

## **Trellis Construction**

by Maurus Brown, OSU Extension Agent

There are several different styles of trellises to choose from. My suggestion is to plan for and build the simplest design. Unless you have a particular decorative style you wish to achieve, then by all means construct something that is durable and easy to maintain. Keep in mind that grapes grown in the backyard are considered edible landscape. So you will want to construct a trellis system that is also eye appealing and allows you to prune and harvest vines.

Many gardeners choose to use wood to frame a trellis. Treated (CCA) lumber will last many years, however some folks do not want to risk using lumber treated with toxic chemicals. You can purchase non-treated lumber, but posts will tend to degrade underground due to soil organisms feeding on the wood. Also, above ground wood will tend to rot and fade due to exposure to weather. Above ground wood can be painted, but trying to repaint once the vines are established could be challenging. Wrought iron trellises are very nice to look at and are relatively easy to maintain, however they can be quite expensive to install depending on how elaborate the structure.

### **Examples:**

\* *Geneva Double Curtain Trellis* -

\* **High Cordon Trellis**

*High Cordon Trellis* -

## ***Overhead Arbor (With or Without Lattice) -***

One important aspect of constructing the trellis is to place the posts (wood or metal) securely into the ground at least 2-3 feet. You may choose to set posts in concrete (much like clothes line poles). Once the concrete is hardened, the wood supports and/or wire can be attached. The grapevines, once mature, will produce considerable foliage so it is important that the trellis will be able to hold the weight of the hanging vine. Metal or wood braces should be added for support. If you choose not to pour concrete around posts, then metal screw anchors should be placed in the ground (1-1 1/2 ft.) at each end with #9 wire tightened down as a brace support. All materials can be purchased at your local lumber yard or home improvement store.

Designing a trellis is important not only to support the vines, but also to allow you to move lawn equipment around the yard. As discussed in the section on "Site Preparation for planting grapevines," it is important to set up and maintain a clear strip around the trellis, not only to reduce grass competition with the vines, but also for ease of mowing.

Herbicide (e.g., Roundup) can be used to maintain a clear strip. Plastic mulch can be quite useful as well. If chips or saw dust mulch is spread under the vines, a 4-6 " layer should be applied to adequately reduce weed emergence.

## Site Preparation for Planting Grapevines

by Maurus Brown, OSU Extension Agent



After selecting the area in your yard where you wish to plant grapevines, begin preparing the site for planting. It will be important to devote enough yard space without removing large areas of sod.

Grass and other plants will directly compete for soil nutrients and water. Plant growth will tend to be limited in the first year or two if grass is allowed to grow next to the vines. Be sure to remove at least two feet of sod from each side of the vine or better yet, remove sod strip under the entire length of grapevines.

Vines planted in a row and spaced 8 ft. apart should have an 8' x 4' strip of sod removed around each plant. That would assure a clean row with a 2' strip on either side of the row. Once the sod is removed, deep-till by hand or use a rototiller to breakup and loosen the soil. Take soil samples to determine the pH and existing nutrient (e.g., phosphorus, potassium, calcium) levels. Soil sample kits can be obtained from your county Extension office or by contacting a soil laboratory for sample bags. OSU Extension can provide you with a list of potential labs to choose from. Obtain a good representative sample of soil from the grape site. Be sure to sample within the top 0-8" (take multiple samples if planting several vines). There is a fee for testing garden soil, but the price is well worth it.

**Example:** \* *Bare Ground Strip 4 ft. Wide Under Trellis*



Lime should be applied if the soil test reads below a desired pH level. Grape growers prefer to maintain the soil pH range for American varieties at 5.2 - 5.8 and Vinifera and French hybrids varieties at 6.0 to 6.8.

Grapes are adaptable to a wide range of pH levels, however maximum vine growth for each variety can be obtained at the desired levels. Determine the square footage of your yard devoted to the grapevines and calculate the pounds of lime required. Ask the soil lab to give you a Lime Test Index (total soil acidity) on the print out. An LTI will indicate the appropriate amount of lime required. If you have questions regarding your soil sample analysis, please contact your Extension agent for assistance. Once again, deep-till your site to adequately incorporate the applied lime. If lime is not incorporated, do not expect a dramatic change in the soil pH lower down in the soil profile. Lime will raise the pH (sweeten the soil) by chemically interacting with soil clay particles - so contact is important.

Vines can be planted at any time after soil has been thoroughly prepared. You may want to immediately build your trellis (arbor) or wait till after the grapes have been planted. Carefully layout and mark the area where each post will be set. This will assure that you allow for enough trellis for grapes to grow. Be sure to note where grapes will be planted so that posts will not be next to vines.

## Grapes ... Healthy Alternative!

by LuAnn Freppon, Extension Agent

Grapes are a healthy alternative to the rich, high fat desserts often served at holiday dinners. For a buffet or dinner, fruited gelatin salads add color, a fruit side dish, or dessert alternative. There are many choices and any fruits can be used (except of course, fresh pineapple). Here is a recipe using grapes in several forms that is flavorful, bright and also uses the traditional cranberry. Best Wishes for a Happy Holiday and enjoy!

### **Cran – Grape Gelatin Salad**

#### **Ingredients:**

- 2 (3 ounce) packages raspberry flavored gelatin mix
- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 ½ cups sparkling white grape juice
- 1 pound cranberries
- 1 small can mandarin oranges, drained
- 1 ½ cups crushed pineapple, drained
- 2 cups seedless red grapes, halved
- 1 ½ cups diced apples



#### **Directions:**

Add the sugar to the gelatin. Stir in the boiling water and stir until the gelatin is dissolved. Stir in the sparkling white grape juice. Chill until gelatin is thick. Finely grind the cranberries and the oranges in the a food processor or run through a meat grinder. Add the ground cranberry mixture, drained crushed pineapple, grapes and cubed apples to the thickened gelatin. Pour mixture into mold, or 9x13 dish or large bowl. Refrigerate overnight.



---

Ohio State University Extension  
**U.S. Department of Agriculture**  
The Ohio State University  
2120 Fyffe Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1010

OFFICIAL BUSINESS