

# GRAPES FACT SHEET

**LOCATION & PLANTING:** Grapes don't require a superior soil but will perform much better if the soil is well drained. They should be in an area that gets full sun. If they are on a southern exposure in a location somewhat sheltered from cooling winds, you may get ripe grapes in marginal growing areas. Grapes are deep rooted and require a less frequent, but heavier, irrigation schedule than most plants around the yard. It's best not to subject them to a lawn watering regime.

Grapes require a trellis or other support but may be used to cover an arbor or form a screen on a fence. Space the plants 8 to 10 feet apart. They should be kept weed free by shallow hoeing or cultivation.

Plant grapes as early in the spring as the soil can be prepared. Set them in the soil in a well prepared hole at the same depth they were in the nursery. Prune off all the plant except two buds on the main stem close to the soil line. Supporting the plant during the first summer is optional.

**TRAINING & PRUNING:** After the first year, prune off all side branches and train the strongest stem up the post or fence. The most common support is two wires with an arm of the vine trained in each direction from the trunk-- "four cane Kniffen system". In the second year, branches may form that can be trained on the lower wire,

about 18-24" high. The main trunk will probably reach the top wire, 5-5's feet high. During the third year, the arms to be on the top support will grow. If the young grape plant lacks vigor the third year may be the first time strong canes will form for side branches. (See illustration.)

Most gardeners don't prune mature grape plants severely enough. A vigorous vine can support 40-60 buds for good yields, meaning 10-15 buds should be left on 4 lateral canes which grew vigorously the previous year. Leave only 30-40 buds if the vine is less vigorous. A properly pruned grape vine will have 80-90% of last year's wood removed.

For trellis or fence culture, remove 1/3-1/2 of the canes to stimulate good fruit production in addition to the shade or screening you desire.

Prune in late February or March, before buds swell. Don't be concerned over the bleeding from pruning cuts, it will stop when growth begins. Summer pruning is not recommended but if an invasive cane crosses a walkway or climbs the apple tree, go ahead and remove it.

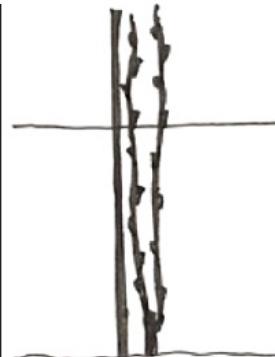
## GRAPE PRUNING: 2-WIRE TRELLIS

1ST YEAR



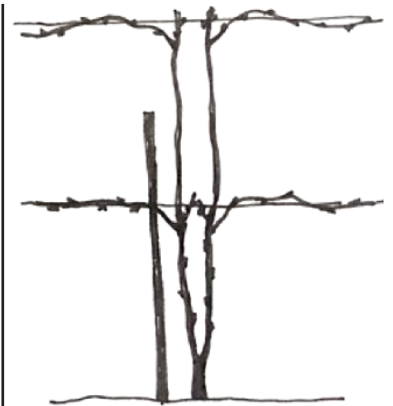
Plant cut back to its best basal buds. These are distinguished as the Arm Slump buds growing from the base of the stem. If the shoots grow vigorously during the first summer, train the strongest up a stake or a stout curd to make the trunk. Cut off the remaining side growth to encourage faster development of the main trunk. If growth is weak, cut back to best basal buds.

2ND YEAR



In late February, cut the main shoot grown the previous summer back to the top trellis wire. In early summer when side shoots begin growth, select two for each wire and fasten loosely to the trellis. Any other shoot growth is removed. If the original shoot did not grow or was less than 1/4" in diameter, cut it back to two buds and start again.

3RD YEAR



The original four canes are cut back to leave 12-15 buds per cane. Four new canes are cut back to two buds each to become next year's fruiting canes. All others are removed. After the third year, grape pruning becomes one of continual replacement of vine for fruiting.

**FERTILIZING:** Grapes are not heavy feeders but moderate amounts of fertilizer will stimulate young plants to get sized up for better early production. Place 1/2-1/3 cup of 16-16-8 or similar fertilizer 2-3" deep and 10-12" from the plant at planting time and in March of the second year. After that, avoid excessive fertilizing because grapes tend to be overly vigorous. In many locations no fertilizer will be needed. Unless a soil test indicates phosphorus or potassium additions, use only nitrogen and that only if the plants show lack of vigor and poor cane growth. Ammonium sulfate, 1/2-1 cup per year should be adequate. Fruiting canes slightly larger than a pencil are desirable.

**HARVEST:** Color is not a good indicator of grape maturity. When grapes are ripe, the seeds will be brown and the cluster stems will shrivel slightly and turn brownish. Seedless grapes will be yellowish (except the red or pinkish ones). When they taste really sweet, go ahead and use them. In most areas, vines will be frosted when Concord reaches maximum sweetness. Fruit is not damaged by light frosts but neither is the frost a requirement for ripening.

Some varieties tend to fall from the cluster as they approach maturity. Since grapes don't ripen after picking, you'll need to harvest properly. There is no practical way to discourage birds that discover the ripening fruit. You'll need to cover the vines with netting or place a paper bag over the clusters. The fruit does not need sunlight to ripen.

**PEST CONTROL:** Insects are not usually a problem with grapes in Utah. The grape leaf skeletoning may leave brown zig-zag patterns as it burrows between leaf layers. Little damage is inflicted on the plant and the insect doesn't get into the fruit. Powdery mildew is often serious, especially on European grapes. Concord (an American grape) is not usually as affected. Pruning to improve air circulation and keeping the foliage dry will reduce mildew problems. The leaves will have whitish or greyish patches which later may cover both sides and be peppered with minute black dots. Mildew on the fruit also appears whitish. At a later stage, the fruit becomes russeted in color and skin cracks are common. You can control mildew by spraying when new growth is 6", 12" and 18" in length. Use benomyl (Benlate), karathane or sulfur. Sulfur should not be used if temperatures are over 90 degrees.

**IRON CHLOROSIS:** Concord grapes very commonly have yellow leaves with green veins. Other varieties are not as susceptible but may show iron deficiency symptoms. Cut down on the irrigation schedule because iron chlorosis is aggravated by over watering. Iron sequestrene 138 may be applied at about 1 lb. per 100 feet of row to green up the plants for about two years.

**2,4-D DAMAGE:** This potent weed killer is used on many lawns, pastures, and grain fields. Minute amounts in the form of vapors may float through the air, even if the spray from the application did not drift. This small amount of 2,4-D is enough to cause deformed, smaller leaves that have parallel veins and "shoe-stringy" margins. Whether fruit production is affected depends on when the application was made and its concentration. Avoid treating your lawn with 2,4-D spray or with a weed and feed material when temperatures will reach 85-90 degrees. (Discuss the problem with your neighbor over the fence, too.)



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