

Anything more or less than this is wrong, and checks the vine, or worse still, limits the potential of the vineyard. This is especially important in drier areas, or on soils with poor water holding capacity, such as sands and gravels.



Misty Valley's standard vines have a longer rootstock than the vines of most other nurseries. This gives you the option of planting the vines deeper in droughty soils.



If the soil is dry at the time of planting, a watering that wets the root zone is essential immediately after planting, regardless of the time of year.

Whether machine or hand planted, the soil that goes back in the hole around the roots should be of a fine tilth, there must not be air pockets in the root zone. It is very important to firm the soil back around the roots to exclude air pockets. The major causes of vine failure in New

Zealands' drier areas or areas with heavy soils are as follows:

- Vines planted too shallow
- Planting too late under hot dry conditions
- Planting into cloddy soils ridden with air pockets.

Practical Tip

The best establishment comes when vine roots are re-trimmed immediately prior to planting. Each freshly cut root tip will generate multiple roots for maximum soil exploration in the first year of growth. Did you realize that the feeding roots the vine starts with in it's first year of life are the only major roots it has for the rest of it's life? (This operation is not necessary when the vines are planted straight from the nursery without coolstorage).

Patchy growth or outright failure in the first year can almost always be linked to poor site preparation, the presence of weeds, or excess wind, or the failure of the vines to find sufficient water.

For all of these problems there are remedies available. I encourage you to think it all through before any of them become a problem.

Practical Tip

If experience indicates that vines are unlikely to produce a crop in the second vintage after planting, then training of the vine in that first season is a waste of time and it should be left to "bush out" for its first season of growth, prior to two budding the following winter.

Use of plant guards has become almost standard practice in windy areas. I'll make some comments about these in the next issue. In the meantime please consider the following:

I have seen numerous instances in recent years of plant guards creating a perfect environment for slugs, snails and the greasy cut worm. If your vineyard has come out of pasture. Use a small dose of metaldehyde bait pills either immediately after planting or at the very first sign of bud movement.

One to two applications will give sufficient control for the growing season.

The Take Home Message.

If you want your vineyard to perform at its potential:

Plant every vine with care and attention to detail.

This means

1. Retrim the roots if vines have been coolstored.
2. The graft union 100 - 150mm above the soil surface.
3. Roots horizontal and soil firmed.
4. Water immediately if dry.
5. Remember the 4 Ws

Rex.



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Call Rex Sunde or Gillian Howard to discuss your requirements

Ph 09 838 7979 Fax 09 838 7509

or email vitis@clear.net.nz

Freephone 0800 444 614