

# GRAPES

*At a glance....*

**Spacing:**

6-8 feet in an arbor, 8-10 feet in rows trellised on wires.

**PH:** 6-6.8

**Watering:**

Keep well watered during first year of planting

**Mulching:**

Grass competition can make it difficult to establish and tend a grape planting. Cultivation around the roots of the plants should be very gentle as grapes are very shallow rooted. Landscape fabric mulched with stone or gravel will help to suppress weeds and be a heat sink for the grape's root system.



## *The Details...*

Grapes benefit from full sun and high heat. Although the soil need not be rich, it should be well drained with plenty of organic matter.

Dig a hole slightly larger than the potted grape, add any soil amendments you wish making sure to incorporate them well into the hole and the native soil that you will use to back fill. Water well.

The grape vine will take about a year to become established. After this a trellis or arbor should be constructed to support the plant.

In milder climates, many grape growers do their pruning in the fall, but northern growers are better off to leave all excess growth on the plant over the winter, so that there are more live canes to choose from if the plant suffers winter injury. Grapes are shy in the spring and are late to leaf out. Often the buds may look dead but have simply not swelled up yet, so give them a bit of time. Shriveled and sunken buds are a sign that they are dead.

Annual pruning to renew the vine should be completed in March or early April. Cold climate growers should encourage "low heading" or side branching close to the ground, allowing more of the plant to enjoy the protection of snow cover during the winter months. These side branches can then be trained up for fruit production during the summer season.

A grape trellis can be a simple structure consisting of several fence posts supporting 2 main wires. Bracing the end posts is important as one season's growth of vine can be very heavy and sag the structure if it is not tensioned. The vine can be pruned to grow out along the 2 wires, one at 2 feet, the second at at 3-5 feet above the ground.

We can recommend both [The Grape Grower](#) and [Growing Grapes in Minnesota](#) as wonderful references for proper trellising of the vines.

Text by Effie Eifer – Fruit Drawings by Gabe Tempesta  
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