Muscadine Grape (*Vitis rotundifolia* Michx.)

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9/7/2026

The muscadine grape is a native vine found in many habitats, including bottomlands, creeks, rivers, fences, mature forests, and even roadsides. It can climb along a support, but it can also creep along the ground and form a ground cover. It is deciduous, with medium-green leaves that turn bright gold in autumn.

This vine grows well in high humidity and tolerates pests and diseases. These are dioecious plants with male and female flowers on different plants. From July through September, they bear a small, loose cluster of grapes, typically 3-40 grapes. The fruits have thick, tough skin and contain up to 5 hard, oblong seeds.



Photo by Nancy Stephenson

Deer eat both grapes and vines, and the fruit provides a vital food source for many wildlife species, including game birds and songbirds, especially during migration seasons, highlighting its ecological significance.

In addition, this vine is a host plant for the Nessus and Mournful sphinx moths.

If you are lucky enough to collect some of the grapes, you can make jellies and jams from them, giving you a rewarding way to enjoy your harvest and connect with nature.

References:

Wildlife Resources Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

University of Florida 4-H Forest Ecology

Mississippi State Extension Service