

Soil – Grapes do well in any good garden soil. If possible, try to pick a place that drains well and is reasonably free from weed seed. Prepare the soil by adding organic materials: compost, well-rotted manure, and/or peat moss. Top soil is also helpful to mix with the organic materials.

Planting – Plant grapes in the spring as soon as the soil can be worked (weather permitting). This is usually in April. Choose a location in full sun. Space plants about 8 to 10 feet apart. Plant at the same depth as when purchased in container. Keep plants well watered after planting.

Pruning – Grapes need a lot of care to produce abundant fruit. Pruning should be done when the vines are still dormant, usually before March.

First Year – Take the largest and strongest cane and tie it to a stake. Prune down to 2 to 3 buds. All other canes should be removed.

Second Year – Prepare a trellis with approx. 5-foot-high posts and place into the ground between every other vine. Use No. 9 or No. 10 galvanized wire to stretch two lines from post to post at 3½' and 5½' heights. Also place a post at both ends of row. Using the "Four-Arm Kniffen System," train a strong cane to run along the lower wire in each direction. All other canes should be removed except 2 "renewal spurs," and they should be cut back very short to 2 to 3 buds.

Third Year – When canes develop near the top wire, train the 2 best canes in opposite directions as done on the lower wire. Remove all other shoots except the 2 renewal spurs to be cut back to 2 to 3 buds. Tie the 4 canes loosely on the wires.

Fourth Year – Canes on mature vines are usually cut to 6 to 12 buds on the lower wire and 4 to 8 buds on the upper wire depending on the vigor of the vine. Each subsequent year, replace the "Four Arms" with canes from the "renewal spurs" for the following year.

Fertilizer – Four to five weeks after spring planting, spread 4 to 6 oz of 5-10-10 around each grape vine. Use approximately 12 to 14 oz of the same the second year. Apply in the early spring.

