

growers who wish to build a high tunnel for in-ground crop production. This program is called the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) High Tunnel System. You can contact your local NRCS office to learn more about the program, if you are interested. You can find more information at www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Grape Cultivar Selection

Selecting appropriate cultivars is critical for success with high tunnel grape production. Attributes to consider when selecting cultivars include vigor (speed of vine growth), hardiness (cold tolerance), disease resistance, harvest date (early, mid, or late season), yield potential, grape cluster attributes and flavor, and adaptation to your specific environment. You will find a list of University of Arkansas table grape cultivars with descriptions in Table 1. These grape cultivars have been selected

for the warm, humid environment of the Southeast, with varying degrees of disease resistance.

It is important to consider the preferences of your customers and marketing channels when selecting cultivars. Most consumers are accustomed to seedless, non-slipskin table grapes such as ‘Thompson Seedless.’ Some of the Arkansas table grape varieties are “slipskin” grapes, which exhibit the characteristic of the skin easily pulling away from the flesh when bitten into, resulting in flesh and juices squirting out. This attribute is common to American-type or “labrusca” grapes from the species *Vitis labrusca*. Labrusca grapes are often described as having a “musky” or “foxy” flavor that is either treasured or disliked by consumers, depending on their flavor preferences. Vinifera table grapes are from European parentage, *Vitis vinifera*, and tend to have a much milder flavor than labrusca (with the exception of muscat-types).

Table 1. University of Arkansas Table Grape Cultivars

Older Releases	
Venus	Blue, seedless, slipskin grape with labrusca and muscat flavors. Early maturity (19 July—Clarksville, Arkansas). Moderate hardiness and medium vigor. Moderately resistant to fungal diseases, but does require fungicides for successful production.
Mars	Blue, seedless, slipskin grape with labrusca flavors similar to ‘Concord.’ Mid-season maturity (5 August—Clarksville). Very hardy with high vigor. Medium clusters with medium-size berries. Highest resistance to fungal diseases, but does require sprays for successful production.
Jupiter	Reddish-blue to blue seedless grape with a mild muscat flavor. Large, non-slipskin berries in a medium to large cluster. Early maturity (24 July—Clarksville). Moderate susceptibility to fungal diseases but does require sprays for successful production.
Neptune	Yellow-green, non-slipskin grape. Hardy and medium-low vigor. Large clusters with medium-size berries. Mid-season maturity (4 August—Clarksville). Moderate susceptibility to fungal diseases, but does require sprays for successful production.
Reliance	Pink, slipskin seedless grape. Highest flavor rating of all Arkansas cultivars. Very hardy with medium vigor. Early to mid-season maturity (29 July—Clarksville). Can be used to produce grape juice, jelly, and sweet-finished wines, and eaten fresh. Harvest date in N.W. Arkansas is typically 1 September. Has susceptibility to skin cracking and post-harvest shelling. Displays uneven ripening in excessively hot growing season.
Recent Releases	
Faith	Seedless table grape. Blue when fully mature. Medium to large berry size with moderate yield. Mostly neutral to slight fruity flavor. Early ripening in late July to early August, with ‘Jupiter.’ Hardiness similar to ‘Jupiter.’ Intended for use in the local market for the early season. Good resistance to fruit cracking. Should complement ‘Jupiter’ in the early local market. Negative aspects include uneven set in some years, resulting in reduced cluster fill, occasional seed traces in some years and, occasionally, slight skin astringency.
Gratitude	White (green) seedless table grape. Released in 2012. Neutral flavor, similar to other <i>V. vinifera</i> table grapes. Berry texture is exceptionally crisp with very thin skin; non-slipskin. Medium-size berries with large, tight clusters and moderate yield.
Hope	White (green) seedless table grape when mature, released in 2012. Fruity flavor with berry size small to medium. Berry texture is non-slipskin, but soft. Very large, tight clusters. High and consistent yield. Mid-season maturity (20 August—Clarksville). Good hardiness. Only slight fruit cracking after rainfall noted, even with a thin skin.
Joy	Seedless table grape, blue when fully mature, released in 2012. Flavor is exceptional, with unique flavor for labrusca-vinifera hybrid. Berry size is small to medium with non-slipskin, soft texture. Very thin skin. Cluster size is medium to large. Yield is moderate to high. Mid-season maturity (11 August—Clarksville). Vines have moderate vigor and very good resistance to fruit cracking.

Source: Cultivar information provided by Dr. Elena Garcia, University of Arkansas