

COMMODITY

GRAPES

Description

British Columbia's grape and wine industry is concentrated in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys but grapes are also grown in the Fraser Valley, the Kootenays, the Shuswap, Vancouver Island, and the Gulf Islands. Most commercial grapes are sold for wine but smaller quantities are also grown for fresh sales or for processing into juice, jam, jelly, or other products. Some commercial grape farms hold winery licenses as well.

Wineries require buildings for making wine, facilities for inventory storage, loading and unloading spaces, working areas for disposal of grape and winery waste materials, and public parking and access areas.

Commercial grape and wine production requires labour and equipment for cultural practices, land clearing, land preparation, planting, pruning and harvesting. Grape producers may use farm equipment such as tractors, cultivators, sprayers, and harvesters. On-farm infrastructure may include irrigation lines, wells, plant supports, loading and unloading facilities, netting, power lines, machinery sheds, chemical and other storage facilities. Vines and grapes must be protected from climatic events, pests, diseases and wildlife. On-farm wineries require wine-making and storage buildings and additional facilities for parking and hosting customers.

Farm Practices of Particular Interest

Practices for specific farm activities can be found in the Farm Practice section of this reference guide. Farm practices that are of particular interest to grape production include the following.

Aircraft Activities

Grape growers may use helicopters to protect their crops from frost damage and other climatic events.

See also Farm Practice: [Mobile Equipment](#)

Direct Marketing

Some grape producers are licensed to operate an on-farm winery. Vineyards and wineries may participate in activities related to the agri-tourism industry through a wide range of activities including, but not limited to, bus tours, bed and breakfast operation, winery lounge hosting, wine tastings, music festivals, weddings, and other promotional activities.

See also Farm Practice: [Direct Farm Marketing and Agriculture Tourism](#)

Frost Protection

Wind machines may be used to protect vineyards from frosts. Wind machines are generally activated late at night or early in the morning but may be operated at any time. Smudge pots, heaters and irrigation systems may also be used for frost protection.

See also Farm Practice: [Stationary Equipment](#)

Irrigation

Grapes require irrigation in most regions of the province to grow a viable crop. Irrigation systems usually operate 24 hours per day. Fertilizers may be applied through the irrigation system.

See also Farm Practice: [Irrigation](#)

Liming

It is common practice to apply lime on a regular basis. Some lime materials are vulnerable to blowing and drifting in windy conditions.

See also Farm Practice: [Fertilizers and Soil Conditioners](#)

On–Farm Processing

Liquor control and licensing regulations stipulate that farm and estate wineries and associated activities and retail outlets must be located on the vineyard. Land Reserve Commission regulations permit the establishment of on–farm processing facilities alongside wineries and their retail stores on land in an Agricultural Land Reserve. Estate and farm winery retail outlets may sell processed farm products and a wide range of off–farm products. Grape growers or wineries may employ mobile bottling, filtering and labeling services. Large commercial wineries may locate themselves on a vineyard if desired. All wineries may serve food at their facilities under certain provisions.

See also Farm Practice: [Farmstead Refuse](#)
[Product Processing](#)
[Storage of Farm Supplies and Products](#)

Pesticide Application

Pesticides are applied primarily between April and October, but application can occasionally occur during the winter months from November through March. Pesticides may be applied at any time of day or night. Most applications are conducted when winds are calm, typically late in the evening or early in the morning. To ensure that crops are treated in the time frame needed for proper pest control, it is not unusual to carry out night spraying operations.

Fields may be fumigated prior to new stock being planted. A liquid fumigant is usually applied in the fall or spring with weed sprayers and may need to be followed with additional watering applications for maximum effectiveness and penetration. Fumigants may also be injected into the soil; in other applications, it may be best to use granular formulations that are broadcast and incorporated into the soil.

See also Farm Practice: [Pesticides](#)
[Storage of Hazardous Material](#)
[Weed Control](#)

Pruning

Vines may be pruned either by hand or mechanically. Prunings are usually mulched and spread over the land but are occasionally burned. Burning should be conducted in accordance with the *Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation* and associated Code of Practice.

See also Farm Practice: [Burning](#)
[Crop Residue Management](#)
[Mobile Equipment](#)

Transportation

Grape producers and on-farm processors may own or manage vehicles making deliveries or hauling products 24 hours a day. Producers must supply adequate areas on the farm property to handle the volume, movement, and parking of trucks and other traffic related to the activities and production of the farm. Operations which sell directly to the public must provide adequate space for customers to park off the road.

See also Farm Practice: [Transportation](#)
[Direct Farm Marketing and Agriculture Tourism](#)

Wildlife Control

Grape growers may use netting, noise-making devices or other methods of control to protect crops from wildlife damage.

See also Farm Practice: [Wildlife Damage Control – South Coastal BC](#)
[Wildlife Damage Control – Interior BC](#)

Principal and Accessory Buildings

From an operational perspective, principal farm buildings for grape growing are typically those used for produce storage, sorting, separating, cleaning, grading, packing, processing, or direct farm marketing. Accessory farm buildings may include storages for agricultural wastes, chemicals, compost input materials, compost products, and woodwaste. Other accessory structures can include processing facilities, machine sheds, on-farm composting buildings, and general storage for manure and non-organic wastes. From a watercourse protection perspective, however, the definition of principal and accessory buildings may differ. For the purposes of determining applicable setbacks from watercourses and property lines, therefore, local government bylaws or the *Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas* should be consulted. Building assessments may need to be conducted on a case-by-case basis if the designation of a building as principal or accessory is unclear.

Legislation

Agricultural producers are expected to follow all legislation that pertains to their farming operations. The *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* stipulates that the farm operation must meet the *Public Health Act*, *Integrated Pest Management Act*, *Environmental Management Act* and the regulations under those Acts. Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C.

Acts that pertain to specific farm activities are listed in the Farm Practices section of this reference guide. Local government bylaws may also apply to some farm practices. Acts that are not referenced elsewhere and which may be of special interest to grape producers include the following.

Provincial Legislation

The *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* outlines powers of the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch.

The *Liquor Distribution Act* governs the wholesale and retail sale of liquor.

The *Plant Protection Act* and its associated *B.C. Grapevine Diseases Control Regulation* provides for the implementation of preventive measures to mitigate the spread of pests destructive to grape plants in the province.

Local Government Legislation

Applicable local government legislation may include noise bylaws and on-farm marketing bylaws.

Publications

Publications that provide information on grape production include, but are not limited to, the following. Refer to Appendix D for details.

A Guide for Liquor Manufacturers and their Representatives in British Columbia

British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Reference Guide

Best Practices Guide for Grapes for British Columbia growers

Fresh Market Grape Production (Best Practices Guide in British Columbia)

Protecting Orchards from Spring Frosts