



Viticulture Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains

The Grapevine

July, 2008

VINE TALK

Set

What a year. First, a freezing cold spring with some frost damage followed by sporadic soaring temperatures in April, May and June. Now we have a week of July fog events in the morning for the coast. Fires rage all around us and the air is filled with smoke. It is unusually humid. The sun rises in a red ball of fury and sets in a similarly eerie glow.

This is the year of canopy management. The grower must maintain that delicate balance between a canopy open enough to allow light and air and spray penetration while still providing essential shade from the burning rays of the afternoon sun.

Shoot thinning and leaf removal has been key to disease control and good set. In areas that are crowded with too many spurs and shoots I have seen spring botrytis and no set. Where leaves have shaded the fruit, spray intervals have been stretched beyond the recommended range and the vineyard has a history of issues, I have seen mildew. Where the canopy is open, the fruit exposed on the shade side of the row and an early, thorough coverage spray program followed, the fruit is perfect. Of course there are those vineyards that do next to nothing and look great and those that have done everything and still suffer. Such is the vine and the powerful influence of microclimate.

Here are some take home tips for next year. When winter pruning try to leave space around posts and trellis pieces. This will prevent shoots from becoming crowded or crushed against the wood or metal. This is essential at the end of the rows where the canopy tends to be more vigorous. Shoot thin aggressively if bud break produces multiple shoots in clusters at each spur position. Consider cane pruning in cooler areas for more even set. Keep these ideas in mind for next year.

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Next Meeting

July 31 at Ridge Vineyards – all day workshop & meeting on Water Conservation and Pest Management

9:30-2:00 Water Conservation/IPM Workshop brought to us by the Sustainability Alliance (No Charge)
2:00pm Tour of Ridge with David Gates & Caleb Mosley
3:00 - 5:00pm VASCM Meeting: Pressure Bomb demo and water wrap-up (deficit irrigation, etc.)

2.5 Pest Management credits granted for the workshop.

This is an all-day focus on water quality/conservation, with a component including pest management. The day will start with a workshop organized by the Sustainability Alliance and end with a regular VASCM meeting. We hope you can come for the full day. Water use and vine health is a critical issue in the vineyard. And now we have the driest spring on record and the State is in an official drought.

See Agenda on p. 3

Directions on back of newsletter.

... and Events

Santa Cruz County Fair, Sept. 9-14, Watsonville Fairgrounds on East Lake Ave. This is the 5th year VASCM will have an exhibit in the Harvest Bldg. We will be looking for volunteers, so stay tuned! And come to the Fair!

President's Corner

Here we are in summer already, a time when we all pray for a good crop and spend much time trying to insure this fact. We busy ourselves spraying and working to maintain a vineyard free of mildew and pests. I hope everyone has a crop that meets their expectations.

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Vine Talk, cont.

If you have a dense canopy do some serious leaf pulling around the fruit after set and be willing to cut out canes that are too crowded. You can be far more aggressive on the afternoon shade side of the vineyard. This is especially important to areas prone to fog events or high vigor. Chardonnay is in particularly sensitive to bunch rot. Remove canes that are weak or remove the fruit on them to maintain a needed position. If the canopy is hanging over the wire significantly and is shading the fruit, be willing to hedge cut with clippers, machete or mechanical equipment. Hedging is most successful just after set but important anytime it is preventing spray access or quality air flow.

If you see fresh powdery mildew powder on the fruit immediately apply an eradicant spray like Armicarb. Apply at a wash rate to achieve thorough coverage. It is a little hot for stilet oil at this point and sulfur will wash off an infection but not kill it. Remember that Armicarb is a high pH product and should not be tank mixed with foliar amendments or other sprays. It will eradicate any portion that it touches but is useless against areas it does not cover. It also doesn't last well and should be followed up promptly with an aggressive product like Pristine. Organic growers need to pay particular attention to early control, canopy management, and precise spray intervals to prevent any infections from occurring. Once established the infection is usually a terrible challenge throughout the season.

Some people have experienced burn on the canopy and fruit. This seems to be related to product formulation, tank mixes, and most importantly, to timing of spray. Avoid spraying during the really hot spells. If a heat spike is predicted put off the spray to another day. Vines better absorb materials during lower temperatures. Ensure that your formulation does not fall out of solution during application. The material at the bottom of the spray tank is often more concentrated. Check sprayer agitation if this is a problem.

2008 is a very dry year. Do not practice deficit irrigation in the weak areas of your vineyard. Keep those vines pumped up and get them back into shape before applying water restrictions. If you do plan on restricting water on the healthy portion of the vineyard monitor closely for stress and if possible keep the fruit hydrated especially prior to heat events. Pinot Noir can be in particularly sensitive.

Boron deficiencies have shown up more this year. It has been noted that the dry conditions combined with low boron levels in the plant tissue may have contributed to shatter. If you see an abundance of dried up clusters that never set, small leaves all the way up the cane, or even big and little berries on the cluster, do some tissue tests to determine zinc and boron levels. It will not improve production this year

but you can add these amendments in a timely way for next year.

Despite the constantly changing conditions 2008 is shaping up to be a spectacular year. Hang in there. Veraison is just around the corner.

Buena suerte!

Prudy Foxx
Foxx Viticulture
Santa Cruz Mountains

Copies of all of Prudy's Vine Talk columns since 2004 can be found on our website at www.vascm.org.

President's Corner, cont.

Our last couple of meetings at Thomas Fogarty and Camel Hill wineries were great successes, with some of the biggest turnouts ever. Ed Muns invited Dennis Culver to speak on plant nutrition at Camel Hill where we all learned the significance of testing our vines and keeping them balanced in nutrition. Ed has posted copies of Dennis' presentation to our website for those of you who didn't attend or would like better notes.

We will have board nominations at the next meeting with elections to follow and the induction of new officers at the November meeting.

The newsletter is always posted to the website as soon as it is completed (thank you to Ed Muns). In order to save costs and effort of future newsletters, we would like to encourage you to view the newsletter on the website. If you would prefer to do this instead of receiving the hard copy, please reply and let us know. We will then send an email message letting everyone know that the newsletter is ready to be viewed online. If we don't have an e-mail address for you, you will continue to receive a hard copy.

We are trying to put the newsletter on a schedule of semi-monthly starting this month. We would like to add a new section which will feature information about member's vineyards. These articles will help us to learn more about each other and our association. If you would be willing to be the subject of an article in this newsletter, please call Bruce at 831.479.7447 or email (bruceanildi@comcast.net) or Mary Lindsay at mary@munsvineyard.com.

Aerial Photographer Available for Your Vineyard

David Sievert (he attended our last meeting) is an aerial photographer available to take pictures of your vineyard. He has photographed many vineyards in the region, and has a discounted package for VASCM members. Call him at 831-426-7400; email david@airphotodesigns.com. (Some members have asked about aerial photos.)

July 31 Workshop & Meeting

On Water Conservation And Integrated Pest Management

2.5 Pest Management (PCA) credits given for the workshop

At Ridge Vineyards, Cupertino

9:30-2:00 Water Conservation/IPM Workshop brought to us by the Sustainability Alliance
NO CHARGE, lunch provided

2:00pm Tour of Ridge with David Gates and Caleb Mosly

3:00 - 5:00pm VASCM Meeting: Pressure Bomb demo and deficit irrigation

This is an all-day focus on water quality/conservation, with a component including pest management. The day will start with a workshop organized by the Sustainability Alliance and end with a regular VASCM meeting. We hope you can come for the full day. Water use and monitoring vine health is a critical issue in the vineyard. This has been the driest spring on record and the State is in an official drought.

In addition, this is an opportunity to see and learn about the sustainable and organic practices at Ridge. Ridge is committed to sustainable practices and is transitioning to organic farming on 56 out of the 120 acres of vineyard on Monte Bello Ridge above Cupertino. Every operation is evaluated based on how it effects the environment, community, and grape and wine quality. Practices include soil management, composting, integrated pest management, raptor roosts and owl boxes for natural control of gophers, etc. You can see more at the website at www.ridgewine.com including vineyard information on "Integrated Pest Management" (including release of beneficial insects), "To Mow or Not to Mow", "Cover Crops".

Workshop Agenda

9:30am Check-in and coffee

9:45am Opening – CA Sustainable Winegrowing Program: *Joe Browde, Ann Thrupp, CSWA*

Segment = Water-Related Regulations

10:00am Water Issues and Regulations affecting Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyards: *Mary Ellen Dick, Ag Water Quality Program Coordinator – Central Coast Ag Water Quality Coalition*

Segment = Reduced-Risk Pest Management

10:30am Integrated Pest Management (non-weed) – Methods and Controls: *Laura Breyer, Breyer's Vineyard IPM Services*

11:00am Under-The-Vine Sustainable Weed Management: *John Roncoroni, UC Cooperative Extension*

11:30am Effective Use of Pest Natural Enemies (incl releases): *David Gates/other local practitioner*

Noon LUNCH

Segment = Management of Water (Conservation & Quality) and Associated Energy

12:30pm Best Vineyard Practices for Conserving Water: *Mark Greenspan, Advanced Viticulture*

1:00pm Maximizing Efficiency of Irrigation Pumping and Drip Systems: *Bill Green, CSU-Fresno Center for Irrigation Technology*

2:00 pm Tour and Discussion of Ridge Vineyards' Water & IPM Practices: *David Gates and Caleb Mosley, Ridge*

3:00 pm **VASCM Meeting Begins:** Discussion of Deficit Irrigation; pressure bomb demo
- followed by wine tasting - bring a bottle of wine to share

6:00pm END

Vineyard Profile

(This is a new section we want to start in the newsletter to share information about our members' vineyards. If you would like to profile your vineyard in an upcoming newsletter, please send your story to the newsletter editor at mary@munsvineyard.com.)

Manildi Orchards and Vineyards

This is the story of Manildi Orchards and Vineyards. It all began in 1905 when my Grandfather, Secondo Manildi, bought about 50 acres from the Capitola Land Company as he finished his career as a lumberjack in the Santa Cruz redwoods. The plot of land was located on a dirt road outside of Soquel. The road is now called Glen Haven and is paved and the property is about 3 miles north of Soquel located between Hunter Hill and Soquel Vineyards at about 900 feet elevation. The land had recently been logged by my grandfather, his brother and other lumberjacks and contained a few timber company buildings. The main one became a home for my grandparents.

The first crops were those of a truck farm and my grandfather sold his produce on the streets of Santa Cruz. Later he added fruit trees and, of course being from Italy, some grapes for wine. I still remember the 250 gallon wine tanks (barrels?) in the cellar of my grandmother's house along with the carboy of wine vinegar with the 'mother' in it.

But when I was a child the only grape vines left were a few wild ones in unattended parts of the ranch. By that time there was no truck farming left; just the family vegetable gardens, my father's and my grandmother's. The rest of the farm contained tree fruit, mostly apples but also cherries, plums, apricots, pears and even some quince.

My wife, Caroline, and I became the stewards of the ranch in 1989 although I was still working full time to support my farming habit. We added our house to those of my grandparents (now occupied by my cousins, the Slatters) and my parents.

We started our first vineyard in the beginning of the new century with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir cuttings from a vineyard managed by Devine Consultants. We became more serious and bought 3000 vines from Duarte Nursery, Pommard and 115 clones of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay 107 clone, and Syrah 887 clone.

Last year our orchard and vineyard were recognized as a California Heritage Farm being over 100 years in our family. The entire 8+ acres of vineyard is on drip irrigation and is capable of fertigation. The system is

powered by a PV solar system which consists of a spring, three tanks and 2 pumps. Solar irrigation works well with nature. When it is cold and dreary and there is not much solar power, irrigation is not needed but when the sun is hot and shining brightly we have lots of solar power and can pump a lot of water. The entire farm runs on solar power – we haven't paid a PG&E bill in over 5 years. The systems paid for themselves in less than 3 years.

After attending last year's technical session of Pinot Paradise, "the clone wars"; we planted 5 more acres of Pinot including more Pommard, 777, 828 and 667 clones. And bringing us full circle with my grandfather, we planted 400 vines of the old Italian standby Zinfandel on St George's root.

- Bruce Manildi



Our June meeting at Camel Hill. Thank you to the Anderson's for hosting! And thank you to Natalain Schwartz for the pictures.

Wanted & For Sale in the Buy/Sell Exchange

Think ahead to harvest. If you need or have fruit to sell use VASCM's email-based Buy/Sell Exchange to make the connections and secure your arrangements. Established as a mechanism for growers and wineries to connect for the purpose of buying and selling appellation grapes, the Exchange can be used for other wine industry related services and products. Just send your email message to VASCM@kkn.net and everyone on the list will receive it. Listings are also posted to our website at www.VASCM.org.

Sustainable & Organic Practices

Included with this newsletter is a copy of a document listing some of our vineyards engaged in sustainable, organic and biodynamic practices. This list is on our website. If you should be on it, please notify Mary Lindsay so you can be added.

Directions to Ridge Vineyards for the 7/31 workshop & meeting:

Ridge Vineyards (production facilities)
18100 Montebello Rd., Cupertino

Directions:

Take the Stevens Creek Blvd. exit off of Hwy. 85, head north
Go 1 mile and left at S. Foothill Blvd.; continue on Stevens Cyn. Rd.
Go 1.8 miles and right on Montebello Rd.
Stay on Montebello for 4.5 miles to Ridge

Note: we will be at the production facilities just beyond the tasting room.

Officers of the Viticulture Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains:

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Newsletter



Next Meeting & Workshop: July 31 - "Water Conservation and Pest Management" at Ridge Vineyards (See details inside)