



5 priorities this winter

- >> Pruning
- >> Trellis repairs
- >> Weed control
- >> Soil inputs & mulching
- >> Irrigation maintenance

Winter is the ideal time of the year to turn your attention to essential tasks in the vineyard.

Pruning is one of the most important activities in the vineyard at this time of the year. Two main pruning styles are undertaken in the cooler Adelaide Hills climate, spur and cane pruning. Although there are many variations to these two styles, the level of pruning is matched to the desired crop level at the end of the season, usually determined by contractual parameters.

Pruning is one the main outlays for growers so cost is critical. Machine pre-pruning assists in keeping costs down prior to spur pruning and can also be used to reduce cane length prior to cane pruning in very vigorous blocks.

Trellis repairs During mechanical harvesting, a percentage of posts may have been broken by the shaking of the machine harvester. The number of broken posts is highly dependent on the quality of the posts, soil moisture conditions during harvesting, the size of the canopy, and the harvester settings.

Post replacements are most easily carried out during winter following pruning when there is no vine canopy present to restrict machinery access. Any broken wires should also be carried out at the same time, to ensure the trellis is in perfect condition to start the new season.

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Continual maintenance of vineyard trellising ensures that the trellis does not deteriorate to the point where it is no longer able to support a fruit-laden canopy.

Weed Control is best carried out during the winter months when they are actively growing, but still relatively small. The most common form of weed control in Adelaide Hills vineyards is the use of herbicides, however, the use of under-vine cultivation and mowing machinery is becoming increasingly common.

It is important to control weeds before they increase their growth rate and set seed during spring and summer. Weeds can also take up water and nutrients which will impact on vine health if they have to compete with weeds during the growing season.

Soil inputs and mulching Winter is the perfect time to add condition to your soil by applying products such as lime, gypsum and other fertilisers. This allows the winter rainfall to incorporate the inputs into the soil before the growing season commences.

All soil inputs are based on a combination of soil analysis, plant tissue analysis and inspection of vine health during the growing season.

There are also sections of the vineyard that will benefit from the application of mulch in the under-vine strip. This is particularly the case for rocky hill tops that need every bit of assistance in maintaining soil moisture during the dry summer months.

Irrigation maintenance Winter is not normally the time when most people think about irrigation, however, there are important tasks that should be undertaken to ensure that irrigation systems are in proper working order at the start of summer.

Winter is the time to clean up all the filters, both in the pumps shed and in the field. It is also the time to apply cleaning agents such as acid or chlorine through the drip systems to minimise blockage. An irrigation ride through is an important component of this work because it ensures that there will be no leaks prior to the cleaning process. Flow rates and block pressures should also be checked before the system is finally shut down.

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WINTER MID ROW TREATMENT