

SUCCESSFUL GRAPE GARDENING

Grapes can be eaten fresh, dried, or converted into juice or wine. One plant can produce a heavy crop of fruit for at least a lifetime!

Environmental Requirements:

Light:

Grapes need an abundance of sun and heat to grow and produce well. In the Northwest plant in a heat trap... against a building, or fence, mulch with black plastic.

Soil:

Grapes thrive in any type of soil as long as it drains well. Very rich soil tends to produce excessive foliage and smaller tart fruit.

Water:

Once the young plant's roots are established, grapes are quite drought tolerant and require minimal watering.

Space:

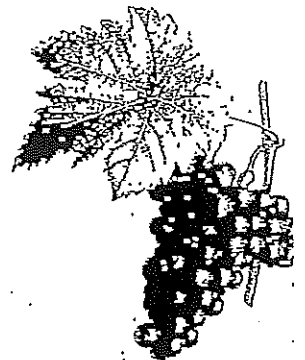
Grapes require strong support for their vigorous vines. It is important that the posts with support the trellis wires or arbor be strong and well-set.

Planting Grapes: Space plants 8-10 apart in rows.
Place a post between each plant

1. Remove all weeds from row.
2. dig a hole 18- 24" deep, work in organic matter, spread the roots comfortably and backfill with soil ½ way. Press out air pockets
3. Fill hole with water and backfill with rest of soil, press out air pockets
4. Mulch with bark or straw

Diseases and Pests:

Home garden grapes rarely have many problems, but preventive spraying with a fungicide, thoughtful pruning, weeding the bed and protecting your crop from marauding birds should take care of most concerns.



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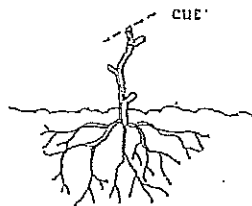
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Pruning Grapes: The Kniffen System

Pruning is probably the most important part of grape culture. Because grapes are such vigorous growers, a lot of wood must be cut away each year.

First Year:

After planting, cut back the new vine so it is only 5-6 inches long and contains 2 or 3 fat buds.



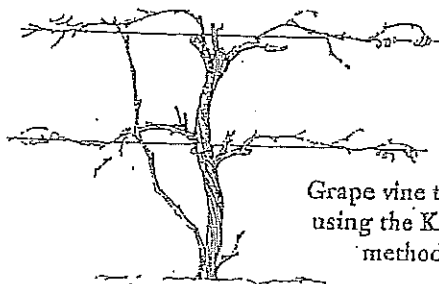
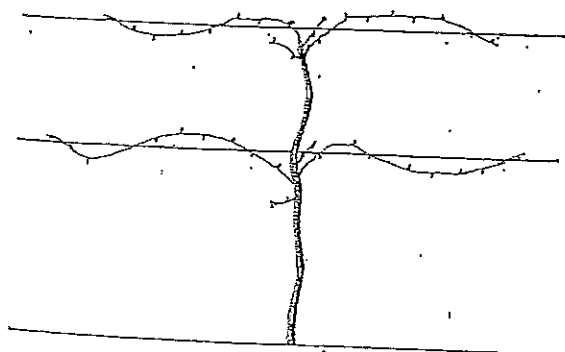
Second Year:

- Very early spring, before buds start to swell, cut them back to a single stem with no branches. This will encourage more vigor.
- During the year allow four side branches to grow, two in each direction, and train them along the wires. Pinch off all other buds that are inclined to grow in other directions. These first vines should then bloom and produce a few grapes the 3rd year.

Third Year:

- During the year, four more canes (only) should be allowed to grow from buds along the main stem. These should parallel and eventually replace the first four.
- During late winter following the 3rd year, cut out the old canes that produced and tie up the new ones to the wires to replace them. Trim off all excess growth except the 4 new canes.

Pruned this way, the mature vine should produce from 12 to 15 pounds of grapes. With this renewing process, your grape should go on producing for 50 years or longer.



Grape vine trained
using the Kniffen
method.