
An Easy Training and Pruning System for Home Grape Vines – The Gyout

Pruning grape vines can be a challenging task for the home grower. One system that works well for home vineyard growers is the Gyout. In this system, vines are pruned each spring to leave just 2 shoots as close to the main vine or trunk as possible. One of these is a lateral arm called a braccio. It is a shoot that grew the previous season (1 year old) and it is pruned back to about 1m (3 feet) in length. The second, also a shoot that grew the previous season, should be behind or below the longer braccio. It is cut back to just 2 gemme (buds) and will serve as a cornetto (renewal spur). This cornetto will produce the shoots from which the braccio and cornetto for the next year will arise.

Planting Year

Vite (grape vines) in the Gyout system are usually spaced 1 meter (40 inches) apart in the row. Wider spacings can be used if desired. Rows are set 220 cm (7 ft, 3in) up to 275 cm (9 ft) apart.

Do not prune newly set vite (vines). Remove any flower clusters that develop. Loosely tie the tralci (shoots) that develop to a training stake (bamboo stake, grade stake) to help develop a straight trunk.

During that first year, build the trellis support system for the vineyard. Use 2.5 m (8 ft) tall posts that are 10 cm (4 in) in diameter or 10 cm (4 in) square. These posts should be set every 6 m (20 ft) down the row. Posts should be set 75 cm (30 in) deep. End stakes need to be securely anchored. The use of duckbill or screw type anchors is recommended.

The main support wire is set 75-80 cm above the ground (30-32 in). Three (3) pairs of catch wires that will be used to support and contain vertical growth in



Figure 1 - Newly set grape vine a few weeks after planting. New shoots should be loosely tied to a stake. Photo: W. Lord

future years are set at 30 cm intervals up to the top of the posts. These pairs are set on opposite sides of the posts.

Year 2

Dormant pruning in year two consists of selecting the most vigorous tralcio (shoot) and pruning it back to 2 gemme (buds). As these grow, loosely tie them to a training stake to encourage upright development.

Year 3

If growth in year 2 was strong, bend one of the tralci (shoots) down to make a braccio (branch) and tie it to the wire. Prune it to a length of 1 m. (3 ft). It will serve as the braccio (arm) from which the current year's tralci (fruiting shoots) will grow. The 2nd tralcio can be pruned back to 2 gemme (buds). It will serve as a cornetto (renewal spur), producing the braccio (arm) and cornetto (renewal spur) the following year. This process is repeated annually.

If growth in year 2 was weak, prune back again to just 2 gemme (buds) and leave no cornetto (renewal spur).

The braccio (arm) you have tied to the bottom wire of the trellis has buds that will develop, each producing a shoot and grappoli (bunches of grapes) that growing season. Once the tralci (shoots) have started to grow, remove all but 5. The 5 developing tralci (fruiting shoots) that are left should be spaced uniformly along the length of the braccio (arm).



Figure 2 - Cornetto (renewal spur) on left; braccio (arm) from which tralci (fruiting shoots) will develop (right). Photo: W. Lord



Figure 3 - Gemme (buds) along braccio (arm) need to be thinned to leave 5 after growth has started. Photo: W. Lord

As the 5 developing tralci grow, they will produce flower clusters at the first 2-3 or perhaps more nodes and continue growing. These tralci should be trained in an upright position. This is accomplished by tucking them between the pairs of catch wires positioned above the bottom trellis wire as they grow.

Once fruit have set, all but the lowest 2 grappoli (grape clusters) should be removed for each of the 5 tralci.

When the tralci grow past the top pair of catch wires, they are pruned off to limit shading below.



Figure 4 - Gemme (buds) were thinned to leave 5. The tralci (shoots) that develop will bear grappoli (clusters of grapes) at the first couple of nodes - they are trained vertically by tucking them inside the pairs of catch wires as they grow. Photo: W. Lord

Timing Pruning

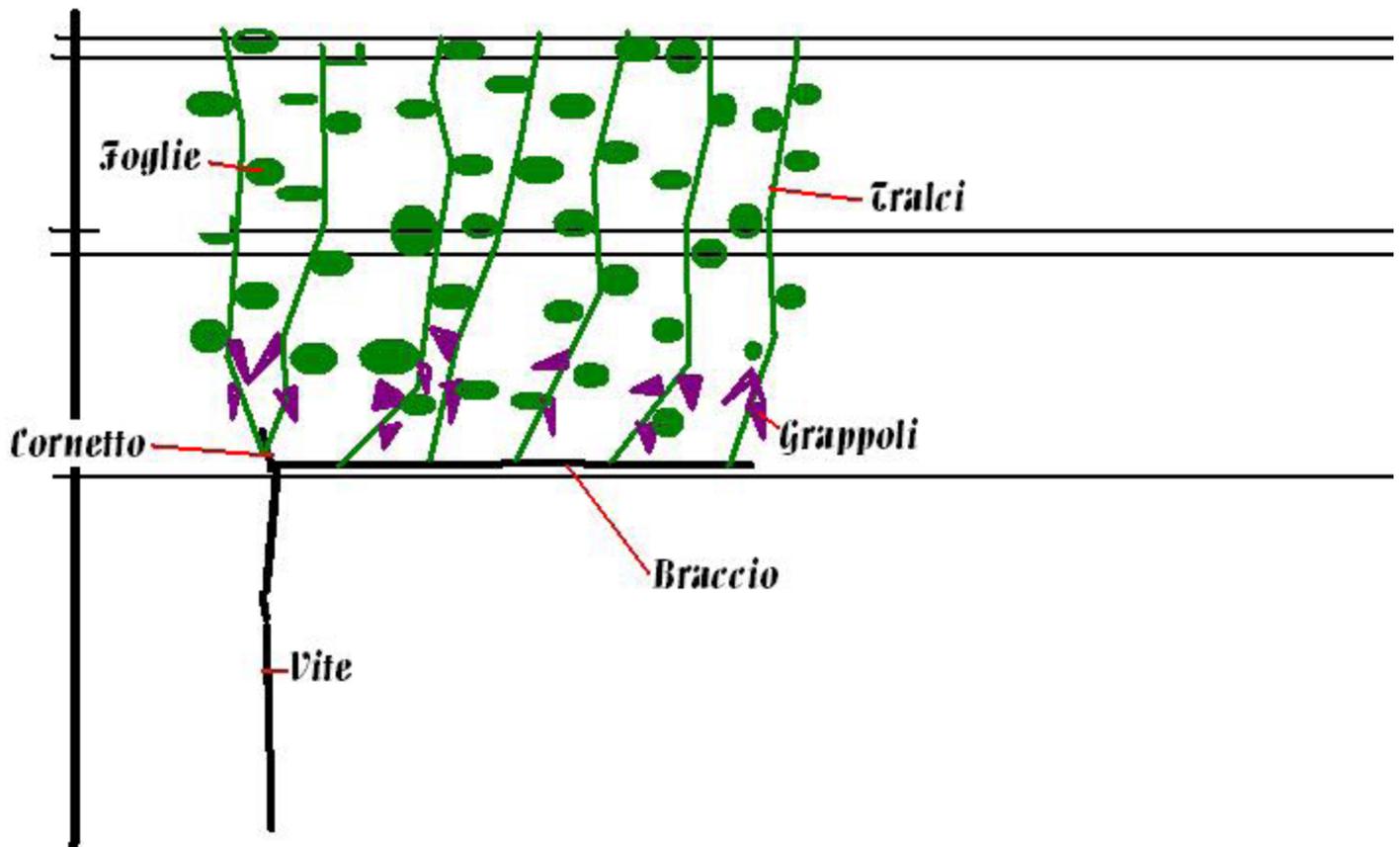
Pruning is done in late winter/ early spring. When pruning in late spring, pruning wounds often bleed. This lacrima (bleeding) can be extensive, often running down the vine and wetting the soil. While it appears quite dramatic, this does not hurt the grape vine.



Figure 5 - The 2 gemme (buds) on the cornetto (renewal spur) each become a tralcio (fruiting shoot) bearing grappoli (bunches of grapes). One will become the braccio (lateral branch tied to the wire) next year, the other the cornetto (2 bud renewal spur). Photo: W. Lord



Figure 6 - Lacrima (bleeding) of a grape vine after pruning in April can be quite dramatic, but does no harm. Photo: W. Lord



Glossary of Terms:

- Braccio – arm or branch
- Grappoli - grapes
- Foglie - leaves
- Gemme (buds)
- Lacrime – bleeding (means tears literally)
- Femminile – laterals of fruiting shoots
- Cornetto – renewal spur
- Tralci – fruiting shoots
- Legatura – tying of canes to wires
- Potatura – pruning
- Polloni – suckering

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