

PLANTING

This can be done at anytime of year if purchased in pots. If planting between late October and March, the top growth must be cut back to 5-7cm (2-3in) from the main stock and the roots trimmed to 15cm (6in) or less. The vine should be planted about 15cm (6in) away from the wall, in a hole 10-15cm (4-6in) deep, and the roots trodden in very firmly. About 15cm (6in) of compost should be laid on the surface of the soil above the root area to protect the roots from being damaged by frost. Where more than one vine is grown, they should be spaced 1.2-1.5m (4-5ft) apart. The young vine should be lightly tied to a stake and not attached to the wall or fence to which it is to be trained for at least a month after planting. Indoor vines can be planted outside the glasshouse or inside in a prepared border which should be well drained and made up of a loam-based compost such as John Innes No.3.

TRAINING SYSTEMS

Grapes are flexible climbers with strong growth and tendrils. There are many ways to grow a grape — as a single cordon (rod and spur system), a multi-cordon or in the single or double Guyot system. A cordon system is suitable for all varieties and is normally chosen when grown under glass or in a restricted area. The double Guyot system is normally used for grapes growing outdoors.

TRAINING & PRUNING THE SINGLE ROD

Unless a large glasshouse is available, one grape should be grown as a single cordon (rod). In a small house, it should be planted at the gable end and trained parallel with the ridge towards the door. It should be tied to wires fixed 38cm (15in) from the glass, spaced 30cm (12in) apart. In larger houses rods can be spaced 1.2m (4ft) apart and trained parallel to the glass and 38cm (15in) away from it. The aim is to produce a strong rod with fruiting laterals (spurs) every 30cm (12in).

FIRST YEAR

Following planting in November/December, the young vine should be shortened by two thirds of its length, pruning to a bud.

In the first spring after planting, one shoot should be chosen to become the leader and this should be trained to canes fixed to the wires. The shoot must be trained on the underside of the wires. Laterals produced from the leading shoot should be stopped at five or six leaves and any sub-laterals produced, stopped at one leaf. Any flowers or tendrils produced should be removed.

SECOND YEAR

The strongest laterals should be selected at 30cm (12in) intervals and these should be stopped at five or six leaves as in the first year. The leader should be trained on as in the first year.

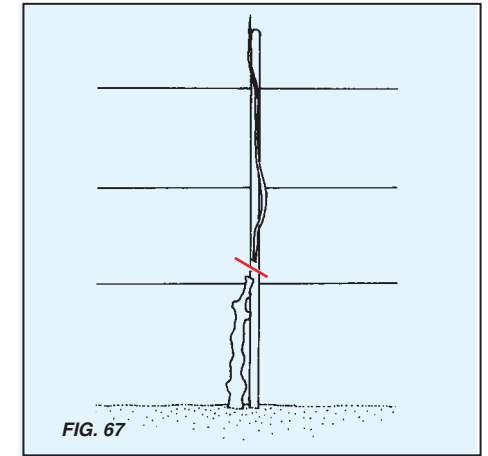
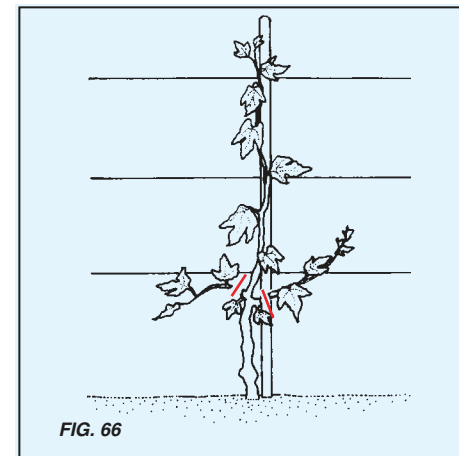
WINTER PRUNING SECOND YEAR ONWARDS

This is the same as in year one and in subsequent years the leader should be shortened by two thirds of the previous summer's growth until the vine has reached its allocated length. After that the leader is treated in the same way as the other laterals.

TRAINING & PRUNING THE DOUBLE GUYOT SYSTEM

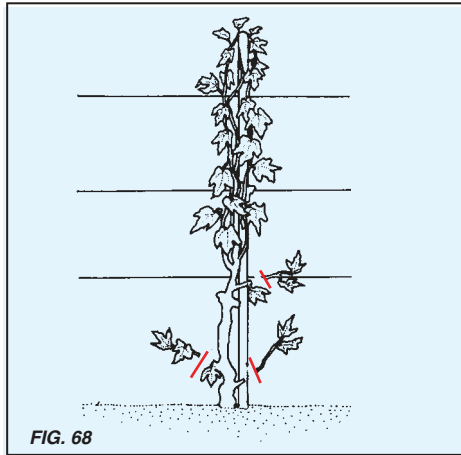
FIRST YEAR

To train a grape in the double Guyot system takes two seasons. In the first season the rod should be cut down to about 15cm (6in) above ground level or 15cm (6in) above the graft union in the case of a grafted plant. Only one strong stem should be allowed to grow during the summer. Any side shoots are stopped at one leaf (see fig. 66). In November or December the leading rod is cut back to the topmost of three good buds below the bottom supporting wire (see fig. 67).



SECOND YEAR

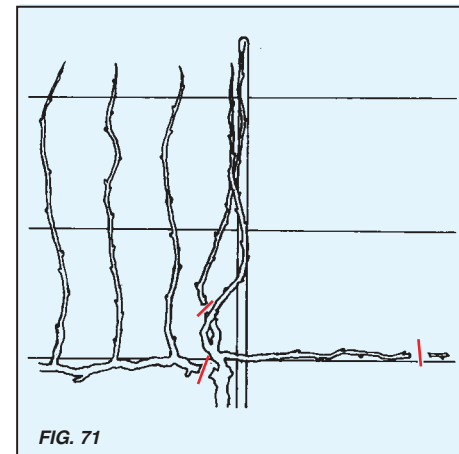
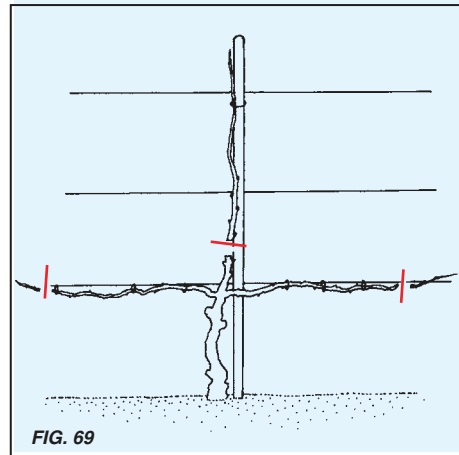
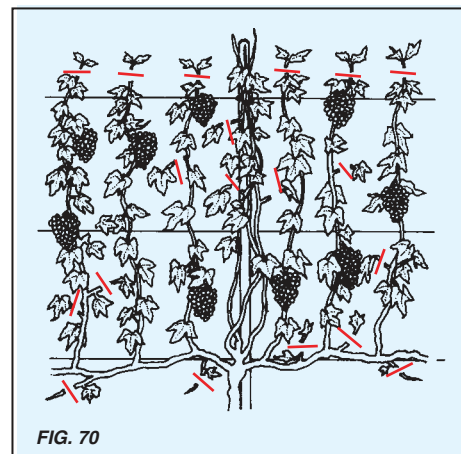
In the second summer three strong stems should be allowed to grow vertically, pinching back any other shoots to one leaf as they grow (see fig. 68). As soon as the leaves fall (normally in November or December), two stems should be tied down gently (referred to as replacement shoots in the subsequent seasons) to the bottom wire, one on each side. Prune off the immature wood, leaving 60-75cm (2-2½ft) each side. Cut the third (middle) stem back to three or four good buds to provide replacement shoots for the following season (see fig. 69).



THIRD YEAR ONWARD

In the third summer and subsequent seasons, three strong replacement shoots should be trained vertically from the centre (see fig. 70). Any side shoots are pinched back to one leaf and the flowers removed. The fruiting shoots grown from two horizontal arms on both sides are trained vertically, pinching out the growing points when they reach the top wire. The vertical shoots should be tied onto the supporting wires, allowing 15cm (6in) between shoots. During the growing season, pinch back or shorten unwanted side shoots that are growing along the fruiting shoots. Thin out the foliage to expose the fruit trusses if necessary.

At the end of the season (November), completely remove the horizontal arms together with their fruited shoots and tie down two replacement shoots onto the bottom wire. The third replacement shoot should be cut down to three or four good buds (see fig. 71). This completes the renewal circle.



MANURING

With outdoor grapes, care must be taken to ensure that the soil is not too rich at any time; the application of rotted manure should be restricted to really poor soils and even then in very small amounts.

A vine grown inside a glasshouse requires much more care in feeding and watering than one grown outside, but there is more control over the plant.

In March each year apply a compound fertilizer according to the manufacturer's recommendation.

From four weeks after starting into growth until the fruit begins to ripen, a liquid feed high in potash, such as a tomato fertilizer, should be applied every two weeks according to the manufacturer's instructions.

CROPPING & HARVESTING

The vine should not be allowed to fruit in the first two summers but in the third summer, three or four bunches can be allowed and thereafter building up to one bunch per lateral. A vine will crop heavily from the fourth year onwards and should continue cropping for fifty years or more. Grape vines are one of the heaviest yielding soft fruits.

Grapes should be harvested when fully ripe; this is often a while after they are fully coloured. They should be cut with a 'handle' of 5cm (2in) of stem both sides of the bunch. This way they can be carried without touching the fruit.

PESTS, DISEASES & DISORDERS

The most troublesome pest is spider mite, particularly on vines grown under glass. The most serious diseases are powdery mildew and brown rot.