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Press Release

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## Grapes

Grapes, among the oldest cultivated fruits, can be dated by fossils back to the Neolithic era. Hieroglyphics depict Egyptians involved in grape and wine production, and the early Romans were known to develop new varieties.

Although much of the cultivation of grapes today is by equipment, much of viticulture (grape growing) is still done by hand. Most table grapes are harvested by hand.

Grapes grow on woody vines that have been propagated from cuttings or grafting. Since grapes need to be raised-up off the ground, stakes or trellises are used to support their heavy branches with bunches of fruit.

Grapes are classified as either American or European varieties. Usually European grapes are oval in shape; American grapes are round.

California produces 98 percent of the grapes grown for eating and juice. A large part of the grape crop is sun-dried for currants, raisins, and sultanas, and another part is grown for juice.

Grapes come in three basic colors—green, red and blue-black. Grapes, sometimes called “nature’s candy,” are high in Vitamin C and can help meet your need of two cups of fruit daily.

Red grapes have been found to contain resveratrol, a potential anti-cancer agent. According to the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR), research points to resveratrol’s ability to slow the growth of cancer cells and inhibit the formation of tumors in lymph, liver, stomach and breast cells.

Two of the most popular grapes in our area are:

- Red Flame Seedless-medium size, juicy, crisp, and very sweet
- Thompson Seedless-oval, amber green, sweet, and used for making Golden raisins

After purchasing grapes, store them in the refrigerator where they will keep up to a week. Just before serving, wash grape clusters and pat dry.

Melaina Calhoun from Bienville Parish won first place in her division in the regional Commodity Cookery with this delicious Grape Salad recipe.

### Grape Salad

8 oz. cream cheese, softened  
¾ cup sugar  
8 oz. sour cream  
1 tsp vanilla  
1 pound seedless green grapes  
1 pound seedless red grapes  
1 cup brown sugar  
1 cup pecans, lightly toasted and chopped

Combine cream cheese, sugar, sour cream and vanilla. Fold in grapes and ½ cup pecans. Combine brown sugar and the remaining pecans and sprinkle over grapes. Cover and refrigerate 12 hours to 24 hours.