





# Valdigué

## Synonyms

In California, Valdigué was misnamed and known as Napa Gamay (or simply Gamay) until 1980 when it was properly identified by Pierre Galet. Its identity has since been verified by DNA fingerprinting. It is still listed as Gamay in the California official acreage reports, but the above names are no longer allowed on wine labels. Some California wineries are now labeling the wine as Valdigué, the official name in France. However, Valdigué fruit still may be used in wines labeled Gamay Beaujolais until 2007. Synonyms in France include Valdiguer, Cahors, Gros Auxerrois, Jean-Pierrou at Sauzet, Quercy, and Noir de Chartres.

## Source

Valdigué's French origin is unclear due to conflicting claims of its first cultivation. It was first commercially propagated in 1874. Plantings became fairly widespread throughout southwestern France, largely because of its high yield and powdery mildew tolerance. It is still grown in Languedoc and Provence, but as a minor variety. In California the variety gained popularity during Prohibition because of its high productivity, with acreage scattered throughout Northern California after Repeal. Areas of later expansion included the Central Coast and Central Valley, as well as the North Coast. Following the wine grape planting boom of the 1970s, total plantings peaked at 6,118 total acres in 1977. Total acreage has since declined to below 1,000 acres.

## Description

**Clusters:** medium to large; long conical, well-filled to compact; medium-size peduncles.

**Berries:** medium to large; short oval; dark blue-black with white bloom.

**Leaves:** medium; mostly entire with shallow lateral sinuses; closed U-shaped petiolar sinus; short, sharp teeth; lower leaf surface with sparse, lightly tufted hair.

**Shoot tips:** felty white; young leaves yellowish and downy.

Vines are moderately weak in appearance, becoming gray-green to yellowed near harvest.

## Growth and Soil Adaptability

Vines are moderately vigorous to vigorous, unless depressed with heavy cropping. With moderate growth, shoots will remain upright and the canopy will spread with non-shoot-positioned vines. Vigorous vines will grow upright during the early season, but the shoots will trail by late season. Valdigué is suited to a fairly wide range of soil types. It is adapted to the warmer districts of the North and Central Coast. The vines leaf out fairly late, tending to escape early spring frosts.

## clusters

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## berries

*Medium to large; short oval; dark blue-black with white bloom.*

## Rootstocks

Vine vigor can be excessive with vigorous rootstocks. Therefore, moderately vigorous rootstocks such as SO4, Teleki 5C, 420A, 3309C, and 1616C are preferred unless soil fertility is limited.

## Clones

Registered clones in California are presently listed as Napa Gamay FPS 01, 02, and 03. FPS Napa Gamay selection 01 is from a California vineyard. It was heat treated to produce two additional registered selections: Napa Gamay 02 (heat treated 63 days) and Napa Gamay 03 (heat treated 102 days). None have been performance tested.

A selection is in the registration process at FPS from a Napa Valley heritage vineyard. There are no Valdiguié clones listed in the French official clonal registries.

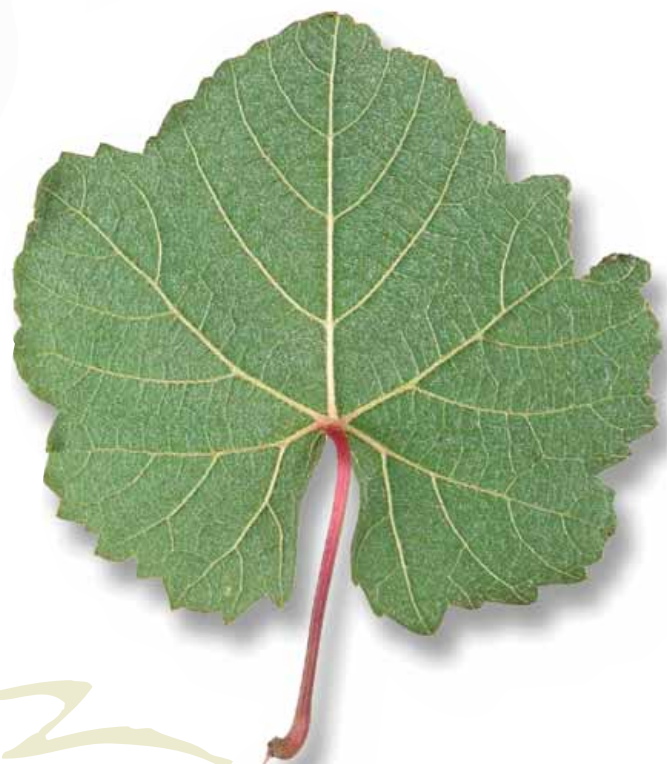
## Production

Vines produce 5 to 8 tons per acre. Its abundant and large clusters can easily contribute to overcropping, especially with young vines.

## Harvest

**Period:** A mid- to late-season variety, harvest occurs in mid-October to early November in the cooler districts (North and Central Coast) and in early to mid-October in warmer, interior districts.

**Method:** Hand harvest is easy due the grape's large clusters. The short and hard peduncles often require clippers for removal. Machine harvest with canopy shakers is medium, with fruit removed mostly as single berries. Juicing is medium. Trunk shaking is easy to medium, with fruit removed as cluster parts as well as single berries; juicing is light to medium.



## leaves

*Medium; mostly entire with shallow lateral sinuses; closed U-shaped petiolar sinus; short, sharp teeth; lower leaf surface with sparse, lightly tufted hair.*

## shoot tips

*Felty white; young leaves yellowish and downy.*



### Training and Pruning

Some older vineyards are head trained with spur pruning. Newer vineyards are bilateral cordon trained with 8 to 14 spurs per vine, depending on vine size. Cane pruning and quadrilateral cordon training are not recommended due to the vine's large clusters and tendency to overcrop.

### Trellising and Canopy Management

The upright growth makes the variety well adapted to vertical-shoot-positioned systems. However, the vigorous growth and large leaves may require shoot and leaf removal and canopy trimming.

### Insect and Disease Problems

Older vineyards are commonly infected with leafroll virus. Only certified planting stock should be used for new plantings. The variety shows a modest degree of tolerance to powdery mildew.

### Other Cultural Characteristics

Crop thinning may be necessary to avoid overcropping, especially in cooler districts where fruit ripening is late.

### Winery Use

Valdigué is used for the production of fruity red or rosé table wines under a varietal label. Fruit anthocyanin content is adequate for light- to medium-bodied red wines in coastal districts but may be insufficient in the Central Valley. "Nouveau" wines of Valdigué have used carbonic maceration, a fermentation method using uncrushed grapes in closed fermenters to produce light-bodied wines to be sold when young.

—L. Peter Christensen