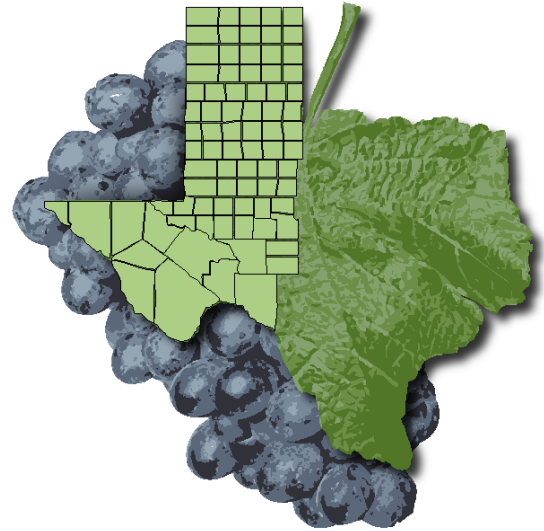


Vitis
High Plains and West
Texas Vineyard News



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Post Harvest Vineyard Care

Early mornings, late nights, cloud watching and worry, are all signs that harvest has ramped up across the region. With the completion of harvest many growers take the opportunity to step back and reflect on the season that was. However, the work is not over yet, there are still tasks that should be completed to help insure that the vineyard goes into dormancy as healthy as possible.

Now is the time to begin looking to the next season and the planning begins with making certain that your vineyard is happy and healthy. To that goal there are several things that should be considered as you “put your vineyard to bed.”

Disease

Disease can still be an issue even though there is no longer any fruit hanging. Powdery Mildew can be a serious menace throughout the

High Plains and West Texas. As both day and night temperatures begin to moderate and the fall rains (hopefully) start, conditions for Powdery Mildew are perfect. Powdery Mildew thrives at temperatures between 68° - 77°F for extended periods. These temperatures characterize the typical night temperatures that have been experienced across the region for the past couple of weeks. Based on past seasons, the region will likely experience temperatures within this range for the next several weeks as well. Because of this and the heavy dews that are also common, now is the time to make certain that you don't become lax in your spray program.

The choice of fungicides is still important even though harvest is over. Fungicide rotation must be maintained to reduce the potential for resistance. There is always the potential that a product that is continuously relied upon to manage Powdery Mildew can become ineffective due to over use. Sulfur and Stylet Oil are good choices at this time of year because temperatures are more moderate and the risk of foliar burn is lower. These products are also relatively inexpensive and have little risk of resistance development by Powdery Mildew.

While disease control is an important factor in making sure that your vines ease into a healthy dormancy, it is not the only thing to consider. With the conditions that have been experienced across much of the region this summer insects have been a major concern as well.

Insects

Leafhopper damage has been significant throughout the region.



Figure 1 Leafhopper in a vineyard on the High Plains

Leafhoppers have been especially severe in vineyards that have not had applications of imidicloprid applied through the irrigation system. Vineyards that applied imidicloprid through irrigation systems have been able to visually reduce or even eliminate foliar damage caused by these tiny pests better than those vineyards that relied on multiple applications of foliar applied insecticides throughout the season.

Leafhoppers damage leaves by feeding on cells and emptying cell content, characterized by white specs on the leaves. If severe, this damage reduces the photosynthetic ability of the leaves. In severe cases the leaves will appear white. Once the damage has occurred it will not heal and the damage will remain until the leaves drop in the fall.



Figure 2 Leafhopper damage to leaves in a High Plains vineyard this season

This is an important time in the vineyard as vines continue to build and store carbohydrates for over wintering and bud break next season. With the fruit load that some of the vines in the area carried this season, much of what was produced prior to harvest went into fruit development and maturation. It is important that the foliage remains healthy and active as long as possible to ensure that carbohydrate production continues.

Fertilization

The next consideration for post harvest is the application of nitrogen. As the vines prepare for dormancy the application of a small amount of nitrogen (2-3 gallons of either 32-0-0 or 28-0-0-5 per acre) can be a good idea. This application will allow the vine to produce carbohydrates and store them in the roots for next season.

Some varieties in this region do not seem to like going dormant so be careful not to over fertilize your vineyard. The objective is just to make sure the vines are not lacking in nutrients, not to encourage vegetative growth. This is an instance where you should look at your results from petiole sample and soil sample analyses and review what has been applied in the past two seasons.

Extension advises taking petiole samples every season whereas soil samples should be taken every couple of years. Don't rely on a soil sample from 5-10 years ago. If you have not taken a soil sample in the past 2-5 years it would be a good idea to take one. There are several places that you can have both soil and tissue samples analyzed. Texas A&M offers this service for a nominal

fee. More information can be found at: <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/>

Weed Control

Post harvest is also a good time to look at weed control and soil erosion protection. Applications of herbicides in the vine row are easier when the vines have been hedged for harvest. Applications of glyphosate as a spot treatment to Bermuda grass, Johnsongrass and Silverleaf Nightshade are most effective in the fall. The weeds are also storing carbohydrates in the roots for the upcoming winter, making systemic herbicides more effective in controlling these hard to kill weeds. Exercise caution whenever applying a systemic herbicide to limit drift.

Cover Crops

This is also a good time to get your winter cover crops planted. Planting either wheat or rye at this time allows the cover crop to make use of any fall rains that come. It is important to try to get the most out of any moisture that comes and getting your cover crop off to a good start is vital to preventing soil erosion due to winter and spring winds.



Figure 3 Quality cover like this is only possible if it is planted early in the fall

Wind erosion is not the only type of erosion that cover crops prevent. Even in the semi-arid desert climate that dominates the region, water erosion can be a problem. With a healthy cover crop you can preserve your vineyards topsoil when the average rainfall comes in just one or two rain events.

This season has been hard and long but don't drop your guard. Only by remaining vigilant can you stay on top of the potential problems in your vineyard. Remember that much of what you want to get **out** of your vineyard next year continues to be influenced by what you put **into** your vineyard this year.

Meet the Variety: Tempranillo

This is a new feature for "Vitis". In this feature I will highlight a variety that is being grown in the

state. I will primarily focus on the varieties that are grown in this region but from time to time I will ask one of my fellow Viticulture Advisors to review something that is not grown here. I hope you enjoy it.

Tempranillo

Tempranillo has its roots in the rocky soils of Spain. It is characterized by its very dark berries that border on black. The earliest known reference to Tempranillo was in the 13th century by the poet Alejandro. Tempranillo arrived in California in 1905. Production at that time was limited as it did not grow well.



Figure 4 Mid Season High Plains Tempranillo

Abacela Vineyard and Winery in Oregon began to popularize the variety in the mid 1990's. At that point no other winery in the states produced a varietal Tempranillo.

Texas now has a number of wineries that are producing award winning Tempranillo wines. Lone Oak Winery in Burleson and Inwood Estates are just two of the wineries that have begun to show the potential of this grape in Texas. The last estimation shows about 20 wineries producing a Tempranillo wine.

Tempranillo has loose clusters and thick skin that helps to prevent rot. However, it seems to be prone to Powdery Mildew and must be treated for this disease on the High Plains even on dry years. Tempranillo has shown to be relatively easy to train and establish in spite of its relatively soft wood. However, care must be taken during harvest to protect the vines from damage by mechanical harvesters.

Literature states that Tempranillo roots are very adept at taking up potassium from the soil. It is speculated that this could possibly be the cause of high pH must in the winery. The high pH of Tempranillo must appears to be a common trait of the variety

regardless of where it is grown as pH's from California, Texas High Plains and the Texas Hill Country showed only slight differences in pH.



Figure 5 Tempranillo has very large leaves that can sometimes measure 7" across

Yields have been good throughout the High Plains even over the past couple of tough seasons. Tempranillo appears to be very fruitful even on secondary buds. This has led to relatively large plantings over the past several years as acreage has grown to almost 60 acres on the High Plains alone. Growers continue to consider planting this variety.

The popularity of Texas Tempranillo wines are still somewhat in doubt as the variety seems to sell well out of the tasting rooms but there has been relatively little distribution into stores. This year has seen the largest Tempranillo crop ever harvested in the state. The size of the crop should result in more

Texas Tempranillo than ever reaching consumers.

Upcoming Events:

Prospective Grower Workshops

October 12

Pittsburg, Texas

Instructor – Fran Pontasch

November 18

Fredericksburg, Texas

Instructor – Penny Adams

Fee \$125 or \$200 per couple

Lunch is Provided

Register online:

<http://agrilifeevents.tamu.edu>

Grape Camp

November 7 & 8

Lady Bird Johnson - Municipal Park

Fredericksburg, Texas

Registration and complete agenda available at:

<http://www.txwines.org/grapecamp/default.asp>

Or

(817)424-0570

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