

Optimum starting conditions for young vines

A wood wool fleece on the ground gives young vines effective protection against encroaching weeds. This method spares you innumerable work processes and makes the use of herbicides superfluous.

Newly-planted vines need to be treated with great care and this is bound up with costs. The young plants are very sensitive to shading by other plants. Accordingly, it is worthwhile to protect them right from the start, before encroaching weeds present them with competition. If you do not want to use herbicides, you have to cut back the weeds or mow regularly. This is not only intensive in terms of time, it also brings the risk that the young plants will be injured. For some time now there has been an interesting alternative available to wine growers. In practice it has been shown that covering the ground with a wood wool fleece offers effective, ecologically sustainable protection against unwanted undergrowth. The fleeces consist of Swiss wood wool made from FSC-certified wood and a groundwater-neutral plastic mulch. The "Howolis" nonwoven mulch is produced by Lindner Suisse GmbH in Wattwil in St. Gallen.

Ecological and time-saving

The wood wool fleece suppresses the growth of weeds, protects from erosion and keeps the soil constantly moist, since it reduces water evaporation. The result is improved growth in the young vines. Competing plants are prevented from growing and together with the favourable micro-climate underneath the fleece, this gives the plants the best possible chance of flourishing. In practical trials a gain of one year to the first crop was observed in comparison with planting the same variety of grapes without using nonwoven fleece. The fleece makes the use of herbicides superfluous. Similarly, there is no need to mow between the vines in the first two years. Abandoning the use of herbicides with their impact on the soil, plus the significant saving in time, makes the fleece attractive not only from the ecological, but also from the economic point of view. The use of the wood wool fleece is thus not only suitable for environmentally-friendly cultivation, but it also offers great benefits when using conventional methods, thanks to the saving of working processes. Using these fleeces to protect the soil between the rows of vines offers the young plants the best possible starting conditions.

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Info Box

Practical tips for use

The following work practices have become established in the use of the wood wool fleece in vineyards:

1. Work the soil (break it up) by ploughing or milling.
2. Plant the young vines.
3. Spread the fleece over the planted vines. With a knife cut small apertures and bring the plants through the holes.
4. Secure the wood wool fleece to the soil along the edges with steel or wooden pegs.
5. Using a mower set fairly high, the surfaces between the rows of vines can be mowed without any problems. The mower glides over the fleece, without doing it any damage.

For further information:

www.bioweingeiger.ch

www.lindner.ch



