

What happened to my grapevine??

Every fall I wait for the grapevines by the garden to change into brilliant fall colors. Years ago, I planted two small grapes on either side of the gate to the garden. Over time, they have grown up over the rebar arch and have made a lovely shaded entrance.



During the summer, the vines are thick with grapes. Last summer, I thought I would be all Martha Stewart-y and cut the grapes and do something lovely with them. I'm sure the wind was blowing through my hair as I sort of skipped to the garden :). As I was poised to cut a large cluster of grapes, a swarm of bees flew out into my face, and stung me on the nose. If you've ever been stung on the nose before, it's quite the experience. I started uncontrollably sneezing, my eyes were watering so much that I could hardly see to stumble away and

get into the house. My nose got rather large and I looked like Jimmy Durante for a few days. The children thought it was funny. So much for my Martha Stewart moment. So, the grapes now stay on the vine.



Last week I went out to the garden and was completely shocked because the grape vine looked completely dead!



Upon closer inspection, I found hundreds of black and yellow caterpillars. They had eaten all the green parts of the

leaves and left the veins only.



Reluctantly, I hand picked off the bugs and filled a big

plastic cup with the little boogers. They are called the Western Grape Skeletonizer and the caterpillars line up and feed in groups, creating a net-like appearance. Gross. These are the larvae to the adult moth, which is blue-black and about 1/2" long. The adults produce masses of yellow eggs in early May. I must remember to look for these next spring and destroy any I see.

So, no fall colors from the grapevines this year ☹ Thankfully I have a picture from the previous year...



Mary