

MUSCADINE BREEDING
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Frequent rainfall this season reduced the need for supplemental irrigation. However, the recent drought years have brought water issues to the forefront in Georgia. In the future, statewide mandatory water-use restrictions are likely for agricultural as well as homeowner use. A downside of the frequent rains this season has been an increased incidence of fruit rots, especially where preventative treatments were less than adequate.

The cultivar demonstration vineyard at Tifton is in its fourth leaf this season. Fruit production in this vineyard is excellent with minimal loss to fruit rots. A field day in early August attracted many growers. This planting provides a demonstration of the suitability of cultivars for the Coastal Plain region of Georgia, which was not previously possible in a mass comparative planting. Similar plantings continue to be available at the Griffin location for evaluation of cultivars in the Piedmont region of the state. As they become available, more cultivars will be added to the plantings at both locations.

There was excellent fruit production in duplicate replicated plantings at Griffin (third leaf) and Tifton (second leaf). These plantings are already providing useful performance comparisons of breeding selections at the two locations. Because of continued shortage of field space, seedlings from the crossing program were again planted in large nursery pots and are being trained to close-spaced temporary trellises. Vines grow well in this system but there may be a delay in the initial rouging for male types and fruit traits since fewer plants flowered than expected from the second leaf seedlings. Further evaluation and fine-tuning of this system is needed.