

Muscadine Grape

(*Vitis rotundifolia*)

Vitaceae

Muscadine grapes are the ancestor of cultivated grapes and grow from Delaware south to central Florida and cultivated as far west as east Texas and northward along the Mississippi River to Missouri (HerbClip™ Online, 2015). It is a vigorous, high-climbing vine with tendrils that may grow up to 100 feet in the wild. Leaves are somewhat heart-shaped with a V-shape at the base with deeply serrated margins. It has small, greenish flowers in the spring, followed by fruits that ripen in late summer and early fall, about the time the leaves start changing color. Grapes turn dark purple to black when ripe. Scuppernongs are lighter in color and are sometimes referred to as the blond muscadine.

In addition to the muscadine grape, there are at least two dozen other species of wild grapes that occur in the United States. They are easily recognized by their woody vines that climb high into trees, often at the edges of woods. Forked tendrils and heart-shaped leaves characterize the wild grapes. All are edible, but some are sweeter than others. Most grapes are sweet to eat straight from the vine and make excellent jelly, pies and wine. Since the fruits contain lots of natural pectin, jelly can be made without purchasing commercial pectin and honey can be substituted successfully for sugar.

Parts Used: Fruits, leaves



Grape Crunch

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Granola Crust:

1/2 cup oats 1/2 cup nuts
1/2 cup flour 1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter, softened

Mix butter with oats, flour, nuts, and sugar until crumbly. Press half the mixture evenly on bottom of buttered baking dish. Reserve remaining crumbs for topping.

Pour the cooked grapes over the oat mixture in the baking dish. Top with remaining oat mixture. Bake for 30-35 minutes.

Grape Filling:

3 cups muscadine grapes, seeds removed
1 cup sugar 3 tbsp. flour

Place grapes in saucepan. Add flour and sugar and bring to a gentle boil. Continue to cook for 15 minutes.

Taste: Fruits are sweet and sour; the pulp is sweet but the skin is sour. Leaves are bitter and astringent.

Health Benefits

Muscadine grapes are among the richest sources of antioxidants, especially ellagic acid and resveratrol, (M.D. News Special Edition, 2008). A puree of skins and pulp was found to be an excellent source of resveratrol, dietary fiber, essential minerals, high in carbohydrates, and low in fat and protein.

Antioxidants

- Ellagic Acid: believed to be a cancer preventative
- Resveratrol: a phytochemical that helps protect the plant from pests or diseases; reported to lower cholesterol and the risk of heart disease; cancer-fighting substance; found in grapes, leaves, skin, and seeds (M.D. News Special Feature, 2008).

Flavonoids – phenolic compounds

Anthocyanins: responsible for the red, purple, and blue hues; may contribute to the prevention of cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular and neurological diseases (Konczak & Zhang, 2004).

References

- M.D. News Special Edition, 2008. retrieved from <https://www.cypress-bendvineyards.com/media/1269/md-news-june-2008.pdf>.
Konczak, I. and Zhang, W. (2004). "Anthocyanins – more than nature's colours." J. Biomed Biotechnol. Retrieved from <https://www.hindawi.com/journals/bmri/2004/307613/>.