



2018 in the Vineyard FEBRUARY

Have I mentioned irrigation recently?

Water now, water next week, water yesterday !

We got one storm last month, it was nice to get a deep soaking. The 1/8th inch on Jan 20th does not count. You should be watering your mature vines at least once every two weeks to a level that gets the root structure moist. I water 1 gal/hour drip emitters for 6 hours. That may be a little more than absolutely necessary - but better safe than sorry.

The Irrigation System

When you turn on that irrigation system you will have failures! So far this year I've had emitters broken off, turn-off-valves disconnecting spontaneously and tubes chewed completely off by rabbits or very nasty coyotes. After starting the water, walk the vineyard; look for leaks. Have repair equipment in hand. You'll need it.

Weed Control

It looks like we will not get any soaking rain (.25" or more) before Feb 12th. If you don't have pre-emergent applied, it isn't going to happen. We'll have more hand work to do later in the year. I do notice that weeds are starting to sprout on walkways and roads. They can be sprayed later than Feb 12. Keep watching for rain.

Squirrels (all squirrels must die)

Squirrels are getting active right on schedule. Do what you need to do now so that you don't have 10 more little mouths to feed from your ripe vineyard in August.

Pruning

Pre-pruning should be complete. You should not leave full length cuttings in your vineyard. They are disease vectors and they catch on everything that goes thru the rows - like a tractor or ATV.

If you live at the bottom of a cold valley don't prune now. Otherwise, it looks like it will be safe to start by mid-February. This month's meeting of the RVVA (FEB 27th) will be about **vine physiology and pruning**. If you are new to the vineyard - this one you need! If you are an expert, than come and share your expertise. There will be a pruning demo and hands-on opportunity the following Saturday, March 3rd.

Don't final prune within 3 days before or after a rain. Use Vita-Seal or Rally on large cuts. Avoid introducing pathogens.

Clean Owl Boxes

If your owl box was occupied last year, or the last couple of years, there is probably a couple of inches of 'who knows what' inside the box. Lower the box and clean it before nesting starts next month.