



GRAPE VINE GROWING GUIDE

Congratulations on becoming an owner of a new grapevine!

Below is a quick start guide to getting your vine established as well as some tips for how to avoid common problems. More information is available at fourwindsgrowers.com. Now that you have unpacked your tree, be sure to remove the plastic bag that keeps the soil in place during shipping.

Location:

Grapes are highly adaptable and easy to grow! Plant in full sun, in the hottest part of your yard. Avoid areas shaded by trees or shrubs. Site selection is very important since grapes are a long-lived plant, requiring up to six years of growth from the time of planting to reach maximum harvest potential. Grapes could remain productive for up to 100 years if the site selected meets its needs.

Choose the sunniest planting location possible. A South or southwesterly slope is ideal, as it will be warmer, reducing the risk of injury from spring frosts. North-South oriented rows provide better and more even exposure of leaves and fruit to sunlight than East-West aligned rows. Grapes grow well on a variety of soils, but they will not tolerate poor drainage.

Planting:

Once you have chosen the perfect spot in your yard for your grapevines, you will want to assess your soil quality. Dig a hole about twice the size of the current root mass. We recommend digging a hole in a slight cone shape as this will make it easier for you to backfill when you are ready. If planting in hardpan soils or soils heavy in clay you should use amendments such as potting soil, mulch, and/or perlite to help increase drainage. Avoid adding fertilizers to the planting hole as we will top dress with fertilizer later.

Watering:

Young plants need sufficient irrigation to maintain growth, without staying overly wet. Once established, mature grapevines are relatively easy to care for. Grapes may need

supplemental watering in areas of low annual rainfall. A good rule of thumb to follow here is to water only once the top few inches of soil have dried out. This will prevent overwatering which can cause root damage.

Pruning:

Pruning is important for grapes. It creates a balance between vegetative and fruit-producing growth, to enable healthy harvests of quality fruit. Grapevines should be pruned when dormant, between January and March.

Start with the basics and remove all the dead, damaged, or diseased wood. Next, you can remove any suckers that are growing up from the ground level as well as any other shoots along the main trunk that you do not plan to train along your trellis/fence/arbor.

There are two methods generally used are spur pruning and cane pruning. Properly pruning grapevines involves the removal of 75-95% of the previous season's growth leaving 2-3 buds at the base of each spur so that canes can regrow and replace the previous year's growth.

Fertilizing:

Grapes should be fertilized very lightly, if at all, in spring because too much feeding will compromise fruit production. Amending the soil with well-composted manure or compost is fine, but avoid heavy mulching, which can delay the maturation of the fruit.

Mulch:

This is the one plant where mulch can have a negative effect on the crop. The insulative properties of the mulch layer work against the grapevine's preference for having warmer roots by keeping them cooler in the summer.

Pests & Diseases:

With fruit as tasty as grapes, can you blame the local wildlife for being interested? Everything from small critters raccoons to birds and larger pests like deer will try to take their share. The use of fencing and netting to protect their crop when it's near harvest time should be more than enough to take care of most large pests. Powdery mildew can become an issue in more humid climates so avoid watering the foliage and only water once the top few inches of soil have had a chance to dry out.