



# *The Grapevine*

## *Newsletter of the Santa Cruz Mountain Viticulture Association*

*June, 2004*

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### **Message From The President**

Fruit set!

The season took off early this year and hasn't stopped yet. This is great news so far – if we can keep up the heat units it will be a fantastic year.

Now is the time to focus on canopy management. Premium fruit loves light (in a stippled sort of way) and air. It is essential to allow free air movement through the canopy so that moisture is not allowed to be trapped and settle on the maturing berries. Even moisture from dew or fog can be an issue so open up those canopies (within reason). At least remove the leaves from underneath the fruit and where leaves are layered on top of one another. Fruit sunburn can be just as damaging so don't overdo.

Leaf removal will be the main topic of discussion at our June 16 meeting, and many growers and consultants will be contributing their experience and methods. This process, though expensive (if you hire it out) and time consuming is a vital step toward creating the goal of premium fruit. Research has documented that leaf removal at the proper time (post fruit set) is as important as spray applications to combat botrytis and powdery mildew and improve fruit quality.

### **Next Meetings**

#### **June 16: Canopy Management**

In-the-vineyard workshop, including leaf pulling, hedging, summer spray program and options, etc.

(Rick Anzalone and John Rogers will also address the Vineyard Inventory Project)

**3pm, Savannah-Chanelle Vineyards**

**August 3: “If you grow it, will they come?” – Growing Commercially Viable Fruit, a panel session with local winemakers**

Location to be determined

*Note: Meetings/workshops to be held every two months. Each meeting to include a ‘vine talk’ summary of timely vineyard tasks.*

Speaking of mildew (though no one likes to): now is the time to take a look at your fruit very carefully. If you have it in the vineyard it will start to show on the fruit now. I have already heard rumors that it is beginning to show on fruit that may have missed a spray interval or be in a hot spot. If you had powdery mildew last year, go to the area where it was the worst and see if there is an infection trying to rear it's ugly head. Now is the time to deal with it!

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If you actually see mildew on your grapes you will want to use an eradicant. One effective eradicant spray that I am aware of is a product called "Armicarb" produced by Helena Corporation in Salinas. It costs \$5/lb and is applied at a rate of 5 lbs. / 100 gallons. Contact Helena directly in Salinas, as they have no other distributor in this area.

I am sure that there are other approaches to early mildew. A sulfur wash has also been recommended, and this can be effective. The problem is that sulfur is a suppressant and will hold down the infection but not eliminate it. Sulfur is also bad for flavor. Ideally, growers are reducing or eliminating it from the spray program around now.

Flint and Elite have also proven to be very effective in keeping infections at bay. Elevate is a proven post-rain event spray for botrytis.

I am looking forward to hearing from other growers at the next meeting about how they are holding up this year and dealing with disease issues. If we can share information with each other it will elevate the quality of fruit in our appellation and that is good for everyone.

On another note we are looking for a small group of creative volunteers who want to put together a display for the Santa Cruz County Fair this September. The Winegrowers Assn. is always there but we would like the viticulture of the region to stand up and be recognized. It's important for the public to understand the importance of where their grapes come from. If you are interested in contributing please sign up at the next meeting or contact Mary Lindsay or myself at the numbers provided. Thank you to the members

who have already expressed interest in this project.

Happy summer!

- Prudy Foxx

### **April Meeting Wrap-Up**

At our April meeting we were privileged to hear Mark Chandler, executive director of the Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission share with us their experiences and lessons in establishing visibility for their appellation, and putting it 'on the map', so to speak. It motivated a good discussion among our members. There are some obvious differences between the Lodi appellation and our own, but there are also a number of similarities, and many of the practices Mark shared with us can be applied anywhere.

The Lodi Commission was created in 1991, as a drive by local growers to assure a market for their fruit. Membership is mandatory for vineyards producing at least 25 tons, with fees based on a percentage of sales. The growers' association became successful at creating market demand for its grapes and the resulting wine, and the Lodi Winery Assn. eventually joined forces with it. The funds raised gives the association tremendous resources, with an entomologist and viticulturist on staff, and marketing resources at their disposal. The Commission built a Visitor's Center in the center of town that includes a tasting room pouring wines from the appellation's 50-some wineries. The region has grown considerably since the Commission's inception from eight wineries at that time. For those of you who attended the Wine Institute's Sustainability Workshop that we held in

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February, you might be interested to hear that that workshop was evidently modelled on a sustainability program started in Lodi some years ago in an effort to improve and focus on their own grape quality. And also, as a commitment to make their fruit more attractive and ensure its commercial viability.

According to Mark, everything they do focuses one way or another into marketing - marketing for their fruit, marketing for their appellation name, marketing for their wine. For example, even their research programs to produce better quality fruit ultimately support their marketing goals. They're currently encouraging wineries from other regions to open facilities in Lodi - because, the more wineries in the region the better prices you get for your grapes.

Among the promotional activities that Mark recommends: participating in special events including industry trade shows, wine festivals, consumer tastings; public relations activities such as working with wine writers, awards (including the State Fair); advertising; trade associations; education and quality improvement within the appellation, including tastings for growers. And all this should be preceded by strategic planning, definition of strategies and tactics and target markets. The Lodi Commission actively pursues a variety of grants to fund its programs, including one to promote the branding of 'sustainability' for its wines.

The SCMWA engages in many of these activities in support of our local wineries, as do many of the wineries themselves.

The Viticulture Assn. has formed a promotional committee to look at how we can help support the sale and marketing of our members' fruit, and

we've made some progress in defining goals and tactics. Look for the August meeting to promote a dialog with winemakers on what they're looking for from us in delivering commercially viable fruit.

### **Members' Information Exchange**

**Q:** "I've heard that wettable sulfur doesn't work as well in cooler temperatures. Is this true?"

**A:** It's true that wettable sulfur does not volatilize as well in cooler temperatures and may not be as effective. However, sulfur is very compatible with foliar fertilizers, and the non-systemic sprays are not. This is problematic if you want to mix fungicide and foliar fertilizers for a one-pass spray day during your first few sprays in cooler weather. But now it's later in the season and by the end of June you should be getting away from sulfur for the sake of juice/wine quality. Note that this will be part of the discussion at the June meeting.

**Q:** "With the cooler temperatures we had early in May, the newer leaves on my shoots turned yellow. Does that indicate disease, nutritional deficiency or a reaction to the cold?"

**A:** We're going to leave the "answer" to this question open to group discussion at the June meeting. The yellowing is a nutritional deficiency, and the vines experiencing this have since greened up in the warmer temps. But come to the June meeting to find out more!

*(This column is designed to provide a forum for members to ask questions, share information and opinions. Contact the newsletter editor at [mary@lindsaypr.com](mailto:mary@lindsaypr.com) or 408-984-7242 with your contributions.)*

## **Classifieds**

This column is an opportunity for members to sell/trade vineyard-related items. If you have an 'ad' to list, contact the newsletter editor.

## **Dues Renewal**

For most of our members, it's time to renew your membership in the SCMVA. Send your annual dues, only \$25, to The Santa Cruz Mountains Viticulture Association  
P.O. Box 126  
Saratoga, CA 95071  
Or better yet, come to the next meeting and renew your membership in person. It would be great to see you!



## **Officers of the Santa Cruz Mountains Viticulture Association:**

President: Prudy Foxx, 831-359-9100,  
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408-984-7242, mary@lindsaypr.com

Vineyard Inventory: Rick Anzalone,  
408-358-6323 or 408-206-2364

## **Awards Opportunities**

**2004 Santa Cruz County Fair, Watsonville, Sept. 14-19:**

Amateur Wine Competition: Amateur winemakers are encouraged to submit entries to be judged; entry fee is only \$3. Entries due: August 7

Judging: August 21

Public tasting and bbq: September 11 (at the Rodgers House, County Fairgrounds)

*For more info: contact David D'Onofrio, (831) 438-8761 or*

*david\_donofrio@sbcglobal.net*

Commercial Wine Competition: open to all bonded wineries in the SC Mt. appellation.

Entries due: July 12

Judging: July 26

*For more info: call Shannon at the SCMWA 831-479-9463.*

**California State Fair, Aug. 20 – Sept. 6**

Entries were due May 28; plan for 2005.

Note that the State Fair has Viticultural Awards for the award winning wines that recognize the agricultural contributions of single vineyard grapegrowers and estate vineyard managers.

## **About the Newsletter**

The goal of the SCMVA newsletter is to be a helpful resource and means of communication for our members. We welcome your suggestions and contributions for articles and content. Please contact Prudy Foxx or the newsletter editor, Mary Lindsay, per the contact information in the box on this page.

***If you prefer to receive the newsletter via email (right now as a Word attachment) instead of by postal mail, please send a note to mary@lindsaypr.com.***

The Santa Cruz Mountains  
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