

## Grafted Vines for Organic Vineyards – a Checklist

Riversun is not a certified organic or biodynamic nursery, but we have worked very closely with organic and biodynamic growers for many years. The nursery can, and has, customised procedures to meet clients' requests, including:

- Scheduling grafting operations at specified calendar intervals.
- Using customers' plant materials for grafting.
- Restricting applications of chemical treatments (after vines are lifted from the field and before dispatch).
- Hot water treatments before planting.

The nursery environment involves intense production, and our first goal is necessarily to maintain high-health vines. At Riversun, we are working toward reduced chemical applications and improving soil and plant biology through natural means. Nursery vines, however, cannot be compared to those in established vineyards: periodic health issues must be dealt with promptly to ensure sustainable recovery rates.

We know that growers and winemakers who are moving towards organic and biodynamic certification often have a list of questions for their nursery. We hope this fact sheet answers most of your concerns, but please don't hesitate to give us a call if you require more details.

### GM status

None of Riversun's grafted grapevines are genetically modified.

### Plant health status

Riversun tests all vines for Grapevine Leafroll-associated Viruses, Types 1, 2, and 3. Our Premium Plus material and all of our Premium Imports are additionally PCR-tested for 17 viruses and destructive fungi.

Riversun follows a HACCP-based production system that is externally audited by SGS (Société General Surveillance) – an accredited international auditing body based in Switzerland.

Our vines are grafted to meet – and exceed – the New Zealand Winegrowers Grafted Grapevine Standard, developed by NZW in consultation with viticulture nurseries. Full details of the specifications and other requirements of the standard can be viewed on the New Zealand Winegrowers' website ([www.nzwine.com](http://www.nzwine.com)).



*Chardonnay ENTAV-INR@ clone 548 at the Riversun source block near Gisborne.*

### Treatments used in nursery production

- We comply with Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand's guidelines regarding chemical treatments on vines throughout:
  - Grafting
  - While vines are planted out in the field, and
  - Processing and cool store prior to dispatch.
- We treat specific health issues as required.
- Vine coatings (at the graft union) are dark beeswax and paraffin.
- Riversun grafted vines are not dipped in insecticides.

### Timelines and conversion of nursery vines

#### 1. New vineyards

It takes three years to receive organic certification or biodynamic status after the first visit of an advisor or inspector, provided the enterprise is compliant with all standards. Otherwise, it takes three years from the point where compliance is attained.

Vines typically take three years to establish before they yield commercial levels of fruit. Riversun has worked closely with many vineyards whose aim, right from the start, has been to achieve organic status, because the timelines are complementary.

Note: Demeter NZ requires approval to be given by the certifier before non-organic plants and plant materials are used. Approval can be given only if suitable organic materials are not available. See bulletin no 2 at [www.biodynamic.org.nz/demeter](http://www.biodynamic.org.nz/demeter) for details.

## **2. Existing vineyards with organic or biodynamic certification**

Once a vineyard is certified as organic, any new vines must also go through the conversion period.

Where new plantings occupy a set number of rows, such a conversion process is easily accomplished. You are required to consult with your inspector or advisor and provide information on your plan to return this area to organic production within the set timelines.

The process can be speeded up if vineyards use their own untreated rootstock and top-graft treated vines onto them. In that case, they can be certified as organic after only one year.

Top-grafting carries a number of risks, however, particularly in the area of vine health. We urge you to read our "Top-Grafting Fact Sheet" (also posted on the website) for further information

## **3. Spot or replacement plantings**

New vines intended for spot or replacement plantings can be grown on in a separate area designated as "under conversion". Once conversion is achieved, the replacement vines can be planted where required.

If you have more questions about organic or biodynamic vineyard production, the following links provide detailed instructions regarding nursery vines and their use in organic and biodynamic viticulture.

- BioGro New Zealand  
[www.biogro.co.nz](http://www.biogro.co.nz)
- Bio Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association  
[www.biodynamic.org.nz](http://www.biodynamic.org.nz)