

Anegada Sea Grapes

by Stephanie Faulkner (age 15)

Anegada sea grapes have a big history from all the way back. They are only grown in warm climates and there are two kinds: purple and white.

In Anegada there were much larger trees, but boat-builders cut them to make timber for building boats, and burning charcoal to be shipped to the United States Virgin Islands. The trees blossom twice a year and bear much fruit if the year is very rainy.

Long ago families found it much fun to go to the beaches to pick grapes. There were no vehicles. They were picked in buckets and boxes and brought home on their heads. They were then shipped to Tortola and St. Thomas.

The over-ripe grapes are very soft. The seeds are squeezed, and the juice sweetened with sugar. It is then strained and boiled until it thickens. It is then cooled before it is placed in jars for sale.

Many people in Anegada make sea grape wine throughout the year so they can use it at Christmas time. These sea grapes are characterized by a juicy layer between the skin and pulp of the fruit, which permits easy removal of the skin.

When making wine the grapes are put in a big bottle and steeped in gold Mount Gay Rum for weeks. Syrup is boiled from brown sugar and stick spice and it is then poured into the same bottle that is how we get grape wine.

Anegada sea grapes were one of the chief sources the families obtain money to help with home expense. Sea grapes are also recommended to people who suffer with low blood. Sea grapes build your blood very rapidly.

These trees are mostly found around the beaches where they are a big attraction. People usually pick and eat the sea grapes when they go to the beach. These grapes are not only found at the beaches. Some people plant the grapes in their yards so they can enjoy the grapes when they want.