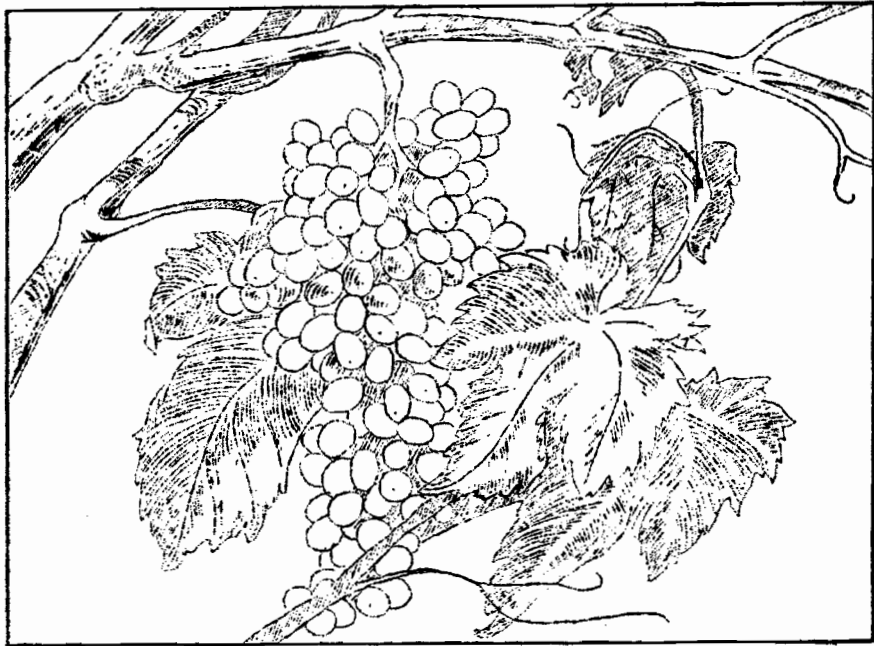


GR-SI-53-1

PRODUCTION COSTS
for
COACHELLA VALLEY
THOMPSON SEEDLESS GRAPES



University of California
College of Agriculture Extension Service
Riverside County

Dean D. Halsey, Farm Advisor
with assistance from
Wallace Sullivan, Extension Economist

WHAT DOES IT COST YOU TO PRODUCE THOMPSON SEEDLESS GRAPES?

Yield per Acre 200 - 24# lugs

Items	Sample Costs		Your Costs	
	per Acre	per Lug 24#	per Acre	per Lug 24#
Labor & Field power				
Furrow out - 5x	7.50			
Cultivation etc. - 6x	12.00			
Irrigation & shovel work - 15x	22.50			
Apply fertilizer	2.00			
Pest control - 6x	9.00			
Girdling	12.00			
Thinning	40.00			
Pruning	30.00			
Tying	7.00			
Brush disposal - shredding	4.00			
Miscellaneous	10.00			
Total pre-harvest labor	156.00	.78		
Harvesting and packing				
Picking @ 20¢	40.00			
Hauling - 6¢	12.00			
Packing, labor & material @ 90¢	180.00			
Selling commission 7% x \$4.00 x 200 (approx.)	56.00			
Miscellaneous	5.00			
Total harvesting	293.00	1.47		
Materials				
Water - 5 acre ft.	15.00			
Fertilizer 100# N.	16.00			
Pest control materials	8.00			
Miscellaneous	5.00			
Total materials	44.00	.22		
Supervision and management	30.00	.15		
Sub-total labor & material	523.00	2.61		
Cash overhead				
*General expense 5% above	26.00			
Taxes	30.00			
Insurance	5.00			
Repairs	5.00			
Total cash overhead	66.00	.33		
Sub-total cash costs	589.00	2.95		
Depreciation - 20 yr. life	45.00	.22		
Interest on Invest. @ 5%	75.00	.38		
TOTAL ALL COSTS	709.00	3.55		

*Covers interest on operating costs and other small items.

The above table is a sample set of costs based on current costs and the above assumed inputs of labor and material. Assumed investment \$1500 per Acre. It includes all costs including packaging and selling commission for an F.O.B. sale.

Use the blank columns for estimating your own costs.

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A previous study showed a sample per acre investment of \$950 for ESTABLISHING a vineyard in the Coachella. This would be the amount invested exclusive of the cost of land and pipe by the end of the third year.

This study shows sample costs for PRODUCING Thompson Seedless grapes in the same area. For purposes of the study a total investment of \$1500 per acre is assumed. Production is 200 packed 24# lugs per acre.

The cultural operations involved are:

Cultivation: Most growers keep down weed growth as much as possible by cultivation and oil sprays. Where Bermuda grass is abundant more cultivation is required but about six cultivations a year may be near the average.

Irrigation: On the better vineyards the soil is never allowed to dry out completely. Irrigation begins about February 15 and may be required at weekly intervals during the heat of the summer and on the lighter soils. Fifteen irrigations with a total application of five acre feet of water for the year is figured in this study.

Fertilizer: Some growers use commercial fertilizer, many use manures at least every two or three years. Fertilizer tests run by the Extension Service in the valley have shown little response to fertilizer of any kind. At least one grower has never applied fertilizer in the 15 years he has operated his vineyard. Fertilizer trials throughout the state usually show an economic response only to nitrogen and an application of about 100# of actual N per year seems to be a reasonable program. This should be applied prior to the first irrigation.

Pest Control: Prior to bud swell in the spring a dust or spray is applied to the vine-trunks for bud beetle. When the shoots begin growing they are dusted at intervals for mildew. DDT is used for leaf hoppers which usually require two or three treatments during the year. Timing of the spring treatment is especially important.

Girdling: This is the most important operation to increase size of berry. Timing is extremely important because of the short season from bloom to maturity. Girdling is done immediately following shatter. Either the trunk or cane girdle is used. Cane girdling is more common until the trunks attain the size of a man's wrist.

Thinning: This operation is also important because of the effect of overcropping on retarding maturity. All except the larger, well shaped bunches are dropped entirely. Those remaining are tipped and in some cases the remaining shoulders are thinned to give a nice loose bunch weighing about one pound at maturity. Thinning is done after girdling when the berries are BB to buckshot size.

Pruning: Usually four canes are saved and about six renewal spurs. A two wire or wide topped trellis is used, the latter being preferable in that the fruit is more widely spread and more easily accessible. Brush is shredded and worked into the ground.

Harvesting: Picking begins in mid-June and continues until late July. Some growers field-pack, other pack in houses. Either is an acceptable method and costs are not greatly different. In any case it is most important that only good sound grapes are packed and that cooling be accomplished with the greatest possible haste. Any delay in the high heat of the area will result in stem browning and decline in the market which will decrease the return.

An excellent pamphlet is available on "Grape Growing in California" describing these operations in greater detail.

Economics: Data is available from reports of the Agricultural Commissioner, Riverside County, showing total acreage of table grapes in the Coachella is increasing rapidly. Doubtless this will result in ~~greater competition on the early market and possibly lower returns.~~ Average production for the valley in 1952 was 204 packed lugs per acre. Average price received was \$3.20 per packed lug. Note that this return is somewhat below the sample cost per lug arrived at in this study. It is generally believed that in order to show a profit from this crop every attempt should be made to produce high quality fruit and to market it early. Prices of early table grapes decline as the season progresses. Although cost per lug can be reduced by growing more lugs per acre, it will probably not be profitable if it results in poorer quality or in later maturity.