

Sunnybank Vine Nursery – Planting and growing instructions

Vines will grow almost anywhere in the United Kingdom, and selected early varieties will ripen in unlikely places. The following notes are a guide only to growing and training on the system called double guyot, a simple replacement cane system which gives good results for amateur and professional alike.

GENERAL.

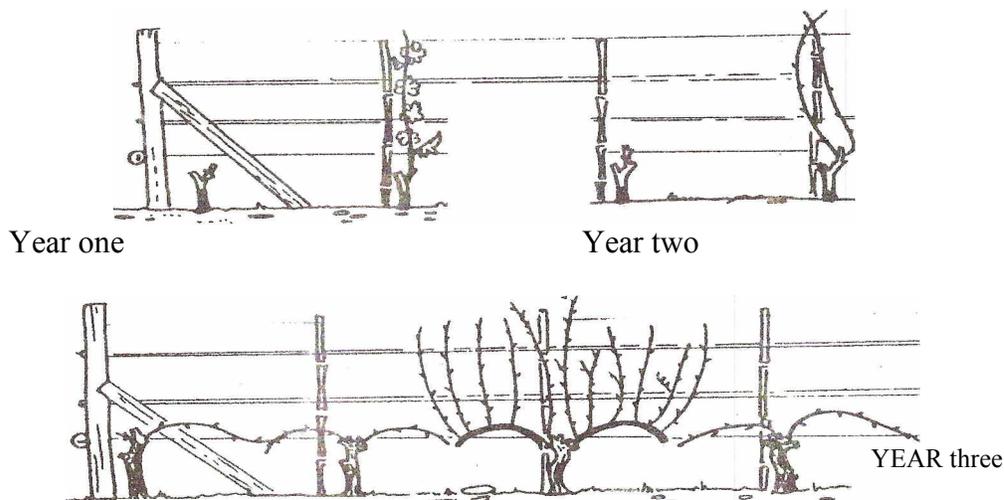
Get the ground in good condition. If it will grow roses, it will grow grapes, and similar preparation is fine for vines, but remember they are a long term crop. Vines will in fact grow anywhere except in seriously waterlogged soil, and in general, and within very wide limits, any garden soil will grow vines.

PLANTING

Rooted cuttings : Plant the cuttings as soon as possible upon receipt in prepared ground and keep well watered. If not planting in the final position make sure they are heeled in and kept well watered, the same applies if they are planted in pots. Vines should not be grown in pots in the long term as they have extensive root systems and will not thrive.

Bare wood cuttings : Again as soon as possible on receipt bury these at least two buds deep either in pots or in a nursery bed outside. The buds can be clearly seen on the barewood cuttings. Again keep well watered. Ensure you put them in the right way up - not always easy to see as you might think ! They will be dispatched with an indicator of which is top and which is to be put into the ground. After the first year treat as per 'rooted cuttings'

TRAINING -outdoor



YEAR ONE : A newly planted one year old vine, and the same vine at the end of the year. Growth may vary from six inches to six feet or more, but about 3-4 ft is normal. allow one shoot to grow, and pinch out side shoots at one leaf. Remove flowers and or grapes.

YEAR TWO: In winter, cut the vine back to three buds, and allow two shoots to grow. Restrict to one only if the first years growth was poor.. Remove flowers and or grapes.

YEAR THREE: Depending on the strength of growth, select one or two shoots, and tie down, pruning to about 6 buds. NOTE that if the first years growth is strong - over 6 ft, skip year two pruning and tie down. Each bud will throw up a shoot which will carry your first years grapes.

YEAR FOUR and after: Select the two strongest shoots from the centre, and cut the rest away. Tie down the two shoots, trimming to 8-10 buds. Repeat every year. Our vines are on their own roots and will usually last a lifetime!

INDOORS.

The same system will work very well indoors, and is excellent when growing in a polytunnel. However, in greenhouses and conservatories it is usual to grow the vine on to build up a framework, then prune new wood back to one or two buds every winter. This works well indoors, and some vines will crop satisfactorily outdoors on this system. Note that there are many training systems, and as the vine is very tolerant, most of them work, at least up to a point.

CROPS

These depend on many factors, including variety .As a rough guide, on Double Guyot, expect about a pound of grapes per foot run of vine. Some may double this amount.

DISEASE

Vines indoors often do not get disease, and many hybrids can usually be grown without spraying. Others *must be sprayed* . The core problem is usually powdery mildew, or in some years Downy Mildew. Sulphur is approved by organic regulations and can be obtained as a solution to spray on. It works ,but is a preventative ,not a cure. Apply before you have a problem Any spray that tackles mildew or any other fungal problem on other fruit or vegetables will probably do the same for vines but be aware of harvest intervals. Note these recommendations are for amateurs and not for those selling their wine or produce. We cannot recommend particular pesticides as they are constantly developing and changing. For best advice join the UKVA and receive their annual Pesticides booklet with up to date information.

BOOKS and WEB LINKS

Successful Grape Growing for Eating and Winemaking, by Alan Rowe, third edition : good on growing and training systems .

Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley Handbook. Grapes Indoors and Out. Good advice on training, particularly indoors.

For a great web site on vines generally (although based in North America) see Lon Rombough's site www.bunchgrapes.com with very good advice on taking cuttings and pruning.

SOCIETIES.

The United Kingdom Vineyards Association 01223 813812. is the National organisation, and can put you in touch with the regional societies. Worthwhile if you are going into it at all seriously, and regional meetings can also be fun. Detailed advice on sprays is worth the subscription alone. www.ukva.org.uk

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Growing notes adapted from those originally written by Brian Edwards former proprietor of Sunnybank Vine Nursery , holder of the National Collection and vine grower of 30 plus years experience.