

Time for some fruitful planning

Vineyard
02.06.2018

At this time of year many are spending long hours outside in the cold and wet pruning vines. It's the job that we all love to hate and yes, I have done my share! Nevertheless, pruning time does present an excellent opportunity for your insect pest control plan. As you are trimming, thinning, lopping and snipping, you're in a great place to see where insect pests are hiding.

This period of dormancy is when your insect control strategy for the coming season begins!

Grapevine scale, mealybugs and mites are among the many pests you should care to look for.

Grapevine scale is a small sap-sucking insect whose wax-like cuticle protects it from some insecticides. Infested canes should be carefully pruned, thereby physically removing the over-wintering scale population.

Mealybugs have become an increasing problem in many regions over recent years. These soft-bodied white insects over-winter as nymphs under the bark of older canes, the crown of the vine and sometimes in and around trellis posts.

Winter is also a great time to inspect vines and identify which species of mites you have. Rust mite over-winter under the bark of cordons or the trunk near the crown. Bud-mites / Grapeleaf blister mite (*Colomerus vitis*) can be found by viewing dissected basal buds under a stereo microscope. Two-spotted mite tend to be found overwintering in weeds in and around the vineyard.

Cultural practices, such as pruning and trimming, can't remove all infestations or over-wintering populations. There are some very effective vineyard insecticides, which are restricted to use during dormancy. Growers can get great value from these products, but to achieve that you really need to know:

- what pests you have
- where they are hiding
- which pruning techniques can be used to also to reduce their numbers.

One last question to ask is what impact will this product have on beneficials. Are you using any products which are causing 'flare ups' due to their impact on beneficial mites?

New products are emerging and indeed, Syngenta will release a new insecticide this season for mite control in wine grapes. Along with offering control of a broad range of other pests, this product is relatively soft on beneficial species and is IPM friendly.

More information is available from your Syngenta Territory Manager or your reseller.

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