



The Grapevine

Newsletter of the Viticulture Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains

May, 2005

VINE TALK

Bloom!

It's hard to believe that we are already into the middle of May. The late winter rains overstayed their welcome and allowed Spring to sneak in barely noticed. Nevertheless we are looking at that time of year when the need for powdery mildew control is absolutely essential. If you can get through bloom and fruit set without mildew your summer will be far more enjoyable. Remember that powdery mildew is not always obvious in the early stages. By the time you see the powder your vineyard has already built up quite a population and eradication efforts are required.

The rains this year have made the spray program quite challenging. It is my opinion that the standard suppressant program of Thiolux or other sulfur programs might provide limited protection because they just keep getting washed off. Eradicant products like JMS Stylet Oil or Armicarb or Kaligreen (doesn't last as long on the foliage) are very effective tools against mildew in a year like this. They wash off too, but at least they kill off the spore populations before they go. That way there are fewer spores to be distributed by the rain. As always, thorough coverage is essential. These products are not systemic and are only effective on foliage they come in contact with.

Be sure to include a botrytis control spray in your program during bloom and at set. Serenade is an organic product available for this purpose. Elevate and Vanguard are among the alternatives.

In addition to sprays it is very beneficial to focus on improving the canopy microclimate. Shoot thinning is an essential practice this year in most vineyards. If your vineyard tends to

Next Meeting

**June 1: Next VASCM Meeting
3:00pm, La Rusticana d'Orsa**
(directions on last page)

- Business meeting.
- 'Vine Talk'
- **Presentation & demo in the vineyard:** pruning, thinning, hedging; trellising, terracing.
- Wine tasting

... And Events

Vintners' Festival, June 4-5 & 11-12, various locations in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Contact the SCMWA.

**International Pinot Noir Celebration (IPNC)
July 29-31, McMinnville, OR**

*Tickets on first come, first serve basis
1-800-775-4762, www.ipnc.org*

have extra vigor, late season shoot thinning will not only open up the canopy but reduce vigor as well. Make sure that your canopy allows plenty of light and air to surround the developing flower clusters. This allows them to dry out from the rains, reduces humidity within the canopy, and allows spray penetration and good coverage. Sprays are far less effective if you don't achieve good coverage.

On another note, Juan Hidalgo from the Santa Cruz County Ag. Commissioner's Office passed out mealy bug traps at the last meeting. Hopefully everyone has deployed those traps in their vineyard. If you have, please remember to bring the trap to the next meeting. We will gather them up and turn them in for examination. New traps will be available

at the same time. Turn in the trap even if you don't see anything in it – it will still help the Ag Department track the spread of the bug, or lack of it. Let's keep up with this program and keep Santa Cruz free from this pest. There are a number of control programs available if you do have mealy bugs, so get informed and take action before they corrupt your fruit.

This is the perfect year to consider a no till policy in your vineyard. With all the rain it may be wise to simply keep the ground cover tightly mowed and avoid tilling or discing. Tearing up the soil not only disrupts microbial life in the soil, it also makes it harder to drive the rows, it compacts the soil, it wicks up even more moisture from deeper in the soil profile, and it creates a dustbowl in late summer. Focus on weed control under the vines and keep the aisles closely mowed to discourage mites and other pests. Newly planted vineyards may require a different approach.

Remember to take petiole samples at full bloom. Doing so will tell you the nutritional status of the vines in real time and is an excellent aid making decisions about nutrient supplements at fruit set and later.

Despite the rain, I hope that everyone is enjoying a bountiful spring. It is the best wildflower year in ages. Make a point of taking in all the beauty that each season brings. It is such a gift to be here.

Happy Spring.

Prudy Foxx
President, Viticulture Assn. of the Santa Cruz Mountains

Heard Around the Vineyard...

... Santa Cruz Mt. Wines will be the stars of the evening in an international tasting with the Mayor and City Council of Florence, Italy. The party will be feted with our appellation wines while here on an exchange program, organized and hosted by Marilyn d'Orsa, a Santa Clara County commissioner to Florence, starting with a tasting at Uncorked in Saratoga and a wine pairing dinner at Il Fornaio in San Jose.

June 1 Meeting at La Rusticana d'Orsa

Frank and Marilyn Dorsa have generously invited us to their special property. We'll be in the vineyard and talking about and demo'ing pruning, thinning and hedging; as well as terracing and different trellising techniques found in the Rusticana vineyards. As usual, we'll finish up with wine tasting (bring a bottle to share), and more than usual - a special treat with pizzas from the Dorsa's pizza oven! The Dorsa's are growing Bordeaux varieties: Cab, Cab Franc, Merlot, Malbec, Petit Verdot. You can see pictures and find out a little more about La Rusticana d'Orsa at www.larusticanadorsa.com.

Now Is the Time to Use the Buy/Sell Exchange!!

If you are a grower looking for a home for your grapes in the Fall, or a winemaker wanting a source of fruit, now is the time to make the connections and secure your arrangements. Use VASCM's Buy/Sell Exchange, established as a mechanism for growers and wineries to connect for the purpose of buying and selling appellation grapes, as well as other wine industry related services and products.

To participate on the Exchange, send an email message to the list mailman at VASCM-owner@kkn.net. You can also view the Exchange listings on our website at www.VASCM.org.

Turn in Your Mealybug Traps at June Meeting – More Available

Please bring to our June 1 meeting the Vine Mealybug traps distributed by the Santa Cruz Agricultural Commissioner's Office at our April meeting – even if you don't see anything trapped in it. It still helps to track the spread of the pest. New ones will be available. Traps should be changed every 6-8 weeks.

Farm Water Quality Planning Short Course

If you were unable to participate in the water quality course held in May in our area especially for winegrape growers to meet the new requirements, you'll have several additional chances later this year to take this class sponsored by UCCE and the Farm Bureau. You are required to get at least 5 continuing education units by 12/31/05 to get next year's waiver. You can get these credits through any applicable course, but for the UCCE class these times and locations could be a little more convenient for you:

June 1, 8, 15, & 22 from 5:30-8:30pm, Gilroy
October, Gilroy
November, Santa Cruz (orchards, vineyards)
December, Hollister (in Spanish)
February 2006, Hollister (orchards, vineyards)
May 2006, Gilroy
May 2006, Gilroy
October 2006, Gilroy
November 2006, Hollister

For more information or to register, contact the UCCE office at 805/788-2321.

For more information on the water quality requirements, go to www.vascm.org.

Note: The Santa Cruz class in November specifically addresses vineyards. The winter classes fill up very quickly.

Check Out Our Website: www.vascm.org

The VASCM website includes information on upcoming meetings and events, copies of speaker presentations and newsletters, links to valuable resources. You'll find all the listings for the VASCM Buy/Sell Exchange. Plus, we're adding profiles of our members' vineyards. To be included, send information on your vineyard, including acreage, varieties, when it was founded and other history and information you'd like to include to mary@munsvineyard.com. Also provide a picture if you have it, or we can arrange to take one. Come back often to see what's new!

Thank you to the webmaster, Ed Muns of Muns Vineyard!

April Meeting on Wine Distribution & Sales

Thank you to Peter Allison of Pleasure Point Wine and Spirits in Capitola for his excellent and insightful presentation at our April 5 meeting on wine distribution and sales. As growers we need to be cognizant of the end results of our labors in the vineyard, and the commercial aspect of getting the resulting wine into the hands of consumers. We'll be posting a summary of Peter's talk on our website in the next few days, so keep an eye out to www.vascm.org and you can find it there.

Pleasure Point Wine & Spirits is located at 38th & Portola in Capitola. Pay Peter Allison a visit and explore and patronize his shop.

Membership Renewals

Many of our memberships are coming due at the beginning of this year, or will be soon. If you find a Membership Form with this newsletter that means your membership needs to be renewed for 2005. Please return the form with your payment to continue your membership. Dues are still currently \$25/year.

We are considering raising the dues a bit to support the many activities we have embarked on and would like to do to raise the level of recognition for Santa Cruz Mountain winegrapes. Even with a dues raise it will still be a bargain! This topic will be discussed at our June 1 meeting.



La Rusticana d'Orsa

Directions to La Rusticana d'Orsa in Los Gatos (for June 1 meeting):

15700 Kennedy Rd. – if lost call Frank Dorsa at 408-464-2922

From Hwy. 17, exit East Los Gatos

Coming from Santa Cruz, make a right off the exit; Coming from San Jose, make a left off the exit

Proceed to Los Gatos Blvd.; left on Los Gatos Blvd.

Right at first stop sign onto Kennedy Rd.

Drive 1.75 miles up Kennedy Rd. to 15700 – be sure to stay on Kennedy and don't turn off
La Rusticana d'Orsa is on the right at a rock wall with a cobblestone drive.

Officers of the Viticulture Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains:

President: Prudy Foxx, 831-359-9100, Prudyfoxx@aol.com

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NEWSLETTER

**Next Meeting: June 1, 3:00pm
at La Rusticana d'Orsa**