



**REX'S PRACTICAL TIPS #22**

**Novel uses for Latex Gloves,  
Silicon and CRC**

**One of the perennial problems we have faced in our business is the protection of mother vines from wood borne fungal disorders after pruning cuts are made. Of course this is not just a problem for the nursery industry.**

Diseases of the permanent parts of the vine contribute to the relatively low age of NZ vineyards.

As it is pruning time, I would like to share with you some of my thoughts.

Way back in 1996 a very interesting paper was written by A G Spiers and D T Brewster. They were researching prevention of silverleaf infection in willows, apples and peaches, and came up with some interesting observations. It so happens that the causal organism of silverleaf in the above species is very similar to the organism that causes Eutypa in the vitis vinifera.

But this is not an article about Eutypa. The message here is more general, and it's aimed at preventing all forms of infection of fresh pruning wounds. Believe me, there's lots of nasties out there just waiting for you to let them in on a fresh wound.

Spiers & Brewster's rather long paper, published in the New Zealand Journal of Crop and Horticultural Science (1997 Vol 25 ppg 19-31) made an enlightened observation. I quote: "An effective wound dressing may not necessarily preclude (silverleaf) but enable the host to form a resistant response and prevent extensive infection." What they were

alluding to is the importance of sealing the wound.

To come to this observation, what they did was extensive trial work on lots of different treatments and then sat down and worked out why the best of them worked so well.

They had looked at most of the treatments then available under the electron microscope. The one that had the best result (and it was very much better than all of the others) retained a smooth, non porous and non fissured surface. It was really the integrity of the seal that prevented spore contact with the wood. This seal had let the plants heal their wounds in the absence of infection, because the bugs simply couldn't get through to the wood below.

Another interesting observation from their research was that some sealants like PVA or vinyl paints, degrade easily and quickly become food for invading fungi.

The authors suggested that some broad spectrum fungicides suppress beneficial as well as pathogenic organisms. As the beneficials are often easier to control, some fungicides will do the very opposite of what is intended.

At Misty Valley Nursery we have taken a two pronged approach to protecting our mother blocks from wood borne disease. The first stage is to protect the wounds from windborne or rain splashed spores, and to generally disinfect the vines. The second is to seal up wounds on 2 year old wood, or older. This is what we do.

**1. On the day of pruning we disinfect the head of the vine (including large cuts) with a 7.5% Lime Sulphur solution. This is done either in the lunch hour or**

**at the end of the day, as pruners do not enjoy the smell of this stuff.**

**2. As soon as practical, and normally within one week of pruning, we apply a flexible silicon sealer to wounds on 2 year old wood, or older.**

What I like about these silicon sealers is that they contain reagents like formaldehyde, one of the most powerful disinfection agents available. The key is to use it liberally and ensure that all of the cut surface is covered. The lime sulphur disinfects the head and protects until we can get the wound sealed. The sealant gives long term protection. Some of them even come with claims of anti-fungal properties. We find that they stick even if the wound is bleeding. If you use silicon sealers do be safety conscious and use latex gloves.

**Borer control**

In Northern areas borer is a real pain. Some people carry a wire and poke it in holes when they are pruning, this is hit and miss. As a kid we carried oil cans with kerosene in them when pruning our citrus and vines, the kerosene kills on contact and fumigates. Last year I thought about this and realised that the solution is at your local hardware store. CRC is mostly kerosene; it comes in a pressurised can with a handy applicator that can be poked deep into a Borer hole. Last year in a heavily infested vineyard we used about half a can of CRC per acre, with excellent results and no obvious damage to the vines. This year we are going to have a play with a can of "Engine Start". That's mostly Ether.

I know we must celebrate our #8 wire culture, but why use a piece of wire when you can nuke 'em!

**GROW WITH US**

Call Rex Sunde or Gillian Howard to discuss your requirements

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**MISTY  
VALLEY  
NURSERY**

**NEWSLETTER**

**JUNE 2008**

## **Clearview Winery & Tim Turvey – a case study of success.**

The wine industry is not always an easy place to find success, so when I find it I take a close look. A trip to Hawkes Bay is incomplete without a visit to Clearview Winery at Te Awanga, and some repast in the excellent restaurant.

It doesn't take long in the company of Tim Turvey, winemaker, owner, extraordinary man, to work out that he is successful. What's more, he loves doing what he does, and he's good at doing it. Tim says that without his business partner, Helma van den Berg, the operation wouldn't last five minutes.

Helma takes care of the restaurant and staffing, whilst Tim is responsible for the vineyard and winery. The joint efforts of all his friends on the staff are what contribute to the success of the whole venture. This is clearly a team environment.

Tim didn't set out to be a grape grower; he more or less fell into the role when a good friend persuaded him with a cheque book, to establish a vineyard. He never intended to be a winemaker. Like any artist, he was so pleased with his first crop of Chardonnay that he could not bear to part with it. That first batch of grapes was turned into wine on a shoestring budget. The result? A Gold medal, champion Chardonnay and Champion wine at the Easter show. From this, Tim discovered his passion for the wine business.

The time frames that Tim talks in seem very long but they are realistic. The investment in land and vineyard alone can easily necessitate a 10 year break even period. As wineries grow, they must increase stock holdings, which require ongoing investment in stock and plant whilst the winery is in growth mode. This has an enormous impact on cash flow.

**In this business, you need to be mentally & physically prepared for a long haul.**

Tim has always been prepared to take on risk. He recently decided to expand his production and purchased an adjoining property. Tim is philosophical about that extra debt, as he will always have the option to sell the land if the market should get difficult.

**If you take on risk in horticulture, make sure you have an option to exit that risk if things go wrong.**

### **Tim's Success.**

Tim openly admits that as he had no formal qualifications, it took him 6-8 years before he felt comfortable talking with other winemakers; and it took nearly 20 years to feel financially secure.

"We started by buying 20 year old vineyard posts at \$1.00 each. I drove each one in myself. We hammered in "every nail in that restaurant."

The winery restaurant at Clearview was one of the first established in New Zealand, in 1991. It's hard to believe now, but at the time many people questioned Tim & Helma about the sense in having a restaurant "so far removed from the city centre".

Here's a winery that does not have a distributor, sells 70% of it's 100 tonne production from the gate, and achieves a \$25/bottle average price. This is a successful business by anyone's standards.

So, what are the key elements of success?

### **Quality and Value**

Know where you sit in the quality stakes, and remember that many customers are very knowledgeable about wine. Make sure your customers feel they are

winning in the price/value equation.

### **Your People**

At the cellar door I was greeted warmly by staff that looked me in the eye, and made me feel welcome. The vineyard staff includes a qualified winemaker and highly experienced viticulturist.

Employ the best people you can afford and make sure they know more about their field of expertise than you do. Tim speaks very highly of everyone involved, in all areas of operation, at Clearview Winery

### **Memorable**

A visit to the cellar door should be a memorable occasion, starting the moment your customer turns in the gate. Cellar door visitors want knowledgeable staff who know their wines, able to share with you the story of their genesis and the quirks of each variety. They come with money in their pockets and are happy to part with it, and to keep doing so if they have the right experience.

Quality wine, ambience, great service and knowledgeable staff are the backbone of customer loyalty.

### **Food**

As wine tourists are likely to have developed an appreciation for good wine, the chances are they have also developed a taste for good food. In New Zealand, the food and wine experience now go hand in hand. Never lose control of your kitchen. Match your food and wine, and ensure your customers' food experience never lets you down. If in doubt, keep it simple with pure flavours and the freshest possible ingredients.

Here is where Helma's expertise comes to the fore. She liaises daily with the chef, keeping on top of all aspects of the restaurant. Helma has never lost control of her kitchen, where there is daily liaison with the chef.

Regardless of whether you are a contract grower or boutique winery, to find success you need a love of the land, a passion for the product and an organised professional approach.

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