

A Rye Note

Artisan bakers in California have been asking in vain for California grown rye. Finally, I've learned what's up! Rye is basically a winter habit grain; the spring habit types are rare and not nearly so productive as the winter habit types. Added to this it is hard to keep the two separated here in California, because we can grow both winter and spring habit types in many areas. And since rye cross pollinates, if the spring type wins, then the crop tends to be disappointing.

So, I'd say perhaps we can take a careful look at **triticale**, the modern cross between rye and wheat. Triticale produces a really head turning crop compared with rye in California. To date, it's been grown for feed and avoided for bread, presumably because it could not be expected to make up into a successful refined flour bread. However, the traditional norm for rye breads is to use *whole* rye grains and *whole* rye flour. Surely, we should be able to make whole grain triticale breads in the style of whole rye bread.

The caveat is to find the variety of triticale that is available and appropriate both to the farmer and to the baker.