

Vineyard pre-planting check list

- Buy copy of *Wine Growing in Great Britain* by Stephen Skelton MW – read it!
- **Measure up site accurately, allowing space for:**
 - Windbreaks, internal roadways, shading from boundary trees
 - Sufficient space for trimming hedges and windbreaks
 - Fencing
 - Correct headland distance for tractor and any likely (towed) equipment
 - End-posts and anchors, 1.5 m - 2.0 m
 - Sufficient turning space for rows at angles
 - Removal of internal trees, hedges etc not required
 - Area for stacking and loading of crop
 - Parking for worker's and picker's vehicles
 - Rest and/or changing room and WC facilities
- **Calculate number of vines required**
 - Decide on row width based upon tractor width +700 mm depending on pruning system
 - Decide upon inter-vine distance depending on pruning system
 - Divide area to be planted by row width and inter-vine distance to arrive at vine numbers
- **Vines**
 - Order required number of vines
 - Decide where vines are to be stored after they arrive in the UK and before planting
 - Decide whether vines are to be treated with dip (mycorrhizal or *Trichoderma*) at planting and get materials on order
 - Book planting contractor for early May
 - If hand planting, make sure team available for early May and assemble equipment: tape measure, measuring strings and stakes, individual vine position markers, spades, vine carrying boxes etc
- **Windbreaks**
 - Decide whether you need windbreaks
 - Measure up for number of trees allowing for appropriate spacings
 - Order windbreak trees. Bare rooted whips (600-900 mm) are best
 - If windbreaks are not to be inside rabbit fencing, order rabbit guards
 - Plant windbreaks in advance of vines if possible
 - Make sure windbreaks are looked after, kept weed-free, fertilised and if possible mulched with compost
 - Stake windbreaks until they grow a trunk strong enough to support themselves
- **Nutrition**
 - Take soil samples and send to laboratory
 - Ask for BS (Broad Spectrum) analysis plus Active Calcium Carbonate if pH over 7.5
 - Alternatively (or as well as) have site EC mapped (SoilQuest from Agrii)
 - Depending on soil analysis, decide upon fertiliser and lime requirements
 - Lime best applied before any work done to the site

- Other fertiliser applied at suitable times, typically half before sub-soiling and half before final cultivations
- Would the site benefit from green manure?
- Would the site benefit from manure or compost applications?
- **Machinery requirements for establishment phase**
 - Tractor with sufficient power for sprayer, mower etc
 - Pesticide sprayer
 - Mower or cultivator for between rows
 - Weed control equipment
- **Other equipment**
 - Secateurs – Felco No.2
 - Max Tapener tying machine, plus appropriate tape, staples and spare blades
- **Site preparation**
 - **Drainage**
 - Does the site require draining?
 - Contact drainage contractors for drainage survey and quotes
 - Book drainage contractor and get date confirmed allowing enough time between drainage and remainder of site preparation
 - **Levelling**
 - Are there humps and depressions on the site that would be best ironed out?
 - If yes, find contractor with suitable tracked bulldozer to carry out work
 - Major earthworks best carried out before drainage work
 - **Trees and hedges**
 - Trim up or remove trees around site if these are likely to impede planting machine and/or cast shadows on vines
 - Remove any internal trees and hedges
 - Make sure trees and undergrowth are open up at the bottom of a slope if this is relevant to frost problems
 - **Fencing**
 - Decide upon fencing requirements
 - Get quotes based upon correct specification. See Forestry Commission and British Deer Society data sheets on rabbit, hare and deer fencing
 - Make sure rabbit netting is correct height and gauge
 - Make sure posts are of correct quality for designed life of fencing
 - Allow for sufficient gates for machinery and entrances for personnel
 - Place order with contractor
 - Work to be completed within 2 weeks of vines being planted
 - If site is not to be fenced, decide how vines are to be protected from rabbits and hares and order vine guards
 - **Water**
 - Is there a requirement for water on the site? It will be needed for both pesticide and herbicide applications
 - If not already present or nearby, make provisions for a connection to the mains
 - Install spray tank

- **Cultivations**
 - Spray area to be planted, including headlands, with suitable weedkiller
 - Apply lime and fertilisers
 - Apply composts or manures
 - Subsoil to a depth of at least 600 mm. Ideally this requires a tracked machine
 - Plough, disc, rotary harrow to seedbed quality. Before rotary harrow, apply balance of fertiliser
 - If it has been decided to grow green manure crop, then plant it for overwintering. Site will require probably need spraying off again, re-ploughing and cultivating prior to planting.
 - Note: All cultivations want to be up and down the slope in the direction of the vine planting

- **Trellising**
 - Based upon planting density, decide upon number of end-posts, intermediate posts and planting stakes required and place on order
 - If using contractor, get quotes based upon trellising design, number of vines and number of posts, end-posts etc
 - Also order required number of end-post anchors, anchor wires, trellising wire, chains, spreaders, clips for planting stakes
 - After planting, order end-post tags with details of row number, variety, clone and rootstock (Daltons ID Systems)

- **Planting**
 - Make sure vines are on-site or nearby a day or two before planting
 - Have available 100-200 bamboo canes (1.20 m) for marking out ends of rows
 - Welcome planting machine and get planting
 - Put rabbit guards on if using these
 - Spray pre-emergent weedkiller once vines settled and before bud-burst
 - Consider using strip-spread compost on sites with poor humus content

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