vinetur

350,000 Heritage Grape Grafts Sold as French Network Marks 25 Years of Preserving Vine Diversity

CTNSP celebrates milestone with surge in conservation efforts, new grape varieties and expanded genetic resources for future challenges

Wednesday, December 3, 2025



The French National Technical Committee for Plant Selection (CTNSP), a network of 40 organizations dedicated to grapevine selection, marked its 25th anniversary this year. Since its creation in 2000, the CTNSP has played a central role in preserving and enhancing the genetic resources of grapevines across France. The group celebrated its milestone during a press event at the Sitevi agricultural trade show in Montpellier on November 25.

Over the past quarter-century, the CTNSP has overseen significant achievements in grapevine conservation. The network's work has led to the official registration of 45 heritage grape varieties in the national catalog and the approval of 323 clones. In addition, more than 90 new conservatories have been established, bringing the total number of conservatories to 189. These conservatories serve as living repositories for grapevine diversity, safeguarding both well-known and rare varieties.

The CTNSP's mission extends beyond preservation. The network also focuses on innovation and adaptation, responding to challenges such as climate change and emerging diseases. This year, three new varieties were added to the national catalog: Artys, a disease-resistant variety; Négret de la Canourgue; and Magdeleine Noire des Charentes, both considered heritage grapes. According to Sébastien Julliard, president of the CTNSP, Magdeleine Noire is valued not for widespread cultivation but for its early ripening and notable tolerance to flavescence dorée, a serious vine disease. Its inclusion in the catalog aims to preserve valuable genetic traits for future breeding programs.

The network's partners conduct regular field surveys in vineyards across France to identify old vines and rare varieties that may be better suited to modern challenges. In 2025, these surveys took place in regions including Charentes, Corsica, Gironde, Dordogne, Saône-et-Loire, Savoie, Aude, Aveyron, Beaujolais and Jura. The goal is to maintain intravarietal diversity and find individual vines with greater resistance to drought and disease.

In Bordeaux, experts explored old vineyards searching for secondary grape varieties. They rediscovered types such as Pardotte, Grappu (also known as Bouchalès), Saint-Macaire and Béquignol, along with previously unidentified plants like Chaudefonds. In

Charentes, surveys uncovered remnants of ancient vineyards from Meschers-sur-Gironde and wild populations of Vitis vinifera sylvestris—the wild ancestor of cultivated grapevines. Sébastien Julliard also reported finding an old nursery of American rootstock vines in a low-lying area, which could contribute material for future conservatories.

The CTNSP’s efforts are not limited to research and conservation. For the first time this year, the network’s partners sold 350,000 grafts under a new “heritage diversity” program. The most popular varieties among buyers were Gamay, Grenache, Pinot Noir and Meunier. Léa Garcin, coordinator of the network, said that more partners will join this initiative in 2026, increasing the availability of diverse planting material.

As French vineyards face mounting pressures from environmental change and disease threats, the work of the CTNSP highlights the importance of genetic diversity in ensuring the resilience and future success of viticulture. The network’s collaborative approach brings together public institutions, research centers and private stakeholders in a unique effort to protect one of France’s most valuable agricultural resources.