College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

New Mexico Viticulture and Enology Newsletter

Viticulture and Enology | **https://viticulture.nmsu.edu/**

Cooperative Extension Service

October 14, 2026

Field Guide of Common Pests in New Mexico Vineyards

We're proud to announce the release of a field guide for common pests in New Mexico Vineyards. The guide is available for free as a webpage or a PDF. In the future we plan on offering a printed version at low cost. This guide contains useful information for grape growers on how to identify pests in a general sense (see right) and specifically (see the next two pages). This first guide focuses on the three most common insect pests we've encountered in New Mexico: Leafhoppers, the Western Grapevine Skeletonizer, and Flea Beetles. Future field guides will tackle pathogenic fungi and weeds.

Geraldine did about 90% of the work on this field guide so give her a pat on the back when you see her. Joanie King, the NMSU extension entomologist, was instrumental in verifying our insect inquiries. I contributed a few photos. We hope this field guide proves useful and would welcome any comments or suggestions.

Table 1. **Quick Start Guide**

Symptoms	Things to look out for	Implications and likely causes
Symptom pattern	Are symptoms uniform, scattered, or localized?	• **Uniform:** likely abiotic stress (water or nutrient limitations, adverse weather, etc.) • **Scattered or random:** often disease related. • **Localized to a specific canopy side or position:** sunburn, hail damage (only exposed side of clusters), or pest and disease related (only leaves, only fruit, etc.).
Symptom location	Where do symptoms appear first on the affected vine?	• **Buds or young shoots:** early-season pest, frost, or cold injury. • **Leaves:** most pests, diseases, nutrient issues, or herbicide damage. • **Clusters and berries:** diseases or sunburn. • **Shoot growth and shape:** trunk diseases, herbicide damage. • **Whole vine:** root or trunk diseases, severe stress issues (nutrient, water), frost or cold.
Timing and phenology	When did symptoms appear? Consider growth stage and recent events	• **Sudden (days):** frost, heat, or herbicide injury. • **Gradual (weeks):** water or nutrient issues. • **Late season (veraison and after):** viruses, diseases. Always consider recent events as well: irrigation changes, spraying, canopy management, etc.

Compare your symptoms with the photographs in the guide. Match your observations with guide sections. Use Field symptoms and Key identification features to confirm diagnosis and/or rule out look-alikes. Confirm with the NMSU plant diagnostic clinic if needed. Is the diagnosis uncertain?

Some problems, especially diseases and viruses, require laboratory testing for accurate identification. Collect samples and submit them to the NMSU Plant Diagnostic Clinic if confirmation is required for adequate management.

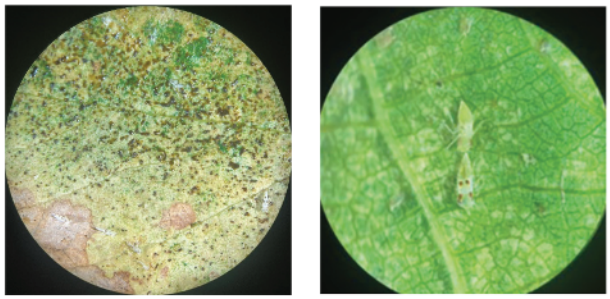


Figure 5. **Leafhopper feeding injury (left) and nymphs (right) under the microscope. Their presence, along with stippling damage and cast skins is a key diagnostic sign of grape leafhopper infestations.**



Figure 6. **Adult grape leafhopper. The characteristic wing coloration and body shape used for identification.**

Don't worry, there are many pretty pictures in the guide as seen to the left and on the next two pages. If you ever capture any neat photos feel free to pass them on and we'd be happy to give you credit.

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Figure 9. Eggs and early larval stages of western grapeleaf skeletonizer on underside of leaf (left) and instars showing distinct yellow and black bands skeletonizing a grapevine leaf.



Figure 10. Late instar larvae feeding on a leaf. Advanced feeding damage leaves only the vein framework, as opposed to earlier feeding signs that only scrapes the tissue creating that "windowpane" look (left) and adult western grapevine skeletonizer moth (*Harrisima metallica*, right).

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Figure 1. Mild (left) and severe (right) stippling damage caused by leafhoppers on grapevine leaves. Severe infestations result in larger chlorotic areas and leaf scorch.



Figure 2. Leafhopper frass on grape berries. Frass is usually a sign of pest presence.



Figure 3. Adult leaf hoppers in the underside of a grapevine leaf.



Figure 4. Leafhopper nymphs on the underside of a grapevine leaf.

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Post-Harvest

Except for perhaps the most northern of growing locations in the state, harvest wrapped up a few weeks ago--preferably before the rains began, though I did hear of at least one grower who waited until after the rain and had to contend with some bunch rots. Maybe you went on vacation as soon as the last grape was picked, maybe you're still on vacation, maybe you've never heard of this vacation thing. Regardless, the post harvest period brings with it some opportunities and challenges. Let's take a look.

In the vineyard: Post-harvest can be a great time for weed control. As plants prepare for the winter they consolidate all the work they did over the course of the season by transferring their carbohydrates to their storage organs (crowns, roots, trunks, etc.). This means that any systemic herbicides will be taken in by the plants and do maximum damage--this includes grapes so use a cover on your sprayer. Fall can also be a good time for dead vine counts, and scouting for viruses and other symptomatic pathogens (like Cotton Root Rot). To confirm a disorder (or at least winnow down the possibilities) send in your sample to the plant diagnostic clinic (see right). Irrigation must continue during this period, and to a lesser degree when the vines are fully dormant. In high pressure areas (read this as especially wet areas) a post-harvest fungicide application may make sense. This will cut down on the inoculum that follow you into next year. But one of the best things to do after harvest is to reflect on challenges and opportunities.

In the winery: (Next page)

NMSU Viticulture and Enology Team

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New Mexico State University Plant Diagnostic Clinic



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Post-Harvest (continued)

In the winery: In the cellar the work is just beginning when the last cluster comes off the vine. Unless you have an extended maceration all lots will have been pressed at this point. This is the point at which differing levels of risk mitigation in the winery will come into play. In the minimal intervention camp will be those that rack their wine off the gross lees generated in fermentation and are otherwise hands off. Most will want to rack and do some level of stabilization.

Preparing your wines for the long haul means protecting them from microbes and oxygen. The only anti-microbial and anti-oxidative used in winemaking is sulfur dioxide. Other products like chitosan or specialized tannins can play one role or the other but not both, and often not as effectively as so2. More on so2 in a future newsletter. Stabilizing can also entail fining, filtration, and the removal or prevention of tartrate crystals and protein hazes.

Keeping barrels topped off, and tanks gassed to prevent oxidation are also routine cellar tasks in this period. Ordering materials in advance and thinking about future blends are recommended. Reflection and re-evaluation of methods and materials are strongly recommended.





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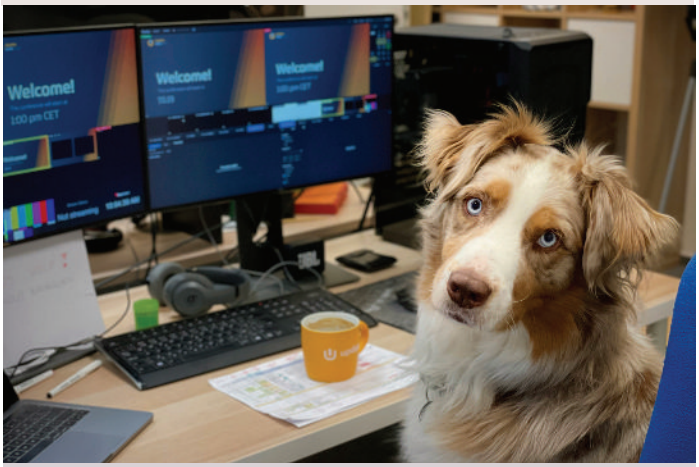
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Pumpkin patches in NY were never this green. Here's hoping you and your family have a great fall season full of ~~pumpkin lattes, candy corn, kids with too much sugar,~~ good memories.





Virtual Office Hours

Unless otherwise noted,
every Monday, 2-3pm.

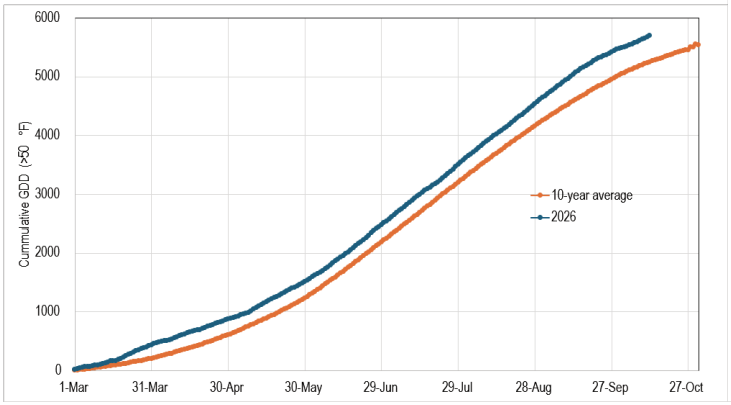
https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/82042824719
Or dial in, 253-215-8782.

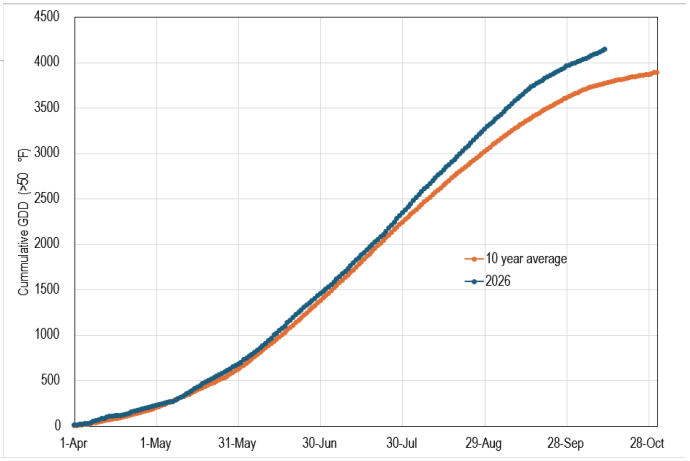
You're welcome to bring any and all questions, photos, epiphanies, etc.

Upcoming Events

- **10/?? or 11/?? Post-Harvest Get Together**
  - Place and date TBD. Get together with fellow grape growers and winemakers and discuss what went well this year, and what did not.

Growing Degree Day Comparison





Las Cruces, 3/1-10/12 Growing Degree Days

GDDs, 2026: 5702

GDDs, 10 year avg. : 5251

Rainfall 3/1-10/12/26: 10.19"

Rainfall 3/1-10/12/25: 5.22"

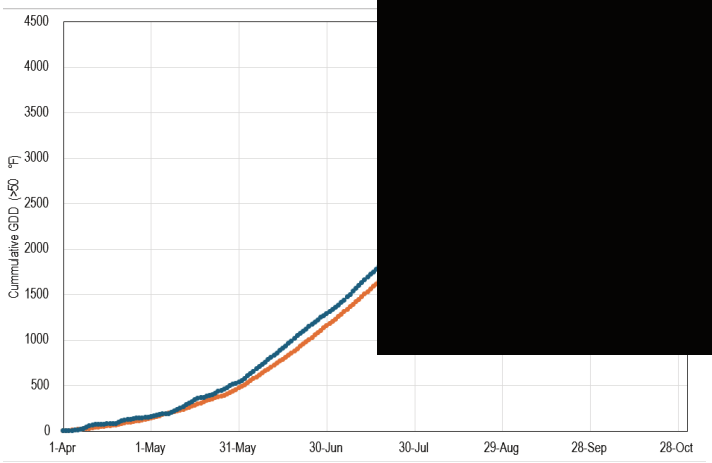
Los Lunas: 4/1-10/12 Growing Degree Days

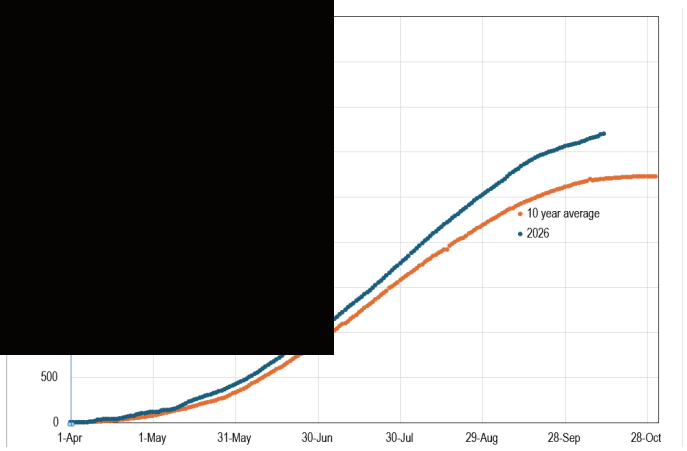
GDDs, 2026: 4143

GDDs, 10 year avg.: 3771

Rainfall 4/1-10/12/26: 6.32"

[redacted]5.18"





Farmington: 4/1-10/12 Growing Degree Days

GDDs, 2026: 3819

GDDs, 10 year avg.: 3422

Rainfall 4/1-10/12/26: 3.16"

Rainfall 4/1-10/12/25: 3.97"

Alcalde: 4/1-10/12 Growing Degree Days

GDDs, 2026: 3199

GDDs, 10 year avg.: 2700

Rainfall 4/1-10/12/26: 9.95"

Rainfall 4/1-10/12/25: 7.33"

These numbers were taken from ZiaMet, a state wide collection of weather stations. Do you know which station is the closest to your growing site? Take a look at: **weather.nmsu.edu/ziamet/**

