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Grape Variety Profile:

Black Spanish

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The Black Spanish variety—also known as Lenoir and Jacquez—is a red wine grape that is grown principally for its tolerance to Pierce's Disease (PD) and consistent fruit production. The parentage of Black Spanish is unknown but the variety is presumed to be a cross between *Vitis aestivalis* and *Vitis vinifera*.

Black Spanish vines produce upright growing shoots (Fig. 1) that are suited to training systems with vertical shoot positioning (VSP) (Fig. 2). Most Black Spanish vineyards in Texas utilize a mid-wire cordon training system with VSP. However, Black Spanish is also successfully grown on the Watson Training System (high-wire bilateral cordon with a horizontally divided canopy).

The vigor of Black Spanish is moderate. Its leaves are large (Fig. 3), necessitating a moderate shoot density (shoots per foot of canopy) to prevent an overly dense canopy. Targeted leaf removal (Fig. 4) is often used to increase air movement through the canopy and spray penetration to the fruit.

Black Spanish produces large, cylindrical clusters with small berries (Fig. 5). Black Spanish clusters generally do not produce a large wing



Figure 1: Black Spanish canes displaying upright growth.



Figure 2: Black Spanish vineyard with vertical shoot positioning.

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and have a somewhat loose architecture. Fruitful shoots average slightly more than two clusters per shoot. Uneven (asynchronous) ripening among clusters on the same vines occurs frequently (Fig. 6). Black Spanish may benefit from a green harvest or green drop to prevent these issues.



Figure 3: Black Spanish has large leaves.



Figure 4: Targeted leaf removal in Black Spanish on the morning sun side of the canopy.



Figure 5: Black Spanish has large clusters at maturity.

While Black Spanish is resistant to powdery mildew and PD, it is susceptible to other fungal diseases such as anthracnose, black rot, grapevine trunk diseases, phomopsis cane and leaf spot, and downy mildew (Fig. 7). When conditions are warm and wet, downy mildew infections can result in complete defoliation and crop loss if left untreated (Fig. 8). Commercially grown Black Spanish requires a well-planned fungal disease control program. The major insect pest of Black Spanish is grape berry moth (Fig. 9), although other insects can be occasional pests.

Black Spanish is primarily grown in Texas un-grafted or own-rooted. In comparison to the PD tolerant white wine grape Blanc Du Bois, Black Spanish is more tolerant of alkaline soils.



Figure 6: Asynchronous cluster ripening.



Figure 7: Downy mildew leaf infection on Black Spanish.

However, high alkaline soils may cause iron deficiency (Fig. 10).

With good viticulture practices, Black Spanish yields commonly range from 3 to 6 tons per acre. On average, Black Spanish ripens 2 to 3 weeks after Blanc Du Bois. At full maturity, Black Spanish fruit often accumulates high soluble solids (23 to 25°Brix). It maintains a relatively high titratable acidity even at relatively high juice pH. Black Spanish is used to make a wide range of wine styles but is particularly notable for Port-style wines.



Figure 9: Grape berry moth damage in Black Spanish.



Figure 8: Defoliation and fruit loss from a downy mildew infection.



Figure 10: Iron deficiency in Black Spanish resulting in leaf interveinal chlorosis.

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