

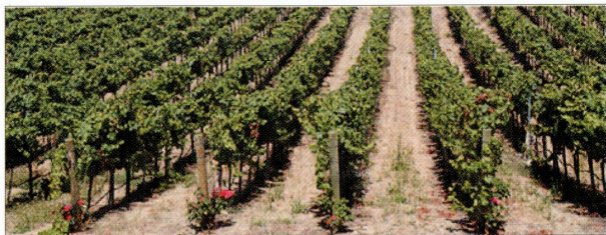
# Living Near A Vineyard

## *Hello Neighbor...*

It's widely assumed that living in rural Nebraska means you will live near a field of corn or soybeans. It's common to see large equipment during spring and fall and most people are aware that care should be given when using certain pesticides near these fields. In general, most everyone knows what to expect.

*Now there's something new dotting the Nebraska landscape...Vineyards!*

Like row crops, vineyards also use farm equipment and pesticides. We'd like to take you on a written tour of what you might expect in a vineyard throughout our growing season. For a "real" tour, contact a local grape grower!



# Spring



Spring is the beginning of a new season. Grapevines are a woody plant...and like other woody plants, such as trees and shrubs, it is bud break time. If we get a cold night or two, we may have to protect the tender new growth from frost. Some methods we may use are: wind machines... which look like big fans, sprinkler systems... to cover the vines with a layer of protective ice, or small, controlled, contained fires. These methods can create a micro-environment around the vines warm enough to save an entire crop.

Maybe you've already seen grow tubes. When new vines are planted, they act as miniature greenhouses to speed the growth of young vines and help them grow straight. The tubes also protect plants from rabbits or other critters that might devour them. Deer can be especially damaging to young green plants. Tubes alone may not be enough protection, so some vineyard owners even install electric deer fence around their vineyards.

Spring is also the time to begin to protect our crop from fungal diseases

such as “bunch rot” or powdery mildew. These are also common diseases on roses, lilacs and many other garden plants. These diseases are caused when humidity and moisture cling to the grapes and create a favorable environment for disease development. Fungicide applications are essential to control these problems. Grape growers use a variety of chemicals and typically treat the plants when there is little wind. With many of these chemicals, it is very important to avoid the vineyard for some time after spraying. Each chemical has a different re-entry interval ... the time between spraying and when you can safely re-enter the vineyard. If you have questions about the exact chemicals being used or the re-entry intervals, contact the vineyard owner.

Spring is also when weed control begins for everyone, not just for farmers. Some vineyard owners use Roundup® to kill weeds. Yup, the same herbicide you use around home or in the field. But it will be used in small amounts and only directly beneath the trellis where the mowers can't reach. Wider, more accessible areas between rows will be disked or mowed. Keeping weeds down is a matter of conservation... It saves water -- and power -- since the water goes to the vines instead of to grow weeds.

Although Roundup®, if applied properly, is not harmful to a grapevine there are some commonly used herbicides that are harmful. The most hazardous products are those that contain 2,4-D and Banvel®. Even yard and garden herbicides like Weed-Be-Gone® can also be hazardous. Using these herbicides on a windy day, even miles away from a vineyard, can damage or destroy an entire crop and possibly even kill the plants... which can take years to replace and grow until they will produce fruit again.



# Summer

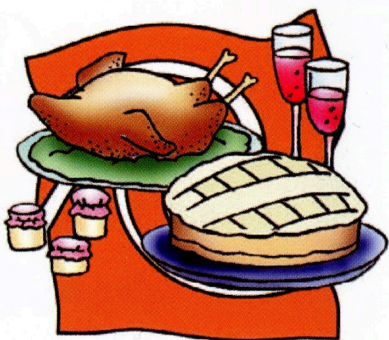


As we roll into summer, work in the vineyard gets busy. This is the time of year when we manually strip away leaves. This is done to expose the grapes to just the right amount of sunlight. This makes them more flavorful and allows for better air circulation and less disease.

While there's a feast of other food available to birds at this time of year, a few species love to munch on grapes. That's when bird control is vital. We use a variety of methods to try to keep birds from destroying our vineyards. Some of these include noise makers like propane cannons and recorded distress calls, decoy owls and eagles, and sometimes netting will be stretched over the vines to protect the still ripening grapes.

As the summer winds down, grape harvest is just around the corner.

# Fall



Grape harvest in Nebraska can begin as early as the beginning of August and can run as late as the end of September. For top quality grapes, harvesting at precisely the right moment is critical. When the grapes are ready, there are, literally, not enough hours in the day. Sometimes picking goes on around the clock.

You may hear engine noises or see lights in the vineyard at night. The noise may be from trucks used to transport the grapes or possibly mechanical harvesters at work. Night harvest has another major benefit... the grapes are cooler. Cool grapes won't spoil as quickly on their way to the market or winery.

In October through December growers get a little time off. Grapes are dormant then, thank goodness!

# Winter



January is the start of the pruning season! Pruning is very important because it sets the stage for future crops... both quality and quantity. In Nebraska, pruning is most commonly done manually. A vineyard owner will spend days in cold weather taking care of each and every plant by hand. Pruning wraps up just in time for bud break and the entire cycle starts over again.

For more information regarding the pesticides used in Nebraska vineyards and potential risks with the chemicals we may use, please contact your local Cooperative Extension office or visit our web site at [www.nwgga.org](http://www.nwgga.org).

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