



GRAPES

Uses

When selecting grapes, it is best to choose those with a powdery-looking coating called "bloom." Green grapes should have a slight gold cast, and dark grapes should be uniform in color. Grapes can be refrigerated in a perforated plastic bag for up to 3 days. Table grapes such as Thompson seedless are served fresh or frozen. Concord grapes are made into preserves, janes, jellies, and juices. Others are dried into raisins and currants or crushed to make juice and wine, depending on variety. Red and purple wine or grape juice is made by including the skins in the processing of the grapes, whereas the skins are removed to make white wine and juice

Varieties

The thousands of varieties of grapes can be divided into basic types: European and American. Both are grown in the United States, but the European varieties are the more popular. Most American grapes (such as the Concord) are slip-skin types, meaning that the skins slide off easily, whereas the skins of most European grapes cling tightly to the flesh. Grapes are classified by whether they have seeds or are seedless. They also can be classified by their uses, such as for the making of wine (such as cabernet), for commercial foods (such as concord grapes for jelly), or for eating at the table (such as Thompson).

Recipe

Mrs. Newton's Concord Grape Pie

4 cups Concord grapes

3 Tbls tapioca

1 cup honey (or 3/4 cup sugar)

1 Tbls lemon juice

2 Tbls butter

About 2 hrs. before baking, slip skins from grapes, reserving skins. In medium saucepan over high heat, bring grape pulp to boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low and simmer five minutes, stirring. Press the pulp through a sieve into a medium bowl to remove seeds. Add grape skins, honey, (or sugar), tapioca and lemon juice. Mix well. Let stand while preparing pastry. Preheat oven to 425 degrees roll out half of pastry and line a pie plate. Fill with grape mixture. Dot with butter. Prepare top crust, making decorative edge. Bake 25 minutes or until golden. Serve warm or cold.

Origin

Grapes are among the oldest cultivated fruits. Fossil evidence indicates that grapes were consumed, and possibly cultivated as early as 8,000 years ago near what is now northern Iran, between the Black and Caspian seas. In precolonial America, native grapes grew wild along the banks of rivers and streams, but these grapes were very sour. Spanish missionaries traveling north from Mexico in the late 18th century are believed to have brought the cultivation of European grapes to California. Today, California produces 97% of all domestic grapes.

Grapes can grow in almost any climate but they thrive in temperate regions with average annual temperatures above 50 degrees. Although modern farm machinery is used, some aspects of grape grown, or "viticulture," are still done by hand. Grapevines generally are propagated from grafts and cuttings rather than from seed. Five years is required for a young grapevine to reach optimal production. The woody vines must be staked to support the weight of the fruit. Like most fruit, grapes develop sugar as they ripen, but they do not get sweeter after they are picked.

Availability

Domestic grapes are available from May through January or March, and imported grapes fill the gap during late winter and spring.

Nutrient Content

Some varieties of grapes are good to excellent sources of vitamin C, whereas others are not. Moderate consumption of red wine, which contains the phytochemical resveratrol, along with a heart-healthy diet may contribute to the prevention of heart disease.

Description

More grapes are grown than any other fruit in the world. These popular berries are produced in thousands of varieties, growing in cluster on climbing vines and low shrubs throughout most of the world's temperate zones. Grapes have juicy flesh and smooth skins that range from pale yellowish green to purplish black

www.pafarm.com