

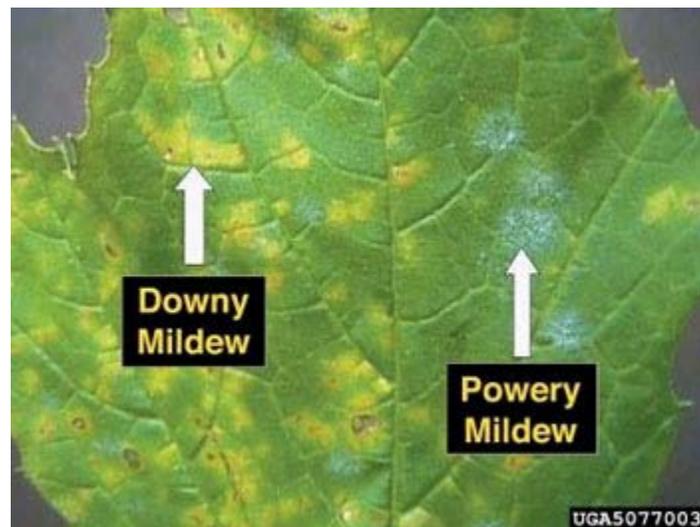
The growth rate has accelerated and pre-flower bunches are already starting to break open and form flowers on some varieties. Disease control continues. Don't spray flowering plants too vigorously, the flowers are easily dislodged at this stage.

Powdery Mildew Control

PM must be stopped early and continuously through the season. Each vineyard is more or less susceptible, but almost all may have an attack as the moisture/fog/rain conditions fluctuate throughout the year. If you wait til you see it, it's too late. It is always present in the atmosphere here.

I have just completed my third spray on a two week (14 day) cycle. If you have more pressure due to a heavier marine layer you may consider a 10 day cycle. I started with Microthiol sulfur, switched to Rally two weeks ago and back to Microthiol this week. The one block which is clearly susceptible to Downey Mildew got treated with Pristine instead of Rally. Next spray will be Quintec for everything except the one block will get Nordox (copper compound) for DM.

Here is a picture of grape leaves with early attacks of either DM or PM. It helps to know what to look for:



Eventually really bad DM turns white and looks like this on a leaf and on the cane.



Insect Control

Don't forget to include **Dipel** to each acre's spray program.

This is also a good time to put out Yellow Jacket traps. The queens are flying around looking for old gopher and squirrel holes to use as nests. Lure them into a trap now and avoid 20,000 yellow jackets later in the year. Given the early season, I should have mentioned this as an April chore. Put them out right away if you can.

PLUCK & TUCK

The new growth on most varietals has gotten long enough to train into the upper wires. You do not want the vines to be sprawling and shading the grape clusters as they develop. The grapes will need dappled sunlight later in the season. Get them ready for that now. Create narrow canopies which let in sunlight.

Here in Ramona we have better sunlight than any region in Europe. (We are as far south as Tunisia in North Africa). In most situations we do not have to pull the bottom most leaves from the canes to guarantee sufficient sunshine. If you've got a shallow water table, lots of growth or a shaded corner of the vineyard, then open up the fruiting zone.

Imidacloprid

It certainly never rained in April. I will be using Mallet 2F (in a very tiny amount per acre) as a foliar spray for the next two months. This will get the Imidacloprid into the vines for the season. It is my least favorite method of application, but Pierce's Disease and white flies are much worse.