

Grapes

Harvesting

The proper stage for harvesting the grapes is adjudged by the development of characteristic colour of a variety and also by touching the grapes from the apical portion of the bunch. In grapes three major colours, viz. White, red and black are found. The criteria used to judge ripening differ according to the use of the grapes. For making raisins, harvesting at a late stage is preferred, to get more sugar in grapes for increasing the weight of the dried product. For all other purposes, ripening is judged on the basis of sugar: acid ratio for getting proper blend required for table purpose or wine making. The correct blend of sugar acid ratio should be between 25-30.

For harvesting grapes for export market, the following parameters are considered-Berry size- should be more than 16mm in diameter.

1. TSS- should be more than 17° Brix.
2. Bunch weight- should be between 300-750 g.
3. Bunch colour- milky green.
4. The selected bunch should not be compact.
5. All the berries should be of uniform colour and size in a bunch.
6. Less than 2% sunburnt or Sulphur bleached, bruised or crushed berries.
7. Pedicel should be fresh and green.

For local markets, the grapes are harvested early in the morning by cutting selected bunches with long nose scissors. Care must be exercised not to injure other berries by the scissors. While harvesting, care should be taken to avoid erasing the waxy coating by holding the stem of the bunch by hand. The harvested bunches are kept in perforated plastic trays. Bunches should be trimmed by removing the decayed or otherwise defective berries before packing.

For export purpose, harvesting has to be done in early hours of the day. It should be stopped when the berry temperature raises above 20° C. It is advisable to close harvest by 10 a.m. otherwise the berry temperature can not be brought down to 4°C within the stipulated time of six hours by precooling. The selected bunches are harvested by giving a cut above the knot present on the stalk of the bunch. Any type mechanical injury to berries should be avoided while harvesting and handling. The injured portion of skin serves as the entry point for many fungi causing decay. Harvested bunches are placed gently in clean perforated plastic trays in not more than two layers and shifted to the packing shed without losing time.

Yield

A well-maintained vineyard starts yielding from 3 years after planting under north Indian conditions and even in less than 2 years under tropical conditions. A well-maintained vineyard of Perlette gives a yield of 25-30 t/ha in North India while Thompson Seedless gives 15-20 t/ha.