



REX'S PRACTICAL TIPS #20

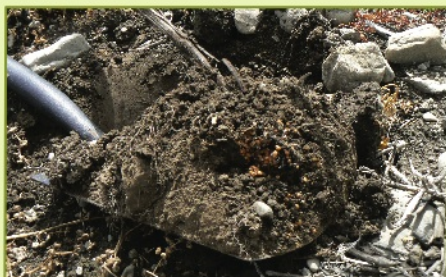
THREE SNIPPETS

Read the Bloody Instructions

Every year we have one or two growers who come back to us with significant failures after using inorganic fertilisers in the planting hole. In every instance, we discover that they have not followed the very clear use instructions when planting.

Don't blame the products, it's the way that you use them that causes the problem. We have found that this most commonly arises with Agroblen. This product can be placed in the planting hole but there must be a decent separation between the fertiliser and the vine roots. Good irrigation and drainage are also essential if you must use inorganic fertilisers in the planting hole. Frankly, I'd rather you didn't!

If you use any inorganic fertiliser in the planting hole, read the label FIRST and follow the use instructions carefully.



Vine failed to grow due to inorganic fertiliser in direct contact with roots.

Vernalisation

Those of you who attended Bragato conference may have heard Dr Jim Salinger of NIWA talking about climate change and the issue of global warming in relation to vernalisation.

What did he mean?

Vernalisation is the process of releasing dormancy. Primary buds on grape vines reach their maximum dormancy in Autumn, around the time of leaf fall. Winter chilling gradually releases this dormancy so that by late winter the buds are at their least dormant and are ready to grow rapidly once the daily mean maximum temperature exceeds 10°C.

In referring to vernalisation, Dr Salinger was expressing concern that our more Northern districts may in future suffer from poor bud burst due to a lack of winter chilling.

It turns out that a number of Northland growers have reported poor bud burst after a rather mild winter. After discussing vineyard management with these folk, it seems our warmer districts are starting to suffer from inadequate winter chilling (vernalisation). There is no cause for alarm, but it's clear that we are already, by degrees, having to modify our vineyard practices and seek

solutions to new problems as a result of climate change.

Copper and Aromatics

There have been questions asked about the warning in the export spray programme, not to use Copper on aromatic varieties post flowering.

The French have long recognised three wonderful properties of Copper. It's a great fungicide, bactericide and deodorant! It's the deodorant properties that the warning refers to, particularly in relation to Sauvignon blanc. Copper can bind irreversibly to aroma precursor compounds with remarkable deodorising effect. It seems that the closer to harvest Copper is used, the greater the effect. This effect is also seen in other aromatic varieties, including reds.

On the positive side, the Copper deodorising effect can be used to great advantage with under ripe Cabernet sauvignon that's suffering from green methoxypyrazine aroma. A spray of Copper prior to harvest in cooler years is an effective deodorant.

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