



Vineyard Establishment Checklist

It takes a **lot** of resources, commitment and preparation to successfully plant and establish a vineyard. Use this checklist to see if you are ready to start a vineyard and what tasks are still needed before you plant.

Site & Location Characteristics

Tasks	Ideal Timing	Date(s) Completed
Collect a preliminary soil sample of each prospective vineyard block & send to lab.	2 years before planting	
Collect water sample and send to the lab to test for irrigation suitability.	2 years before planting	
Determine well output (gallons per minute).	2 years before planting	
Record information on aspect of slope & the percentage of slope on each potential planting block.	2 years before planting	
Produce & print a soil map of property using the Web Soil Survey .	2 years before planting	
Check elevation – absolute elevation and elevation relative to surrounding topography. Identify air & water drainage pathways.	2 years before planting	
Submit soil samples for Nematode analysis.	2 years before planting (in spring or fall)	
Complete a comprehensive soil evaluation. Dig soil pits up to 4 feet deep & have a professional evaluation of drainage, soil structure, soil texture & root limiting factors.	2 years before planting	
Create a list of wildlife (deer, raccoon, birds, possum, wild boar, etc.) that may impact your vineyard & determine how to combat these threats.	2 years before planting	
Establish a list of local/regional pests & diseases that you will need to contend with & educate & prepare to proactively address these.	2 years before planting	
Create a list of grape varieties that are proven to grow well in your area. Then, narrow the list to 2-3 varieties that you are most interested in growing & identify <u>specifically</u> why these varieties will be successful in your region & the expected marketability to wineries for each variety.	2 years before planting	
Create a list of root stocks that are suitable for graft for your desired grape varieties (presuming you will need to use root stock in your region). List why these rootstocks are best suited for your soil & for the variety you wish to plant.	2 years before planting	

Support Resources

Tasks	Ideal Timing	Date(s) Completed
Establish contacts & become a member of your local grower organizations & online educational organizations such as Virtual Viticulture Academy . Learn more.	2 years before planting	
Visit vineyards in the region where your vineyard is planned; taste wines & talk to the people who manage the vineyards.	2 years before planting	
Create list of local resources such as university staff or extension associates.	2 years before planting	
Establish contact with local & national resource conservation programs to determine if grant assistance is available for farm infrastructure such as irrigation, pesticide storage facilities or other vineyard specific items.	2 years before planting	

Vineyard Infrastructure

Tasks	Timing	Date(s) Completed
Identify a functional water well or the cost to drill a well.	2 years before planting (budgeting phase)	
Game/Deer fencing - is the property fenced / what is the cost to install fencing.	2 years before planting (budgeting phase)	
Ensure access roads are in place for all sections of the planned vineyard.	2 years before planting (budgeting phase)	
Identify appropriate tractor with enclosed cabin & air-conditioning.	2 years before planting (budgeting phase)	
Identify appropriate vineyard sprayer for your maximum vineyard size.	2 years before planting (budgeting phase)	
Identify appropriate herbicide sprayer for your maximum vineyard size. (herbicide sprayer must be used for herbicides only).	2 years before planting (budgeting phase)	
Purchase small utility vehicle for driving yourself, your gear, and your vineyard consultant around the property and in between vine rows such as a Kawasaki Mule or John Deere Gator.	2 years before planting (budgeting phase)	



Personal Attributes

Tasks	Timing	Date(s) Completed
Ensure support from family/friends as you transition & learn to be a grape grower.	Before you commit	
Acquire finances of \$15,000 to \$20,000 per acre for desired vineyard size (do not spend your retirement funding on this).	Before you commit	
Commit working hours from February through October with no significant vacation during that time if you are managing the vineyard.	Before you commit	
Hire a full-time vineyard manager for vineyards over 10 acres.	Before you commit	
Identify grant dollars available for specialty crop farming &/or young farmer or new farm / ranch initiatives.	2 years before planting	

Was this helpful?

If you found this guide helpful, please visit VirtualViticultureAcademy.com to view other free Grower Guides. Or better yet, become a member of Virtual Viticulture Academy and have full access to all the content you need to better manage your vineyard. Benefits include live webinars, hands-on field courses, twice monthly Live Vineyard Advising (your vineyard questions answered live), vineyard product discounts and more.

Visit VirtualViticultureAcademy.com today to learn more.



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