



Guidelines for Planting

DORMANT VINES

The following guidelines should be followed in order to ensure a successful planting. Many planting techniques are available, but the majority of our growers have been successful with this system.

Taking Delivery of your Vines

Dormant vines should be planted around late March to late April to assure best results. However, we have had growers successfully plant well into June. To arrange shipment or pick-up of your order, please contact us at least ten days in advance.

Inspection and Trimming

Vines will arrive in bundles of 25. Regardless of the packaging, open the container and plastic bag immediately. Check to ensure that each bundle is labeled correctly, the bundles reconcile with your packing slip and the number of vines in each bundle is 25. Cut into a small percentage of the vines to check viability of the wood. Although vines have been trimmed during grading and inspection further trimming may be recommended. Roots should be trimmed back to fit the hole you are planting in. The tops should also be pruned, saving two buds (nodes) from one or two of the most desirable canes. Vines should be kept moist and above freezing temperatures during all of these steps. It is essential that trimming and inspection take place in a timely manner so that vines do not dry out. Notify us immediately if problems are detected.

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Extended Vine Storage (if necessary)

Ideally, vines should be planted immediately after delivery. If unable to plant right away, trimmed and inspected vines should be kept as cool and dormant as possible up to planting. Three options for storing vines to the time of planting are:

1) Place vines in Cold Storage in the original box and packing material or a container covered with a suitable moist packing material (never below freezing and below 50 degrees F). Remove from cold storage for a few days (four or five) before planting to allow vines to acclimate. A shaded intermediate location such as a shed, barn or garage is recommended. Open plastic bags regularly and check to ensure the vines remain moist. Do not expose them to direct sunlight.

2) A deep trench on the north (cool) side of a building, with soil covering all but the top 4"-6" of growth.

3) For a short period (one week or less) leave vines in the original box and packing material in an unheated garage or shed if the temperatures are cool but above freezing. Open plastic bags regularly and check to ensure the vines remain moist and do not expose them to direct sunlight.

Planting

At planting, double-check tags to assure you are planting the correct vines. Take only a portion of the vines from the storage area to the field for planting, unless they can be properly stored there. Again, do not leave vines in the direct sunlight or allow them to

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dry out. Vines should be transported to the field in buckets with a few inches of water in the bottom to keep the roots wet. Cover the bucket with a wet cloth if there are intense temperatures and sunlight.

Another common practice is to hydrate the vines by soaking them in water for some period of time. If you feel the vines need this step you may place the vines in a suitable container of water large enough to immerse them completely. This may be done in the evening the day before planting. Soaking overnight should be sufficient, but for no longer than 24 hours.

Typical Vineyard spacing is 5' x 8' (view our Plant Density Chart for more information). Dig planting holes at least one foot deep and the width of your trimmed roots. You may slightly mound the bottom of the planting hole to assure that roots are positioned downward (avoid J rooting). Fill in hole with soil, free of herbicide residue, until roots are covered. Firm the soil around the roots to remove air pockets in the root zone. Fill the remainder of the hole to the level of the buds (nodes) retained after pruning. Firm the soil again around the trunk. If planting lower grade plants late in the season (after May 1st) leave the top one-third of the hole unfilled. The remainder of the hole should be filled later after the growth has lignified or become brown and woody.

Install an Inland Desert Nursery vine shelter.

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Grafted Vines

If planting dormant bench grafted vines, leave the graft union 4 inches above grade (natural soil line). Install an Inland Desert Nursery vine shelter with the top in the closed position. At two to four inches of growth open the top of the vine shelter.

Vine Shelters

Vine shelters are an excellent way of protecting young vines and enhancing early season growth. For best results the proper installation of vine shelters is paramount. This requires installation as soon as possible after planting, the use of a suitable training stake to support the shelter and sealing the base of the shelter in the soil. The base of the shelter must be sealed well enough so that no air can enter and create a chimney effect. The tops of the shelters may be closed at planting time and opened after 2 to 4 inches of growth. The vine shelters should be removed before the onset of winter conditions.

Irrigation

If soils are moist, irrigation is not immediately necessary. If soils are dry, pre-irrigate a few days before planting to allow time for the soil to drain so it is not too wet or too dry. For the first irrigation, apply only enough water to wet slightly below the root zone and set the vines. Do not over-irrigate. Drip emitters should not be placed directly over vine.

Dig near the vine to check soil moisture before irrigating. The old farmer's way to check for adequate soil moisture is to dig down to the root zone next to the vines, grab a handful of soil, form a tight ball and toss back and forth in your hands. If the ball crumbles, irrigate.

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Maintenance irrigations should be based on many factors, such as soil moisture holding capacity, plant water use (transpiration rate) and weather. Irrigation should be scheduled to maintain good soil moisture to a depth slightly below the root zone allowing the soil to drain between applications. Again, do not over-irrigate and avoid keeping the soil saturated.

Fertilizer

Do not fertilize until growth has started. Then do so based on the nature of the soil you are farming. In some cases, little or no fertilization may be required in the first year. If used, fertilizer should only be applied early in the season to avoid excessive late season growth increasing the potential for winter injury.

Training

Growth should be trained up a stake to eventually meet your cordon wire as it emerges from the vine shelter. Many plantings reach the cordon wire after one season of growth. Selection of your trunk(s) and cordons is often made during the dormant season following the growing season. Choose moderately vigorous canes about pencil-size in diameter to train.

Winter Preparation

If farming in a cool-climate region subject to heavy fall frosts and winter freezes, begin to limit vine growth after August 1st with water deprivation. If the vines are well established and growing vigorously, limit irrigation to induce mild to moderate water stress. You should notice slowed shoot elongation, the loss of tendrils and the

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desiccation of a few shoot tips, but not to the point of defoliation. This is crucial to promote the development of lignin (brown woody tissue) in order to prevent serious fall frost damage. If pushed too late into the fall for extra growth, all of the summer's growth can be lost.

In order to protect vines from winter freezes, the one foot planting depth rule is key. It may be prudent to mound soil around the base of the vine for additional protection from the cold. A post-frost irrigation to saturate the soil profile is very helpful in limiting vine mortality of young and mature vines.

If you have further questions, please feel free to **call our office at 509-588-6615**. Or, **email viticulture@idnursery.com** for suggestions from our experienced viticulture staff.