



RIVERLINK

Linking Horticultural Centres
in Sunraysia - Riverland

Media release

For immediate release

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Table Grape Berry Collapse

Berry collapse has been a problem on Thompson Seedless properties along the Murray Valley in the last 8 seasons. It was been particularly severe in the 1997-1998 and 2000-2001 seasons for properties situated in and around Robinvale and Euston, although there have been isolated incidences in other areas and seasons.

Berry collapse continues to be a significant problem for the table grape industry, and finding the answer to this problem is essential for growers, particularly in the Sunraysia region. Experiments designed to test the impact of gibberellic acid (GA) and calcium on the incidence of berry collapse on Thompson Seedless are being conducted in the vineyard this season, but you can also help solve the problem.

A project team at DPI-Mildura is asking growers to help this season by observing their vineyards for the development of berry collapse. Things that can help the team determine the cause of this problem are:

- What time of the season did the problem occur?
- What part of the vineyard was affected first?
- What are the management systems in place for that part of the vineyard (fertiliser applications, irrigation management, GA sprays)?

Over the coming months please look out for the symptoms described below and complete the berry collapse survey available from the DPI office in Mildura or find it in the Nov/Dec issue of the industry newsletter *'The Vine'*. If you have any queries please contact one of the project team.

The symptoms of berry collapse become apparent around veraison (time of softening). A brown discolouration that occurs in longitudinal stripes (running from stem to berry tip) was thought to be the first symptom of berry collapse. However, observations from the last three seasons suggest that the collapse of the berry can occur quite independent of discolouration and vice versa. Actual 'berry collapse' becomes noticeable in the weeks leading up to harvest where the lower portion of the berry loses firmness and eventually all structure and begin to shrivel (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Berry collapse shown on Thompson Seedless berries

For most of this process the top portion of the berry remains turgid and quite healthy looking, as does the berry stem.

Berry collapse symptoms have been found in other varieties. Crimson Seedless and Sultana are the main varieties affected while isolated symptoms have been seen on Red Globe and Sunmuscat.

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