



Grape Grins and Grimaces MP3

Gary Crawford [00:00:04] Ah yes, you've heard of that fictional family from The Godfather, the Corleones. But now we investigate a real family, a family that has reached out its vines to almost every corner of the earth, the notorious vitaceae family, and there's only one word to describe this family:

Voiceover [00:00:18] "Grapes, grapes, small and sweet, so good for you..."

Gary Crawford [00:00:20] (singing along) "...a tasty treat." Yeah. Today, we're back here matriculating at good old VegU, the VegU-cation tent of higher learning at the Agriculture Department's farmers market here in Washington D.C., with professors Rachel Schoenian and Chantel Oyi. They're out here about to deliver part one of a two-part lecture and demonstration concerning grapes. So, are you two excited, eager to get started? How are you guys feeling today?

Rachel Schoenian, Chantel Oyi [00:00:43] We feel grape.

Gary Crawford [00:00:45] Great. I'll have to take your word for that. All right. First, this vitaceae family. It's been around a long time. Scientists have found fossils of what looked to be grape plants from 66 million years ago. Now it seems that once us humans came onto the scene, it certainly didn't take us long to somehow get the idea of making alcoholic beverages out of grapes. Rachel, you've followed this line of investigation, and what did you find?

Rachel Schoenian [00:01:07] The production of wine from grapes started as early as 5000 B.C. It's said to have originated in Georgia.

Gary Crawford [00:01:16] (singing) Georgia, yes. Oh, sweet song, keeps Georgia on my mind, Georgia.

Rachel Schoenian [00:01:22] The country, not the state.

Gary Crawford [00:01:23] Oh, oh sorry. Anyway, Rachel you say most grapes are grown for wine making, but I don't see you two stomping around on the grapes with your bare feet or anything here.

Rachel Schoenian [00:01:33] Today at the VegU tent, we are talking about table grapes. They're different from wine grapes. Table grapes have a thin skin.

Gary Crawford [00:01:39] Oh, don't take criticism well, I guess.

Rachel Schoenian [00:01:41] And over the years they have been bred to be seedless or have very small seeds.

Gary Crawford [00:01:45] No wonder they're quick tempered and all.

Rachel Schoenian [00:01:47] Wine grapes, on the other hand, are smaller and have thicker skins and lots of seeds.

Gary Crawford [00:01:51] Okay, but today it's the table grape we're dealing with. And Chantel, you are the expert on this part. As a food, how do grapes stack up?

Chantel Oyi [00:01:59] One cup of grapes is about one hundred calories and it provides more than 25 percent of your daily recommended value for vitamin K and vitamin C. Grapes also help minimize the risk of heart attacks because they increase the levels of nitric acid in the blood which prevents blood clots.

Gary Crawford [00:02:16] Okay, now the biggest question that we've been hearing from folks now out here is to store grapes - how to keep them okay for as long as possible. Chantel says keep them in the crisper of your refrigerator in the plastic bag they came in, and very important -

Chantel Oyi [00:02:28] You don't want to wash the grapes until you're about to eat them.

Gary Crawford [00:02:32] Why not?

Rachel Schoenian [00:02:32] They're going to decay faster if you wash them.

Gary Crawford [00:02:36] They absorb the moisture and, well, anyway, it's not good. How long will they stay in good shape if stored correctly? Most experts say three to five days, maybe longer depending on your fridge and the nature of the grapes. Now in our next session, Rachel and Chantel will be showing us how to make a really neat summertime food item from...

Voiceover [00:02:53] "Grapes, grapes, grapes, grapes..."

Gary Crawford [00:02:53] This is Gary Crawford reporting for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington. Kid, that was really grape.

Voiceover [00:02:57] "Yeah!"

Gary Crawford [00:02:58] Yeah.