



Photos by WILLIAM COLGIN/Correspondent

Anna Delgado picks some ripe muscadine grapes Friday off the vine at Boggy Creek Vineyard in Vancleave, owned by her grandfather, Jack Hoover. The vineyard opens to the public today.

# Pickin's good

## Boggy Creek opens today for muscadine harvesting

By BEVERLY TUSKAN

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**V**ANCLEAVE — Boggy Creek Vineyard opened this morning and muscadine grapes are ready for harvesting.

Owner Jack Hoover said he was expecting about 300 people today.

"Opening day is always the biggest crowd. People want to get in there and get whatever they want," Hoover said.

"Every year on opening day, there's a line of cars about a half-mile long on the main black top road waiting to get in."

Locals can come pick grapes for 90 cents per pound, from 7:30 a.m. until 6 p.m., seven days a week.

The vineyard will remain open for approximately two to three weeks.

Though buckets are available at the vineyard, pickers are encouraged to bring their own.

There are 32 rows of muscadines in a variety of bronzes and reds, including Regale reds, Ison, Summit, Magnolia and Carlos.

"We have a total of seven different varieties," Hoover said.

"The reds are more tart and better for red wines, jams and jellies. Because they're more tart, they're not as good eating off the table as fresh fruits," he



A bunch of ripe muscadine Summit grapes hangs from the vine at Boggy Creek Vineyard in Vancleave.

said.

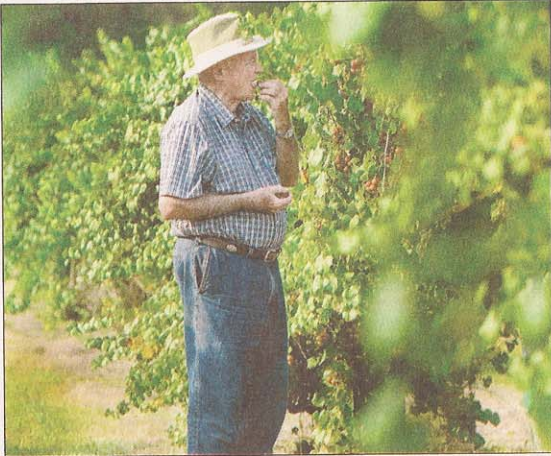
"The big bronze grapes are big and juicy and better for eating as fresh fruits. The Ison grapes are black and are really tasty," he said.

This year will be the first time signs will be posted to direct pickers to their favorite muscadines.

"We will have real nice signs in front of every row

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Left, Jack Hoover samples some of the grapes at his vineyard Friday as he gets Boggy Creek Vineyard ready to open to the public this Saturday.

Right, Anna Delgado takes a bite Friday from a ripe grape grown at her grandfather's vineyard.



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that will give the name of the grape and what it is good for," he said.

A trip to Boggy Creek has become a family tradition, Hoover said.

"The thing I enjoy the most is seeing the people enjoying themselves out on the farm picking delicious grapes. They're having fun, and it's a family affair," he said.

He pointed out some children have no idea where grapes come from or

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— Jack Hoover, owner of Boggy Creek Vineyard in Vanclave

have never seen a vineyard, so the experience offers a fun, hands-on lesson.

For the elderly, a golf cart is available.

"If they're trying to bring back 30 pounds of grapes, that's a lot. They can put the grapes and themselves

on the rear end of the golf cart and we'll bring them back to the checkout station," he said. "It's a lot of fun."

Hoover has been cultivating muscadines for 29 years.

His father chaired the

department of agronomy — the scientific study of agriculture — at Mississippi State University for many years.

"I had the property — 80 acres — and I wanted to put some kind of crop on the acreage that I would enjoy developing," Hoover said.

Under the direction of Mississippi State specialists, Hoover started his vineyard on 3 acres.

The vineyard is located at 11300 Paige Bayou Road.

## BOGGY CREEK VINEYARD

Boggy Creek Vineyard in Vanclave is now open. Here are the directions to get to the vineyard to pick your favorite muscadines:

**WHEN:** Open from 7:30 a.m. until 6 p.m., seven days a week. Will remain open for approximately three weeks.

**WHERE:** 11300 Paige Bayou Road, Vanclave.

**DIRECTIONS:** Go north on Miss. 57 through Vanclave, turn right at the second red light [New Potica Road] and go 1 mile. Turn right on Paige Bayou Road, at Red Barn and go 1.6 miles. The vineyard is on the left.

**COST:** 90 cents per pound

**INFO:** Call 228-283-0669.