 per 100.

BLACK CORNICION. This is a large, long, oval shaped black grape ripening in July. It has a very loose bunch, is a strong grower and is one of the most popular California grapes. Individual vines have given fine fruit here but no commercial planting has yet fruited. I planted an acre last winter and they are doing finely.

EMPEROR. This is a very large, round, firm, meaty red grape ripening in July with us. It is so firm that it is a splendid slipper carrying most anywhere. Small plantings have fruited well here but no commercial planting is yet good enough. I planted an acre last year and they have grown well.

FOR HOME PLANTING

The above are the varieties I advise for commercial planting and I think will all be successful if given the proper care. But one of the main reasons for this love of these varieties is that they are planted mainly for his own home eating, he can eat fine flavored grapes, early and late varieties which are not available in California. I would put in triall varieties. He should have a greater variety than for commercial planting and plant a few of each variety which set on and ripen second crop. I recommend the following:

GROS COLEMAN. Ripens June 25th to July 15th. The berries of this grape are the largest of any grown, they are round, reddish black with thick but tender skin. The flavor is slightly acid and wine, different from native other grape and also from hybrid grape. The vine is a strong grower and early bearer but because of its tender skin, it is only a moderately good slipper but it is handsome a grape that if it reaches the market in good condition and in grades it should be planted for home use at least. 25c each, $1.00 per dozen.

BLACK MOROCCO. A fine and handsome berry, very sweet and juicy black grape. Some small plantings of this variety have fruited well but we do not know enough about it here to justify large plantings. It has the tendency of setting on too many bunches and the reason should be used in all home plantings. Only obtainable in California vines. 25c each, 1.00 per dozen.

TOMASSON SEEDLESS. This is a very early, small, greenish white grape borne in large clusters a strong grower and prolific bearer. It is larger and sweeter in California and sells better here; hence I can only advise it for home and experimental planting. Only obtainable in California vines. 25c each, 1.00 per dozen.

Of the above, I have a few vines of my own raising and will sell at the prices named.

PEREZ ZAOS. A very prolific, large white grape, sweet in flavor and early but with so thin a skin it is not fit to ship and cooks readily. But if it is only a bearer and so prolific it is worth planting. 25c each, $1.00 per dozen.

CHAS ELAN. This is a large, round white grape ripening in June, extensively planted in California and which is a fine hybrid. It ripens a large crop and bears early. 25c each, $1.00 per dozen.

ALMERA. This is the grape imported from Spain in 1870 and generally known as Almaga but it has a larger berry, oval, is said to be sweeter and has many characteristics making it a finer grape than the Malaga. 25c each, 1.00 per dozen.

HERBON. Another large white grape ripening in July, with the Sweeterwater or Chasselas flavor. Worth trying out. 25c, $1.00 per dozen.

REINE HUGUENOT and DES POUS. Two and Five Dollars. These grapes ripen early, grow large and are good keepers. They are ramified and much in demand for early ripening, very large almost pure white grape of fine flavor and shipping qualities. At present, most of the other white grapes are already ripe and have no offer for sale, but as soon as they might bring the highest price of any white grapes raised in the market. 25c, $1.00 per dozen.

PALEA DE FRESNO. A red grape in a large bunch of an oval rose colored grape. Very mealy, very fine and a good slipper. This grape is so mealy that with all the cold there, it may replace the Tokay in a red grape 25c each, 50c per dozen.

RAMON. A large, round black grape with white bloom, mealy, crisp, large thick skin, large berries, medium size, late. It looks as if this might replace the Black Hamburgs and other purple grapes. 40c, $1.00 per dozen.

CABERNANE. A dark purple wine grape of medium size and fruit, slightly flavored. An early and prolific bearer. 25c, $1.00 per dozen.

PUGLIA. A late ripening, medium size, purple grape with a rich, fruity, flavor and very productive. 25c, $1.00 per dozen.

MUSCAT MADEIRA. This grape ripened before any others with me. It is a very large grapes early in season. It is only a small, and so this a slipper, it is a poor shipper but it has the exquisite Madeira flavor and I recommend it for home planting. 25c, $1.00 per dozen.

BLACK MUSCATS. Four or five varieties of Black Muscats which are so close in fruit, flavor and growth that it is almost impossible to tell them apart. These are hybrids between the regular black grape and some black grapes and in them, the rocky clinging sweetness of the Muscat is modified into a delicacy and exquisite flavor that surpasses all others. I do not know whether there are any good slipper but I would rather eat them than any other grape grown and if they will ship, when once planted they will do well. I have a few vines to sell and the price is $1.00 each.

Next year more of the varieties will be coming into bearing and I can give a larger assortment and a better selection.

SPRAY MATERIALS

I am carrying for my own use, a cask of Bordeaux lime and sulfur solution, powdered sulfur, south carolina arsenate of lead, etc., and my neighbors come to me for my supplies. I believe greatly that some form of spray can be applied to your grapes and I have given a little treatment to 2000 plants with success. I would greatly like to spread others and give advise as to what to use. Also, I am carrying an extra Automatic Spray machine with copper tank to use in cold weather. It will cost you $10.00 and my experience is that it is one of the best. I am ready to try a plant in the supply of dust guns or machines. It is foolish for any one to try to use fine fruit sprayers or tanks without a strong machine, a dust gun and the materials to go with them, as it would be to farm without a plow.