

Ancient alcoholic beverage makes a comeback

By ALIYA HALL
Capital Press

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Brothers Nick and Phillip Lorenz make mead, a beverage with lots of history behind it. Mead is one of the oldest alcoholic beverages. It was widely popular in ancient Greece and during the Middle Ages, especially in northern European countries where grapevines didn't flourish. "On one hand, it's not new at all — it's the oldest alcohol, but it's new commercially," Nick Lorenz said. "Especially our style. It's a niche, but emerging marking. The opportunities are endless and it's just growing." The production of mead starts with fermenting honey in a tank with water, yeast and — depending on the brew — additional flavoring



Aliya Hall/Capital Press

Nick Lorenz and his brother Phillip make mead, an alcoholic drink that has honey in it. Ginger-honey is one of their most popular meads, along with a lemon-lime brew called "Nectorade." ingredients, such as berries. The mead is then filtered and carbonated in a tank before packaging. The process takes around

a month, Nick Lorenz said. At their company, Nectar Creek, the brothers produce session style mead, which refers to alcohol content, that ranges from 4 to 8 percent alcohol. Nick Lorenz describes the taste as light and similar to beer and cider. For mead with additional fruit flavors, the company picks flavors that pair well together, along with giving brewers freedom to experiment. Nick Lorenz said that ginger-honey is one of their most popular meads, along with their lemon-lime brew they called "Nectorade." Nectar Creek formed in 2012, but the brothers had the idea since high school to start a value-added agriculture business. "Selling strawberries is great, but strawberry jam is available all year round,"

Nick Lorenz said. Phillip Lorenz started home brewing before going to work at Queen Bee Honey Co. When the brothers first started Nectar Creek Phillip Lorenz kept bees, but eventually sold them to Queen Bee Honey Co. "It's too much," Nick Lorenz said. "Beekeeping is a whole separate business." Instead, Nectar Creek receives honey from local beekeepers and describe themselves as a "honey co-op." Nick Lorenz said that they try to add a new honey supplier each year. As the company has grown, the brothers have decided to double the size of their operation and expand into a new facility that can also work as a tap house, as well as a distillery. The facility is expected to increase

operational efficiency by 50 percent. Nick Lorenz hopes that the building will be done in November. The biggest struggle that the brothers have had is educating consumers about what mead is. "People in the beer industry know everything about beer and have never heard of mead," Nick Lorenz said. "Or they'll say, 'My uncle made mead in his basement and it was gross,' but they don't really know what it is." He described interactions with bar owners where it took multiple attempts and samples for the owners to even try the product. He said that even when the owners do like it, they aren't sure if they can make any money from it. He contrasts that with getting a new IPA in bars.

"A bar will just take it without trying it or even knowing if it's good or not," he said. Although Nick Lorenz knows there is still a lot of education to be done about mead, one of the most rewarding aspects for him is seeing customers' eyes light up after trying it. "It's the impact we have on people," he said. "The goals we have rests on our positive impact on the environment, people and community." Nectar Creek employs five workers, and Nick Lorenz said that the first time he wrote an employee's paycheck he knew "it was real." "The more mead we're making, the more people are drinking it and the more we can care for our employees," he said.

Table grape field day set for Sept. 13

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Promising table grape cultivars, not to mention tasty grape samples, will be on display and up for discussion during a field day at Oregon State University's North Willamette Research and Extension Center. The field day is Wednesday, Sept. 13, from 1 to 4:30 p.m. at NWREC, 15210 N.E. Miley Road, Aurora. Research Assistant Amanda Vance, who has spent the past three years evaluating cultivars, will talk about her findings. Oregon is known for its wine grapes, of course, but Vance believes there may be a table grape niche for small-scale growers who sell at farmers' markets or roadside stands. The grapes Vance found most promising include Neptune, a green grape from the University of Arkansas with

high yields year after year, and Canadice, a smaller red grape from Cornell University with good flavor and uniform clusters. Agricultural researchers often share cultivars among themselves for evaluation and OSU received several over the years from John Clark, a University of Arkansas plant breeder and horticulture professor. Clark will attend the field day and talk about his work. Vance has a viticulture background and volunteered to take on the OSU table grape research project. She'll discuss her work, and OSU berry crops professor Bernadine Strik will talk about grapevine morphology, physiology, trellising, pruning and training. Javier Fernandez-Salvador, an OSU Ph.D. candidate and an assistant professor, will talk about organic table grape production, including disease and weed control.



Courtesy Maine Extension Service

Canadice, a variety of table grapes, is one cultivar that will be featured at Oregon State University's North Willamette Research and Extension Center field day Sept. 13.



Aliya Hall/Capital Press

From left, Jordan Sinn, Earthlight's Oregon branch manager; Shaun George, Northwest Hazelnut co-owner; Polly Owen, manager of the Hazelnut Marketing Board; Kevin Cameron, Marion County commissioner; Barb Yates, Ferrero representative; Gov. Kate Brown; Rep. Rick Lewis, R-Silverton; and Larry George, Northwest Hazelnut co-owner, cut the ribbon on the company's solar array.

Hazelnut processor shifts to solar

By ALIYA HALL
Capital Press

HUBBARD, Ore. — Northwest Hazelnut Co. has completed the installation of a 435-kilowatt solar power system that offsets 100 percent of the electricity the processing plant uses. Company co-owner Larry George said the project, including the replacement of halogen lights in the facility with LEDs, ran up a bill of roughly \$1 million. With the energy savings and government incentives, however, George plans to offset the costs within five years. Northwest Hazelnut is part of a network of facilities that process the Oregon Hazelnut harvest, and has three sister processing plants, according to its website. As a result of going solar, Northwest Hazelnut expects to save \$1.6 million on its electricity bills over the next



Aliya Hall/Capital Press

The new solar array produces enough electricity to power the Northwest Hazelnut processing plant.

25 years, said Jordan Sinn, Oregon Earthlight branch manager. The panels should have a lifespan of over 40 years. The company partnered with Earthlight Technologies, a SunPower Elite Dealer, to install 1,000 of the 435-watt commercial panels. The 435-kilowatt system produces enough electricity to power about 40 average Oregon homes, David McClelland, senior program manager at Energy Trust of Oregon, said.

The cost of solar systems varies based on size and location, and state and federal incentives are available for some businesses, McClelland said. Northwest Hazelnut held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Sept. 1 at the processing facility. The ceremony was attended by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown. "It's a great step forward for sustainability," Brown said. "(Northwest Hazelnut) is leading the way and impacting the future. They're

setting an example for Oregon agriculture." Hazelnuts rank 11th in farmgate value among Oregon's agricultural commodities. Brown said she expects the rapidly expanding crop to shoot to fifth in the next couple of years. "Thanks for investing in Hubbard, Marion County and Oregon Agriculture," she said. "SunPower's reliable solar energy solutions coupled with Earthlight's commercial experience and local presence were strong reasons why we decided to move forward on the project. And knowing this is a long-term investment, the robust warranty and higher efficiency panels were extremely important to us," George said. Earthlight Technologies was founded in 2008 as a family-owned and -operated business. Since 2012 the company has installed over 2.5 megawatts of solar PV in both residential and commercial sites, and has over 50 employees at its Ellington, Conn., and Silverton, Ore., offices.

WESTERN PACKAGING

Your Future is Our Future...

WE SPECIALIZE IN BULK BAGS!

BAGS:

- Seed Bags
- Fertilizer Bags
- Feed Bags
- Potato Bags
- Printed Bags
- Plain Bags
- Bulk Bags
- Totes
- Woven Polypropylene
- Bopp
- Polyethylene
- Pocket Bags
- Roll Stock & More!

HAY PRESS SUPPORT:

- Hay Sleeves
- Strap
- Totes
- Printed or Plain
- Stretch Film (ALL GAUGES)

WAREHOUSE PACKAGING:

- Stretch Film
- Pallet Sheets
- Pallet Covers

LOCATIONS:

Albany, Oregon (MAIN OFFICE)
Ellensburg, Washington

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Phone: 855-928-3856
Fax: 541-497-6262
info@westernpackaging.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE IS OUR TOP PRIORITY!

www.westernpackaging.com

36-2/100

RESERVE YOUR SPACE NOW

SAVE 20%

2018 NW AG SHOW

PORTLAND EXPO CENTER
JANUARY 30 - FEBRUARY 1

Sign up before Oct. 31, 2017 and Save 20% off your advertising in the 2018 NW Ag Show Guide, the Official Program for the show.

To take advantage of this offer, contact your sales consultant or call 800-882-6789.

Capital Ag Press
The West's Ag Weekly

*20% discount will be taken off your total buy in the 2018 NW Ag Show Guide. Discount must be applied before your advertising publishes and cannot be combined with any other offer. Discount cannot be applied to previous advertising run in association with the show. Offer expires 10/31/17.

ADP-36-8-W/100