

Harvesting the Muscadines



Kevin Do shows off the bucket of muscadines he picked.



A bunch of the muscadines catches the eye.



Anna Delgado takes a bite of a juicy muscadine.

The Mississippi Press
September 3, 2007



Hundreds swarm to first picking of the year

By **CHERIE WARD**

The Mississippi Press

VANCLEAVE — The

Boggy Creek Vineyards are just right for picking and families from all over carried away bucket loads of muscadines Sunday.

Dr. Jack Hoover is the owner of the 27-year-old family vineyard and said Saturday and Sunday was their best season-starting weekend yet.

"We had a magnificent opening," Hoover said. "We probably saw 350 people yesterday. And another 100 today."

The vineyard will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week until the muscadines are gone. Hoover said it usually takes about three weeks for every last muscadine to ripen and be picked. He expects the same this season.

The cost is 75 cents per pound.

The original vineyard was 5 acres, but Hoover said nearly 2 acres were lost in Hurricane Katrina.

"But, that's not stopping people from coming out here," Hoover said.

Muscadines are a grapevine species native to the Southeast. The plump berries range from bronze to nearly black in color when ripe and have a variety of uses.

"People come out here and pick the muscadines for everything from eating them right off the table to jellies and jams to wines," Hoover said. "The muscadine makes a sweet, dessert wine. We try to give out recipes to anyone who wants them. You can make a red or white wine."

Hoover said he has experienced people seeking the grapes for muscadine ice cream, cobbler and pie.

"The possibilities are endless," Hoover said.

Anna Delgado, Hoover's 6-year-old granddaughter, said her favorite way to eat muscadines is straight from the bucket and Kevin Do agreed.

The 6-year-old was picking muscadines with his family and said he'd eaten more than he'd thrown in the bucket.

Huyen Do, Kevin's grand-



Dr. Jack Hoover, owner of Boggy Creek Vineyards, weighs a bucket of muscadines for sale during the opening weekend of the vineyard's season.

Want to know more?

Call (228) 826-4308 for information about the Boggy Creek Vineyards. The vineyard is located at 11300 Paige Bayou Road in Vancleave.

mother said she, Kevin and about nine other family members travel from New Orleans each Labor Day weekend to pick the muscadines.

"We don't have these in New Orleans," Do said. "Our favorite way to eat this is from the refrigerator."

Amanda and Danny Bruhl of Ocean Springs were busy picking muscadines for their family members.

Amanda Bruhl said their children, Mandy, 12, and Alex, 8, love to just sit around and eat muscadines. She said also she'll share the berries with her mother and grandmother.

"My grandmother makes muscadine jelly and the kids love that too," Bruhl said.

Hoover also said he enjoys making muscadine season a family event and usually has help from his children and grandchildren.

Reporter Cherie Ward can be reached at cward@the-mississippi.com or (228) 934-1442.



Kell Tran bends low to pick some ripe muscadines during the season's opening weekend at Boggy Creek Vineyards in Vanleave.

“People come out here and pick the muscadines for everything from eating them right off the table to jellies and jams to wines. The muscadine makes a sweet, dessert wine. We try to give out recipes to anyone who wants them. You can make a red or white wine.”

— Dr. Jack Hoover, owner of Boggy Creek Vineyards

