



Caring For Grapes

Choosing a site:

Grape vines require two to three years to produce a harvestable crop. Grapes generally don't reach full production until the fifth or sixth year. The first step to acquire the perfect grape is to choose a location that gets full sun. If possible choose a sloping site to help avoid damage from spring frosts. Even though grapes can grow in any type of soil, well drained soil is essential.

Grapes adapt to a wide range of soils, but grow best in well drained soil. Select a site that is free of any competition from weeds or other plants. Compost should be tilled into the entire planning bed, not just the hole before planting begins.

Planting:

Grapes are generally planted in rows and trained on a trellis. The spacing between the rows should be about nine feet. The individual plants should be planted six to eight feet apart in the rows.

Plant bare root grapes in early spring. Before planting, prune the grape cane back to only two buds. Soak the roots in a bucket of Root Stimulator mixed with water for 15 to 20 minutes. Set the plant in a hole large enough to spread the roots out without bending them. Cover the roots with soil and press firmly to remove any air pockets.

Grapes do not require a high level of fertility, but adding a slow release fertilizer like Dr. Earth Bud & Bloom Booster or Espoma Plant-tone to the soil each spring would assist in the growth and health of the plant.

Harvest:

The most important part of growing grapes is the harvesting of the fruit. This can be tricky because unlike other fruits, grape color is not a good indication of maturity. In table and wine grapes, ripeness is determined by seed color. The grape is mature when the grape seed turns from a green color to brown. Maturities of seedless table grapes are simply determined by taste.