



This year has been dry, early, cool, hot and then very hot. We have not had a rainstorm yet, but even that looks inevitable. My grapes are very late, I should be close to picking - instead we've just started netting. And even the netting is going on early just because we have the time.

The convection oven of July 6th was disaster for many, painful for some and even uneventful for a lot of vineyards. We now know something new we have to watch out for. It looks to me like it may have actually delayed veraison as the more mature clusters were dehydrated and killed. Veraison is not showing here as early as I expected, even with the cool spring.

Even after those two incredibly hot days, we've seen consistently high temperatures. I do not remember so much 95+ days in a row in the nearly 20 years I have lived here.

Powdery & Downey Mildew Control

Harvest will be late this year for many vineyards. Don't stop your spray program just because you 'never spray after August 15th'. The grapes are still vulnerable until veraison is complete.

Even then, don't stop spraying Dipel to keep skeletonizers under control. AND IF IT RAINS ON RIPE BUNCHES - have a spray program of Luna or equivalent ready to go. Bunch rot caused by rain soaked grapes can ruin your entire crop in very short time.

Water

Most of this year we've been ahead of the water curve. The really hot weather in July has changed that. We're working hard to get some moisture into the soil after the top layers have boiled off.

After getting educated at the Symposium, I'm changing my watering schedule! I'll be doing stress watering before veraison and full use water after veraison. The most recent studies show that photosynthesis needs water to convert sunlight into magic.

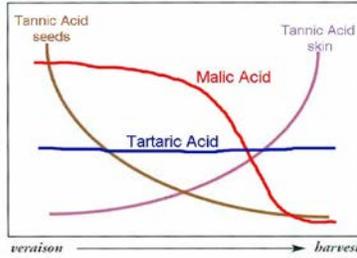
Bird & Bee Netting

We are not growing wine grapes, we are growing bird candy. It is time now to have all your net in place. Only the absolute latest varieties don't need to be netted now so that late season spraying can continue. If you put up your nets early for shade or just timing, it is still possible to spray through the net.

Measuring your Grapes

Sometime in August you can start measuring your grapes. Make sure your tools & supplies are on hand and working properly. Calibrate your pH meter, clean and test your refractometer (use distilled water and a 25% sugar solution). Make sure you have fresh sodium hydroxide (0.1 normal). Clean all your work surfaces and containers.

We're looking for that sweet spot where these curves and several others are perfectly in sync.



Look for the Harvest Test Lecture 2015 in the presentations section of this website.

Keep your Customer (Winemaker) Informed

One of Ramona's competitive advantages is that the grape growers and winemakers are close, communicate often, and don't decide on harvest date in a vacuum. KEEP IT THAT WAY - IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Every week send your winemaker the results of your testing. The winemaker needs to plan for harvest, you want your grapes to be perfect.