



## December Newsletter

That time of year again when there are not enough hours in the day and some things get neglected. Fortunately as I would rather tell people what is happening in the vineyard than go Xmas shopping the newsletter won't be one of them.

The grape growing year is often compared to jumping a series of hurdles; you jump one successfully, then face the next.

The first hurdle is spring frost, and this year with no frost was one of the easiest in many years. So far so good, very good.

The next hurdle is flowering which has just started, by the time the next newsletter comes out it will all be over and I can give a full report.

Grapes are self pollinating so no need for insects or bees, however weather conditions are critical.

Grape flower physiology is quite interesting, there is a "cap" over the flower, when its flowering time the cap will fall off, the flower opens up, pollen falls from the filaments to the stamen below and we have successful pollination and a crop of grapes.

All quite simple if it wasn't for the weather, what we don't want are cool wet conditions for any length of time as the moisture causes the cap to stay stuck to the flower and not fall off allowing it to open. If that happens the flower will abort and there will be no grape. The industry term for this is "glue cap", it can be considered a natural way of crop thinning, but nature isn't on they payroll and doesn't always do the job the way we would, more often than not its way too enthusiastic.

We would rather face a frost than very bad flowering weather; at least we can fight a frost, at flowering there is really nothing significant that can be done, so we will all go away really enjoy the Xmas break then come back and see how it went.

Hope you have a great holiday season, drink quality over quantity and I will report back in the New Year on flowering and anything else that is of interest,

Grant

