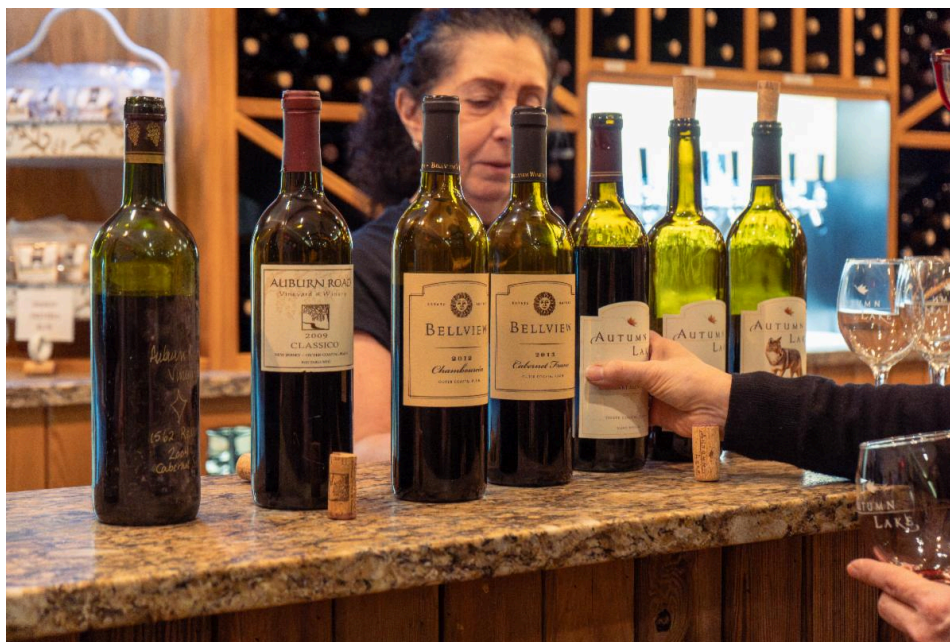


# OCP VA

Outer Coastal Plain Vineyard Association

## The Vineyard Post

### Spring Newsletter



The February 26 the meeting was held at Autumn Lake Winery. Chairperson Jim Quarella called the meeting to order at 6:10 and once the minutes of the 12-25 meeting were approved and accepted, the following topics were discussed.

#### Meeting's Highlights

##### Board Elections:

Many volunteered for additional terms and there are a couple new positions held.  
Old board members reelected; Peter, Joe, Jules (treasurer),  
Current term board members; Dante (secretary) Jim, Larry, Kelly (ED)  
New board position; Mark (chairperson)  
New board member; Maddy

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### **By-Law Change:**

It was proposed to change the by-laws to allow all NJ vineyards to become members of the OCPVA since much of our work benefits the entire state. This change can be viewed on the OCPVA website under About Us/By-Laws. Of the 20 members responding to the vote, 17 were for and 3 were against. Updates have been made to the by-laws.

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### **Agritourism Grant:**

It was reported that there was a considerable response to this grant and several hundred applications had already been received, well ahead of the deadline. If you didn't qualify this year, please try again next year.

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### **Grant News:**

A NJ Wine Council grant will be applied for to facilitate the experimental vineyard planting at RAREC. A half an acre of new trellising and an acre and a half of new vines will be established if the grant funds are approved. The goal is to test a few new varieties and accelerate testing on a few old varieties. Rutgers is excited at the prospect and will support the efforts of the OCPVA.

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An **SCBG grant** will be applied for with the focus on raising awareness of the **Coeur d'Est (CdE)** blend. The idea is to increase sales of the blend and increase the need for the varieties in the blend, supporting both farmer and wine producer. First, funds will be sought to make an advertorial with a well-established food and wine publication. Second, a new app for producers to use to attract and measure public response. Lastly, two events to be held at local wineries inviting the curious wine traveler to learn about CdE with wine, food and education.

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The featured wine at this meeting was “**Library Wines**”, meaning something that had been held in storage for a while. Some very interesting examples were poured and discussed, including a 2016 Syrah from **Working Dog**, 2013 Cab Franc and 2012 Chambourcin from Bellview, a 2004 Cab and a 2009 Sangiovese/Cab blend from **Auburn Road** and a multi vintage Chambourcin/Cab Franc blend called “Cagey”, circa 2016-2018, and a Cab 2016 from **Autumn Lake**. The OCP Reds hold up as well as any other region!

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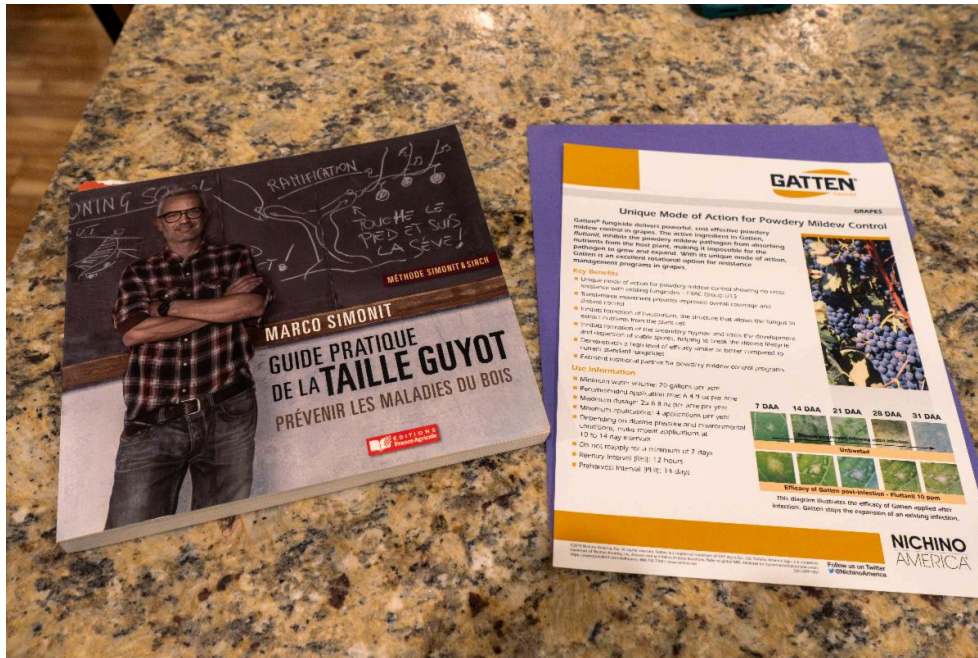
Read all the details of the meeting in the minutes on the website.

[View Meeting Minutes](#)

# Meeting Speakers

**Viticulturist Philosophy Speaker** was **Maddy Cozine** of **Working Dog Winery**. This was the first presentation of its kind at a meeting and it is designed to share vineyard trials, facts and philosophies as they relate to NJ grape. Several topics related to pruning technique were discussed and the talk was well received. There was a handout available at the meeting. The book is available on Amazon for \$82., although only a French text version was noted. Guide Pratique de la Taille Guyot by Marco.

Presenter **Aimee Bently** of **Nutrien Ag Solutions** spoke on how “softer chemistry” can be incorporated into some spray programs using biopesticides with conventional spray products to lessen the use of more dangerous chemicals. Products like Double Nickel and Lifeguard were discussed.



**Be Heard!** Email your events, vineyard pictures, winery pictures, etc. to **Megan** to be included on OCPVA social media at [megan@autumnlakewinery.com](mailto:megan@autumnlakewinery.com). It can be info, funny, a short story, nature shot or any small thing of interest to be included in Social Media. Every member is welcome to send in!

## Next Meeting Details

The next meeting is at **Auburn Road Winery** at **117 Sharptown-Auburn Rd** in Pilesgrove at **6:00** on **May 14th**. You won't want to miss this one! Attendees will be treated to a selection of Auburn Road's own menu! They also have their own pizza oven in-house!

The featured wine will be **Fortified Wines** this quarter. All who attend are encouraged to bring and share a fortified-style wine example for tasting and discussion.



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The **Viticulturist Philosophy Speaker** will be **Mike Beneduce** of **Beneduce Winery** in Pittstown, NJ. Mike will be presenting his journey on becoming herbicide free, a topic of major importance considering all the EPA talk that's occurred lately.

**Mike Beneduce** is the owner, vineyard manager, and winemaker of **Beneduce Vineyards** in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. He oversees 27 acres of estate vineyards dedicated to producing 100% estate-grown wines, with a focus on northern European aromatic varieties. Mike holds a B.S. in Viticulture and Enology from Cornell University and is a Certified Sommelier through the Court of Master Sommeliers. His work is rooted in sustainable farming and artisanal winemaking, and he was recognized as New Jersey's Outstanding Young Farmer of the Year in 2022.

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**Paul Licata**, owner of **BDI equipment** will present some ideas on mechanization regarding vineyard work as it pertains to growth and cultivation. Sprayers, hedgers/trimmers, shredders mowers and deleafing equipment will be part of the presentation.

**Paul Licata** is the owner of **BDI Machinery Sales, Inc.**, an agricultural equipment company based in Macungie, PA. With 25+ years of experience across industries—from agriculture to electronics—he brings deep expertise in agricultural mechanization, and automation, and operations.

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New Faculty Member at Rutgers, Assistant Extension Specialist in Plant Pathology, **Nancy Sharmer**, wants to conduct spray trials in the vineyards at RAREC. Additionally, she will be initiating a program to work closely with local, commercial vineyards to see field conditions related to pesticide resistance and pathology. Nancy will present an outline of her anticipated work and how you can get involved at the next meeting (**May 14 at Auburn Rd**). Welcome aboard, Nancy.

**Dr. Nancy Sharma:** Assistant Extension Specialist for diseases of wine grapes, small fruits, and tree fruits. B.S. in Agriculture with a major in Plant Pathology and Entomology at Punjab Agricultural University, India, followed by an M.S. in Plant Pathology at Auburn University. Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from Michigan State University, focusing on fungicide resistance in grapevine powdery and downy mildews. My research interests include understanding the etiology of emerging plant pathogens, investigating fungicide resistance, and developing rapid molecular tools for early detection of pathogens and fungicide resistance.

# Other News



The **OCP table** at the recent **Eastern Winery Expo** in **Richmond, VA** was a hot spot at the opening night Welcome Wine Reception. Shawn and Jules and some others poured OCP produced wines for hundreds of interested wine professionals. Thanks to all who poured!



A **mask fitting test** will be held on **May 21st** from **4:00 to 5:00** at **Autumn Lake Winery** for any member of the OCPVA. Mask fitting is an annual requirement and it ensures your pesticide mixing mask fits well. An outside firm, Active Assist, HCS will be performing the evaluation, offering certificates and a medical evaluation is included.

**COST:** As the OCPVA will be picking up 50% of the cost, attendees will need to pay \$47.50 each. Checks should be made out to the OCPVA. Cash will be accepted. No other form of pay available. Cost is the same whether or not you need the medical evaluation.

**WHERE:** Autumn Lake Winery, 870 West Malaga Rd Williamstown, NJ 08094

**WHY:** NJ state law requires a qualified person to check each licensed handler each year.

**HOW:** Reply to Kelly at [kellyocpva@gmail.com](mailto:kellyocpva@gmail.com)

**NOTE:** No eating or vaping within a half an hour of your test

All participants must be clean shaven for the evaluation

No make-up on the area that touches the mask

Bring your mask that you use when mixing

A **current OSHA Respirator Medical Evaluation is required.** It's the short questionnaire from OSHA to prove you are healthy enough to use a respirator. You can access the form [here](#).

### OSHA Respirator Questionnaire - Active Assist HCS - HIPAA Compliant Online

Fill it out carefully as it will only be reviewed one time. Bring the approval with you to the fitting event.

The evaluator will have adapters to test **Honeywell North, 3M and MSA brand** masks only. Do not sign up if you don't plan to bring one of these three brands of mask. For prepared participants, the evaluation takes about 5 minutes.

**RSVP to Kelly**

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The **April 21 frost event** has left devastation in its path for many vineyards as well as orchards and blueberry fields. It was just too cold for too long and in the early morning hours of that historic day, one could watch the tender green tissue turn to grey and brown as the predawn hours passed. Some tried to minimize the effects of the cold and were out in the fields through all hours of the night. Some were successful, some were not. You are urged to contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) to report damage. Visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) and put in your zip to find your county FSA office.

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### **Interesting Articles regarding Viticulture and Enology and the Marketing of;**

Staying on the frost topic, read here how some others were affected by the dramatic spring weather. [Read more here.](#)

A story not affecting the OCP but of interest to those who like to know how things work. A story about the odd trade of barrel leasing found here. You'll have to scroll to Massive Barrel-Hire on the Brink story... [Read more here.](#)

Two of the important sheets that are included in the 2019 Rutgers Grape Recommendations are posted on the OCPVA website. The Grape Growth Stage Disease Chart, [Grape-Growth-Stage-Disease-Chart](#) and the FRAC Code Chart, [Frac-Code-Chart-Rutgers](#) can be found here. These are excellent charts and can be used all throughout the grape growing season.

An interesting article about soil composition, imbalances and management. [Read more here.](#)

Headaches caused by red wine and quercetin explained. What you can pass along to your customers for info. [Read more here.](#)

As dedicated vineyard folks, we'll do almost anything to see to it that the crop succeeds. Read about a man who did some unusual things to keep pace with his vineyard. [Read more here.](#)

When the intelligent take the initiative and see something that no others can see, great things can come to fruition. Read about how molecules extracted from grape trunks can be used to protect the very same plant. [Read more here.](#)

Long time wine educator Deborah Parker Wong introduces fresh ideas to entice the Gen Z population to wine drinking. Perhaps there are a few ideas that can be implemented in NJ. [Read more here.](#)

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**Mark Your Calendars!**

The **Terroir NJ Wine Showcase** will be happening again on **August 1, 2026!** The event brings together top NJ wines created from **100% NJ grape**. It will be veritable who's who in the wine world of judges from around the globe for this illustrious event.

[Read about last year's event here.](#)



**Rutgers** will host a demonstration of a laser weeder robot by **Carbon Robotics** on **May 13 at 10AM** at the **RAREC** site in **Bridgeton**. You'll be able to see first-hand what the possible future of weed control may look like in the vineyard. [Details here.](#)

## Growers vs Producers

The title would lead one to believe there is an adversarial relationship between growers and producers but this writing is to describe quite the opposite. As of late, many of us have been on both sides of this contract as the alcohol industry navigates the recent downturn in sentiment regarding consumption. Now, being from “both sides”, I can share what I have learned and what I can do better to be a good grower AND a good producer. Whether you are predominantly from one side of this equation or the other, there is one universal rule: be considerate. Here are some things you can do to improve grower/producer relationships and soften the chaos and frustration of harvest season.

The grower must consider the current conditions swirling about the winery at that time of year. Tank space restrictions, staffing issues, other fruit deliveries and equipment disappointments are all contributing factors affecting the wineries capacity to receive and/or process fruit. Be aware that schedules will change as unforeseen gremlins creep onto the crush pad or into a pump! Some things a grower can do to show consideration for the producer:

1. Provide timely and regular updates on fruit maturation. With this info in hand, a producer can keep notes on the calendar and see ahead for weeks a certain variety's progress and anticipate ripeness. Nothing instills ire more than a surprise call saying, 'hey your grapes are ready, come get them'.
2. Agree ahead of time what containers will be used to hold the fruit and who will provide the containers. We all have different ways and capabilities of processing fruit so it is important that all parties are on the same page. Imagine it is 3:00 PM, you've been at it since 5:00 AM, and some guy shows up with 3 tons of fruit in lugs as your rotator-equipped forklift sits silently waiting for a task! Ugh, I guess we will hand-load all this into the crusher starting now! Then we will wash 150 lugs instead of 6 macro bins...you get the picture.
3. Update the producer on the quality of the grapes. Don't be so proud that you can't be honest. We all know that things happen in the vineyard and sometimes the quality of the fruit suffers. If the producer knows ahead of time, some mitigation techniques can be employed to salvage at least a “blendable” outcome. Keep in mind the producer will likely need time to purchase amendments to add to the must or wine to do this.
4. Be dependable. Be certain you have all the hands you need to meet your commitment. Be certain your equipment is reliable. Start work early to finish work early. Exceed expectations.

The producer must consider the conditions in the vineyard at that time of year. The grower faces wet conditions, other violent weather events, insect and fungus pressure, staffing issues, other buyers' demands and equipment disappointments. (Note the similarities to the growers' considerations above.) Be aware that schedules will change as unforeseen gremlins creep into the tractor exhaust pipe or up a vine trunk. Here are some things you can do to show consideration to the grower.

1. Go see the grapes in the vineyard. Walk a few rows with the grower, taste a few berries and make personal notes on ripeness and fruit quality. You may feel you don't have time or 10 other reasons not to go but nothing solidifies a relationship faster than mutual interest. Remember Gemba? Go to the place where value is created and see.
2. Keep an eye on the weather in your grower's area. You can bet a hill of quarters that the grower is checking this. Use upcoming weather events to modify your in-house schedule ahead of the event and consult the grower proactively.
3. Be flexible. Growers who hand harvest cannot bring in a crew to pick only one ton of a variety. They must keep the crew for the day. Consider taking another variety alongside the target variety if it is only a day or two early. Consider bringing the crew to your farm to pick a variety. The grower will be thankful for the two-4-one. Growers who machine harvest will be equally grateful as the washing-out procedure for the machine is cumbersome and extensive.
4. Be dependable. Be certain you have all the hands you need to meet your commitment. Be certain your equipment is reliable. Start work early to finish work early. Exceed expectations.

Both growers and producers should consider using a contract. All the idiosyncrasies and details can be recorded and the game plan mapped out. It doesn't need to be a large document, just a few paragraphs spelling out what is important to each party. One may say that you are risking a relationship if you choose not to use a contract.

Take-aways are plentiful but the main one here is that we are all in the same industry, many times on the same team and always in the same boat! Working together to raise the quality and sustainability of NJ wine is the responsibility of all involved.

I guess I could have saved you about 15 minutes and just wrote The Golden Rule but that would not nearly have been as fun for me. It is, however, always true and righteous.

Examples above are pure fiction with a few originating in dreams the night before a big harvest day and embellished for entertainment.

**Mark**



Outer Coastal Plain Vineyard Association | PO Box 1118 | Mullica Hill, NJ 08062 US

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