

Newsletter

April 2004

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 15th, at 7:30 PM.
Maplewood Community Pool, 7550 Lohmeyer, Maplewood MO
MWS Website: www.mowinemakers.org
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Notes from the March Meeting: The wine Fair was definitely a success and a profit was realized. Our thanks to Keith Burns and the committee members for a job well done. There was a lot of discussion about how to improve it in the future. Nothing much was resolved. The bottom line is, we need more people on the committee and we need to start planning earlier in the year. The biggest problem continues to be qualified judges.

Next meeting: Thursday March 18th at 7:30PM, Maplewood Community Pool, 7550 Lohmeyer, Maplewood, MO

Clyde and Katie Gill of Peaceful Bend Winery and Vineyards will speak about the importance of pH.

The tasting will be four or five of Clyde's wines, which are for sale at the winery. There will be a charge of \$5 for this tasting.

Cellar Notes:

A question has recently come as to how much sulfite (SO₂) to add, if any, before bottling.

When SO₂ is added to wine, part of it becomes bound and only the remaining free portion is available to protect the wine. The level of free SO₂ needed depends on the pH, and is generally in the range of 25 to 50 ppm (see Ref. 1). It is recommended that these levels of free SO₂ be maintained throughout the life of the wine.

The problem is, measuring the free SO₂ and knowing when there is enough to protect the wine. On the other hand if too much is added it can be detected in the wine.

The SO₂ test kits manufactured by Chemetrics are considered to be accurate to within 10 ppm for white wines but are of questionable value for testing red wines. More accurate testing apparatus is complicated and usually beyond the means of home winemakers.

If you can't measure the free SO₂, the following amounts are recommended in Ref. 2.

- ? White wines: 50 ppm added at first racking, and 15 to 25 ppm added at each additional racking.
- ? Red wines: 30 ppm added at first racking and 15 to 20 ppm added at each additional racking

If you make wine from fresh grapes, I recommend both references from our friends at SMSU. Both are in our club library.

Ref. 1: Micro Vinification, by Murli Dharmadhikari, and Karl Wilker

Ref. 2: Making Wine for Home Use by Karl Wilker, Travis Harris, Marilyn Odneal, and Murli Dharmadhikari

Vineyard Notes:

The first pass rough pruning should be complete. It's good practice to leave excess buds the first time around to account for winter kill on the less hardy varieties. After buds start to swell you can get a better idea of the number of live buds and then remove the excess.

Now is the time to assess the vineyard's fertility level. What is the size of the vines (how much year-old wood was removed at pruning)? What was last year's fruit yield? Are you satisfied with the vines' growth or are there signs of nutrient deficiencies. If you haven't had a soil test within 2 years, you should get one. In addition to soil nutrients the soil pH is very important as it effects the vine ability to up-take nutrients.

An annual application of nitrogen is generally recommended for mature vines. It should be scattered beneath the vine in late March or early April. The recommended amount of 40 to 80 lbs of actual N per acre calculates to approximately:

- ? ½ to 1 lbs (1 to 2 cups) of 13-13-13 per vine or
- ? 0.16 to 0.32 lbs (1/3 to 2/3 cups) of 46-0-0 (urea) per vine,

The Grape Spray Guide that was handed out at the pruning demo had some errors and omissions. An updated version with expanded general information will be posted on our web site.

Early fungicide cover sprays are the most important for controlling diseases. Begin application when the shoots are one inch long and continue at seven to ten day interval until past bloom. Bloom is evident when the tiny caps fall off the flower buds.

Calendar of Events:

- ? May 16-18 Washington MO Fine Art Fair and Wine Fest, features local and out-of-state artists showing their works and local wineries offering samples of their products on the riverfront. (888) 792-7466.
- ? May 20th MWS Meeting, program and tasting will be on meads made from different types of honey.
- ? June 15th, Viticulture Field Day at the Southwest Missouri State Fruit Experiment Station in Mountain Grove, MO.