

President's Message

Well, our calendar year draws to a close, and a good one it has been. Nice warm growing season, little or no rain during véraison, early harvest, beautiful fruit. Great publicity in Sunset Magazine. An encouraging start to the wet season. Hopefully we won't have to do another rain dance.

Which brings me to the topic at hand: Our annual Meeting/dinner will be Saturday night, January 30, at the U S Hotel in Jacksonville, with Platon and the Jacksonville Inn catering. Cost will be the same as usual. \$37.50 per person, \$75 per couple. Greg Jones will give his annual growing season analysis and forecast for the upcoming year.

Last year our first Southern Oregon Grape Symposium was such a huge success, we are going to do it again: The 2nd Annual Southern Oregon Grape Symposium will be held at SOREC on March 15, 2016. The Program/Technical Committee has put together a great program, including Glen McCourty, John Duarte, Scott Burns, and Greg Jones. We have some interesting ideas on the geology and soils of Southern Oregon, and how to use soil knowledge to improve farming. We will cover the issue of clean plant material, and how we can best build the reputation of grapes and wine of Southern Oregon.

I have been learning how to maintain our website, and hopefully you will see more relevant and up to date information in the future. Some of you have your logos posted to the site, but many don't. If you would like to have your business logo and website added to the website, please send [me](#) a PDF file copy of your logo.

Starting at the first of the year, I will send out membership invoices. We are retaining our same dues structure: \$25/year for non-commercial/individual enthusiast, \$50/year for commercial vineyard/winery, and \$100/year for business affiliate membership. You can pay this by check mailed to RVWA, P O Box 1402, Phoenix, OR, 97535 (preferred), or you can go to the web site and pay by credit card or PayPal. If you pay before the first of the year, I will not have to send an invoice (Yay!), and if you pay reasonably soon after the invoice, I will not have to send another invoice (Yay! Again). Maybe you could take care of membership and the cost of the annual Dinner/Meeting in one fell swoop. Hoo-Rah! Remember, all of our funds go toward Research and Education. We have had a very productive year, with great educational events featuring world renowned speakers, all due to your continued support.

I hope you all have a splendid holiday season. In parting, I leave you with a poem on wine by one of my favorite poets, Pablo Neruda of Chile. This is the price you pay for having an old English teacher as the editor of your Newsletter. Caution: Some people might consider this poem R rated. Paz—John

Ode to Wine by Pablo Neruda

Day colored wine, night colored wine,
Wine with purple feet or wine with topaz blood,
Wine, starry child of earth,
Wine, smooth as a golden sword,
Soft as lascivious velvet
Wine, spiral seashelled and full of wonder,
Marine, never has one goblet contained you,
One song, one man, you are gregarious,
At the least, you must be shared.
My Darling, suddenly the line of your hip
becomes the curve of the wine goblet,
Your breast is the grape cluster,
your nipple the grape,
The gleam of spirits lights your hair
And your navel is a chaste seal
Stamped on your belly,
Your love an inexhaustible cascade of wine,
Light that illuminates my senses,
The earthly splendor of life.
I like on the table,
when we're speaking,
The light of a bottle
of intelligent wine.
Drink it,
and remember in each drop
In each topaz glass,
in every purple ladle
That autumn labored to fill the glass with wine
And in the ritual of his office, let the simple man remember
To think of the soil and his duty
to propagate the canticle of the wine.

Upcoming Events

RVWA Annual Meeting/Dinner

When: 5:30pm – 9pm, January 30, 2016

5:30 – 6:15 pm: Social (Bring wine to share)

5:15 – 7:00 pm: Meeting

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm Dinner

Cost: \$37.50/person, \$75/couple, payable on website with CC or at the door with cash or check

RSVP: Please RSVP to me **by January 26 at the latest (sooner the better)**

Pest Management Strategic Plan" for Wine Grapes

The goal of this project is to document the current pest management challenges and needs within the industry, and to create a cohesive plan for focusing the industry's time, money, and energy moving forward.

When: Monday, December 14, 1-3 PM

Where: OSU's Josephine County Extension Auditorium, 215 Ringuette St, Grants Pass, OR 97527

Media Relations 101 Webinar by Oregon Wine

Who and what: Interested in generating more publicity for your vineyard, winery and/or wines? Join marketing and communications consultant Dixie Huey of Trellis Growth Partners and RVWA member Marilyn Hawkins of Hawkins & Company PR for Oregon Wine's first webinar.

When: Thursday, December 17, 10 – 11:00 am

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4901578127039372033>

Grow Tubes Needed

The new vineyard at Southern Oregon University's Sustainability garden needs some help: If you have any spare grow tubes, they would appreciate the donation. Contact [me](#) and I will arrange delivery.

Grapes Wanted

A large winery from the Willamette Valley is looking for Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc and Chardonnay. If you have fruit for sale, contact Ian Burch, Winemaker, <http://www.scottpaul.com>, cell. [503.569.5872](tel:503.569.5872)

SOREC Viticulture Specialist Hiring

As you know, we have been without a viticulture specialist for one year now. The hiring committee that worked on the process this summer was not successful. As a result, the position was announced again, and application period will close January 15. Patty Skinkis will Chair the new hiring committee, and Randy Gold and Sean Naumes will serve as industry representatives. The posting details can be found at https://jobs.oregonstate.edu/applicants/jsp/shared/position/JobDetails_css.jsp

'Huge' Outbreak of Pierce's Disease Mild weather could be contributing factor in Napa and Sonoma counties by Paul Franson

North Coast, Calif.—Grapegrowers in Napa and Sonoma counties experienced an explosion of Pierce's disease (PD) this year, and it's attributed to the native blue-green sharpshooter, not the threatening glassy-winged sharpshooter that so far has been excluded from the counties by rigid quarantines. Researchers are hoping to uncover the reason behind the spike in PD, but many people are speculating that the mild weather we've had the past two winters may be a culprit. Meanwhile, a new method of addressing the disease developed in Texas, where PD may have originated and still is rampant, shows promise. Sonoma County hard hit Rhonda Smith, the viticultural advisor for University of California Cooperative Extension in Sonoma County, said, "A huge increase in Pierce's disease occurred in vineyards that are traditional hot spots as well as in sites not normally affected, pointing to an epidemic associated with warm winters." She said that growers removed tens of thousands of dead vines in the spring and replanted, but the demand for plants outstripped supply. Smith added that the incidence of PD has been slowly increasing during the past few years, and a larger increase was seen in 2015.

Doug McIlroy of Rodney Strong Vineyards is on the board of the Sonoma County Winegrape Commission. His family has grown grapes in the Russian River for more than 40 years. "I've never seen PD like this before," he exclaimed, noting that outbreaks seem to occur in cycles. "It seems to peak around warmer El Niño years." He thinks cold weather affect the bacteria. McIlroy said the grapevine illness seems especially damaging to early leafing varieties like the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir that Sonoma County is best known for. He finds it especially prevalent in the Russian River Valley southwest of Healdsburg, Calif., and in Dry Creek Valley, both relatively narrow valleys with intensive riparian growth. It's not as much a factor north of Healdsburg, where the Alexander Valley is much wider and farmers grow other crops along the Russian River. "It's also probably colder during the winter there," McIlroy noted, adding, "and many of the streams that feed the river don't have much riparian area." He said that Rodney Strong has removed a lot of invasive species like Himalayan blackberry and vinca major, which harbor the sharpshooters, but PD is often a problem around landscaped homes that feature plantings of non-native plants and irrigated lawns.

Also a menace in Napa County Rhonda Smith's counterpart in Napa County, Dr. Monica L. Cooper, also reports more PD. "There has been a marked increase in PD in 2015, with some growers reporting incidence rates as high as 50% of blocks, especially in regions where background PD pressure is historically high." In the North Coast, PD is generally associated with riparian areas or other landscaping that provides alternate hosts for the insect vectors. Cooper said, "We have experienced a severe impact on vines, since systemic PD infections are generally lethal within a few years." Steve Moulds, the owner of Moulds Family Vineyard in the Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley and current president of the Napa Valley Grapegrowers, agreed. "There has been a tremendous resurgence of PD this last year. We have discussed different factors, such as drought-induced stress. I do know that the Big Ranch Road area has been particularly hard hit, but even non-riparian areas near our ranch are feeling some effects." Cooper noted that scientists have some theories and potential explanations for the outbreak, but they are just gearing up to study them as part of the three-year grant recently awarded by the CDFA PD/GWSS Board to the team led by Dr. Rodriogo Almeida at UC Berkeley. Cooper explained that PD epidemiology is complicated because researchers have to consider the vector, pathogen, vine, alternate host and weather/climatic conditions. "For example, temperature can influence transmission efficiency of the

vector. Temperature and vine water status can also impact the pathogen's colonization of the vine." She said that many factors could contribute to outbreak conditions. "One of the objectives of our research will be to study those factors to try and determine which are the most influential; that, in turn, should direct management practices."

She continued that it typically takes five to 10 years for epidemiological studies like this to generate the volume of data necessary to make broad conclusions, but the researchers planned to do their best to address some of the pressing questions in the three-year time frame. Cooper said she hopes that they can continue to receive funding to study these issues. Garrett Buckland is vice president of Premiere Viticultural Services and vice president of the Napa Valley Grapegrowers. "We deal with PD every year, but we've seen a bigger spike this year. It's two to three times worse," he said. "For us in Napa Valley, the odd patterns of weather are a bigger problem than the drought." Buckland added, "I'm not sure why PD was so bad, but this was the warmest winter on record, with temperatures in the 90's in January. Perhaps this weird weather threw the sharpshooters off their usual life cycle." He added, "We can't treat the disease at this point, so we have to go after the vectors, and that means getting rid of host plants and diseased vines or at least affected parts of them." **Not an issue in Lake and Mendocino counties** North of Napa and Sonoma, Pierce's disease doesn't seem to be a problem. Glenn McGourty, UC viticulture & plant science advisor for Mendocino and Lake counties, said, "Mendocino and Lake counties have not had any issues to the best of my knowledge during this past season. We have found scattered PD in the past along the Russian River and some of its tributaries, but the disease doesn't seem to persist locally." He added, "According to Dr. Sandy Purcell, retired entomologist from UC Berkeley, we have plenty of the vectors, including blue green sharpshooters and willow sharpshooters, but since temperatures routinely fall below 26° F, he thinks the bacterium doesn't survive." McGourty noted, "Growers probably need to plant some of Andy Walker's PD-resistant cultivars. Not much else is effective."

A possible cure? Growers are intrigued by recent research out of Texas A&M University and published in the June 2015 issue of the journal PLOS ONE. "Control of Pierce's Disease by Phage" describes how a "cocktail" of phages, viruses that infect and replicate within a bacterium, can destroy the *Xylella fastidiosa* bacterium that causes Pierce's disease. (Read Wines & Vines' coverage of the research in "Experimental Solution to Pierce's Disease.") For more information Viticultural advisor Cooper recommended the third edition of the UC ANR Grape Pest Management Guide as a great reference for all things *Xylella*, and it is currently available on sale through the UC ANR publications website. As part of the funded research project, UC also is revamping the *Xylella* website, so that it will contain updated information, links to talks, etc.

Read more at: <http://www.winesandvines.com/template.cfm?section=news&content=161735>

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Nitrogen in the Vineyard

Taken from Lodi Rules Blog

In wine grape growing, nitrogen (N) receives a great deal of attention for several reasons. First, N is a component of numerous molecules essential for life, including a wide array of proteins, nucleic acids, and chlorophyll. As a result, nitrogen has broader influence on grapevine growth and fruit production than any other mineral nutrient. When vines contain too little nitrogen, photosynthesis is depressed, growth is inhibited, and their foliage appears pale or yellowed (chlorotic). In contrast, when vines contain too much nitrogen, their growth is rapid, canopy development excessive, and foliage is dark green. In effect, the supply of nitrogen, like the supply of water, acts like a growth controller.

Second, nitrogen is commonly present in soils at levels insufficient for vine needs. Actually, in soils there are no naturally occurring sources of mineral nitrogen, such as nitrate and ammonium, which are the forms vine roots take up. Instead, native nitrogen occurs in organic forms and since most California soils are low in organic matter, they are also low in nitrogen. Grapevines have access to native soil nitrogen only after microbes convert it from organic to mineral (inorganic) forms, but microbe numbers and activities are often limited by low organic matter.

Third, mineral forms of N are short-lived in soils. The efficiency of mineral nitrogen use by vines depends greatly on the presence of active roots near the available nitrogen. Soil microbes, by consuming mineral nitrogen, increase its residence time in vineyard soils and the likelihood of use by vines. If plant roots or soil microorganisms do not promptly take it up, mineral nitrogen may be lost to the environment with the off-site movement of runoff water, downward leaching with water percolating below the root zone, or emission to the atmosphere.

Fourth, due to high demand in developing plant tissues and prevailing low levels in soils, nitrogen is the fertilizer nutrient most commonly applied in vineyards. Like all management practices, nitrogen fertilization involves costs and risks as well as benefits. As mentioned above, losses to the environment pose one set of risks. Fertilizer ammonium readily converts to ammonia, a potent greenhouse gas, if left on or near the soil surface, particularly if the soil is alkaline and low in clay, organic matter (OM), cation exchange capacity (CEC), and moisture. Fertilizer nitrate, on the other hand, is readily transported with water both with overland flow and deep percolation. High nitrate in surface waters is hazardous to aquatic animals and excessive ground water nitrogen is human health hazard, especially for infants.

Over-fertilization is also among the nitrogen fertilization risks. As mentioned above, an overabundance of nitrogen, whatever the sources, induces abnormally rapid shoot growth, large leaves, and excessive canopy development (fig 2). As a result, shoot tissue integrity diminishes, susceptibility to fungal diseases and wind damage increases, palatability to leafhoppers increases, cold hardiness decreases, and fruitfulness declines. At the same time, fruit quality suffers from slow sugar accumulation, poor coloration, and underripe and often times, vegetative aromas and flavors. In addition to these indirect

effects of nitrogen over-fertilization, there is the direct risk of elevated juice nitrogen leading to production of elevated ethyl carbamate in the finished wine. This intermediate fermentation product is a carcinogen regulated by the European Union and an impediment for wineries that export to Europe. In rare cases, over-fertilization may cause toxicity in leaf tissues.

Under-fertilization with nitrogen is perhaps more common than over fertilization due to several factors, including increased prevalence of reduced-input management programs and attempts to contain fertilizer costs. With under-fertilization, vines have pale foliage and reduced photosynthesis, too little growth vigor, insufficient canopy development, greater susceptibility to stresses, reduced fruit yield, impaired ripening, and declining vine health (fig. 4). Under-fertilization also has direct implications for wine processing because low N fruit is prone to slow and stuck fermentations, and associated rotten egg (hydrogen sulfide) aromas. Winemakers may submit incoming juice samples for yeast assimilable nitrogen (YAN) analysis prior to inoculation with yeasts, but laboratory analysis and nitrogen additions to grape musts are additional production costs. Moreover, the sensory profile of wines made from grapes containing adequate nitrogen are often than different than wines of the same variety made with supplemental nitrogen.

Obviously, N plays a pivotal role in vineyards. Maximizing benefits while minimizing risks of applied nitrogen involves careful selection of nitrogen fertilizer form, application rate, application timing, and placement in the vineyard.