

# Planting and Growing Grapes

Your grape plants are professionally grown and packed with great care. Each plant should have two shoots. If during shipping any of the growth is broken off, new shoots will develop from secondary buds and the plants will continue to grow.

Growing your own grapes is a fun way to produce fruit for fresh eating, making jams, jellies and wine. Selecting the proper varieties will provide a long season of grape harvest. Table and wine grapes have the same basic growing requirements and techniques. Grapes are long lived and once mature will be productive for a lifetime.

## Where to plant

Grapes are very adaptable and easy to grow. Plant in full sun avoiding areas subjected to strong winds or frost pockets. Most soil types are suitable except for very wet or dry. If planting in rows, orient plantings north to south for the most sun exposure. Most grape varieties can be planted six to eight feet apart in rows or on trellises. Grapes require some type of support. Support can be as simple as a chain link fence or arbor to a pole and wire trellis system. Described below are two common training systems.

## How to plant

Dig a hole large enough to easily contain the root system. The hole should be large enough to plant the root system approximately 1/2 to 1 inch deeper than the soil level in the pot. Remove the plant from the pot and slightly roughen the root system. Place the root system in the hole and backfill with the original soil. Soil may be amended with composted manure, but use sparingly to avoid promoting too much vine growth. Place a sturdy stake in the soil next to the stem and tie the vine to the stake for support. Water thoroughly. Young plants will need water often, but avoid keeping plants too wet. Once vines are established water only during periods of low rainfall.

## Pruning

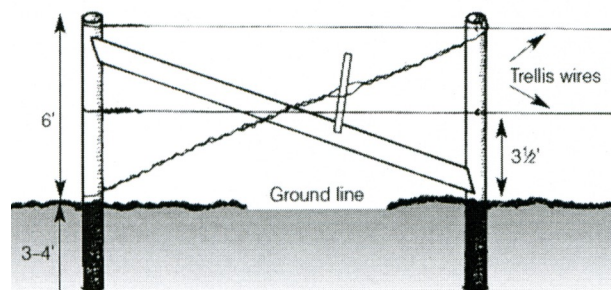
Annual pruning is important. For productive vines, removal of 75 to 90 percent of the previous season's growth is required. Pruning should be done between January and March. Pruning method is determined by the type of training. See below for pruning based on training method.

## Fertilizing

There is no need to fertilize the first year. Each year after fertilize very lightly to avoid too much vegetative growth. Apply a balanced garden fertilizer at the lowest rate recommended on the label.

## Supporting Vines

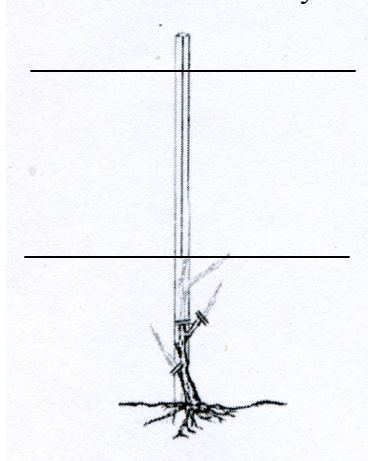
Grape vines can be grown on a variety of supports, arbors and fences. Below is a simple method of providing post and wire supports for the Four Cane Kniffin System and Cordon System.



Common end posts for the Kniffin and Cordon training systems

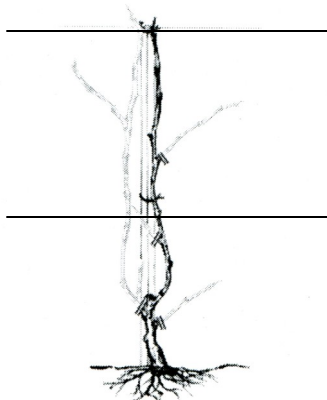
# Pruning and Training Systems for Grapes

Two common systems for training grape vines are the Four Cane Kniffin System and the Cordon System. Both systems require a support system that is easy to build and maintain. The systems start with the plant being trained to a stake the first year. Prune canes as shown below each year from January through March.



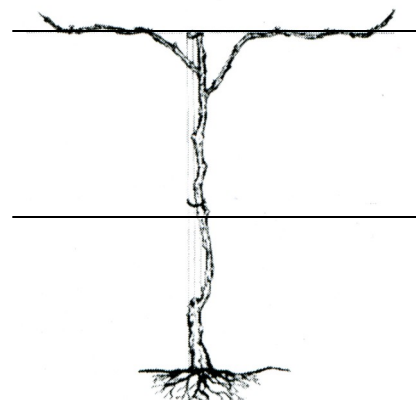
**First Year**

Train two or three shoots along a stake.



**Second Year**

Train the most vigorous cane that reaches the top wire. Remove all other shoots.

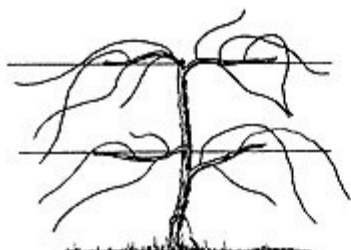


**Third Year**

Train two along the wires for the Cordon System and four canes along wires for the Four Cane Kniffin System.

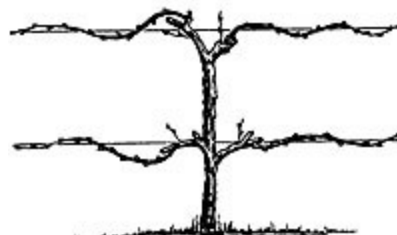
## Four Cane Kniffin System

The Four Cane Kniffin System uses a two wire trellis. Canes are trained along the wires to provide ample sunlight and air movement. Select two canes one each direction from the main trunk on each wire. Tie the canes to the wires using twine. Each year remove last year's growth, leaving the main canes 10 to 12 buds long. Remove side shoots on main canes to 2 to 4 buds or spurs. This will maintain productive vines year after year. (A spur is a small cluster of buds along the canes that will produce new growth and fruit).



**Four Cane System**

Before and after canes trained to two per wire.

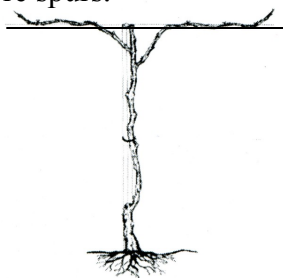


**Four Cane System**

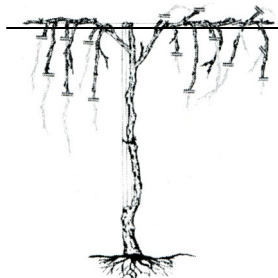
Mature vines pruned 10 to 12 spurs or buds per side and 2 to 4 buds per spur.

## Cordon System

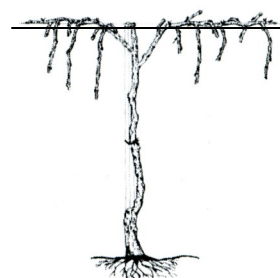
There are a number of cordon systems. This is an example of one where the main trunk and two lateral canes attached to a wire. The lateral canes are pruned each year to spurs every 6 to 10 inches apart. The length and number of spurs is based on the vigor of the vine. More vigorous vines can have longer laterals and more spurs.



**Spring**  
Third season



**Winter**  
Third season



**Spring**  
Fourth and following seasons