



Some general pruning rules that I have learned over the years...

- Wherever possible keep trellis full, vines in full production for maximum balance yield, quality and profit
- Correct vine balance trumps a full trellis. If a vine does not have enough vigor to fill the trellis, do not force it carry more buds/fruit that it wants to
- Understand the relationship between vine size and balance.
- Pruning is the first opportunity to regulate crop. Understand the correct yield per vine for the wine that will be produced
- Always have a destination when pruning. Prune towards something – shape, size, yield, etc.
- Young vines should be pruned to shape and to develop roots
- Older vines should be pruned according to Richard Smart's Golden Rules (with local adjustments)
- Learn to prune for an experienced and skillful/correct pruning instructor
- You cannot learn how to properly prune a grapevine by reading a book or watching a video
- Anticipate. If something goes away how will you most quickly replace it
- Always be aware of the height of the head of the vine relative to the fruit wire
- Decide early on about the relative merit of head training/cane pruning vs. cordon/spur.
- Cane pruning may lower incidence of disease by reducing the surface area of old wood
- Leave renewal spurs in the head area of the vine for both cane and cordon
- Consider renewal parts from the base of the vine in case of winter injury
- Efficiency: prune well to maximize all vineyard operations and practices
- Have a concept of what you are pruning towards visually, philosophically and economically
- Prune for crop first, position second and always for vine shape, think a year or 2 ahead
- Stop, look and think: check and select fruiting wood first then prune around it
- Measure twice, cut once rule. Once you make the cut it's gone.
- Prune for sun canes
- Do not use laterals for fruiting wood
- Make clean cuts, close to the old wood (the secret is a very sharp pruning tool)
- When disbudding use the flat side of the shear against the older wood
- Check wood quality, especially in cane pruning for punky or dead wood
- Use the right tool for the right cut, if you are twisting or laboring you do not have the right tool (carry a saw, loppers, hand shears and a sharpening stone)
- Leave 1/2-3/4" from tips of canes and spurs

- Cut with angle down and away from tip
- Do not let spurs get too long, look for and retain replacement shoots during the growing season.
- Leave 6" between end of shoots and canes
- Prune to 5/8 inch or pencil diameter
- Vigorous vines: more buds. Weak vines: fewer buds
- Be aware of and check for trunk diseases: Eutypa, Botryosphaeria, Petri disease
- Treat large pruning wounds
- Keep pruning tool clean, sharp and oiled
- Sanitize if there is disease: clorox in a spray bottle. Consider using Rally as a wound treatment
- Remove cluster mummies and all infected wood from the vine and the vineyard
- Do not cut wires, stakes or fingers
- Leave extra canes or spurs, double prune, insurance
- Be careful when cutting away laterals, do not cut the bud
- Remove old tendrils
- Remove old ties and junk on the trellis
- Mark vines with problems or that need to be re-visited right away

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