

Sunnybank Vine Nursery – Planting and growing instructions

These notes are a short guide to growing and training on the system called **Double Guyot**, a simple cane replacement system. Cane replacement is essential for seedless varieties to fruit well. Others are happy on a ‘spur’ pruned system. There are many other systems of pruning and training that are not covered here.

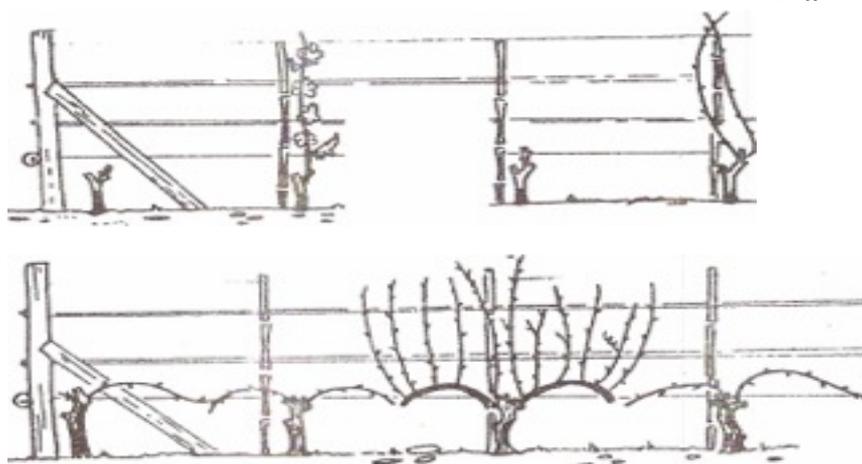
PLANTING

Prepare the planting holes and make sure the ground is well drained. Square holes are better than round ones especially if the soil is heavy. Vines will grow anywhere except in seriously waterlogged soil. Ideal pH is around 6.5 but they are tolerant from 6 – 7.5.

Rooted cuttings: Do not let the roots dry out upon receipt. Plant the cuttings as soon as possible upon receipt in prepared ground and keep well watered for the first two years. If not planting straight away in the final position due to unsuitable conditions then make sure they are either heeled in or potted on and not allowed to dry out. They can then be planted in their final position once the soil has dried out and warmed up. Vines can be grown in large pots / barrels but this will limit their fruiting potential.

Bare wood cuttings: As soon as possible on receipt bury these at least two buds deep either in pots or in a nursery bed outside. Ensure you plant the right way up – the top has a slanted cut and the bottom a flat one. If you think they may have dried out cut a sliver off the bottom of the cutting and allow to soak for a few hours to rehydrate. You can ‘pre-callous’ prior to planting and bottom heat applied to pots will speed up rooting. But keep the tops cool to avoid buds bursting before the roots have formed. Keep from drying out. After the first year treat as per ‘rooted cuttings’.

Training Year One



Year Two

Year Three

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 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 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 year's grapes.

YEAR FOUR and after: Select the two strongest shoots from side of 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 is known as spur pruning. However seedless varieties will fruit better on cane replacement systems.

CROPS

These depend on many factors, including variety. As a rough guide, on Double Guyot, expect about a 1.5kg per metre 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 and professional qualifications are required both for their purchase and application.

BOOKS and WEB LINKS

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

Grapes: Indoors and Out, Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley Handbook.

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

UK VINEYARDS ASSOCIATION

This is the national organisation, and can put you in touch with regional societies. Worthwhile if you are going into it at all seriously, provides detailed advice on sprays. www.ukva.org.uk

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Growing instructions 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. Updated November 2016.