

From the Vine to Your Plate

GROWING, DRYING AND PROCESSING
AUSTRALIAN DRIED GRAPES

Australian dried grapes are considered to be the finest in the world, because of the very high quality standards that Australian growers maintain. The most common varieties grown here are Sultanas, Raisins, Currants and Sunmuscats.

The largest dried grape growing region in Australia is Sunraysia, which spans northwest Victoria and southwest NSW. Smaller quantities are grown in the Riverland district in South Australia and the Swan Valley and Bindoon regions in Western Australia. These areas are warm and sunny and provide conditions that are ideal for grape growing and natural sun drying.

Science plays a vital part in the success of the Australian dried fruits industry. Ongoing research into viticulture techniques, soil conservation and management, irrigation practices, drainage, crop forecasting, drying and packing has made the industry one of the most efficient and productive in the world.

Up to four kilograms of freshly picked grapes are required to produce just one kilo of dried vine fruit.



Winter Pruning

During winter the vines are pruned. The old canes are removed from the trellis and new canes selected and wrapped around trellis wires. These new canes are now ready to bear the next season's crop of grapes.

Pruning helps to promote consistent yields of fruit and to ensure that harvesting of the crop is as efficient as possible. It also helps with pest and disease management.

Grape vine growth stages

From early September and throughout the spring, as the vines burst from dormancy into life, they go through a series of growth stages. Firstly, young shoots appear on the vines and they develop clusters of flowers. This is called "inflorescence". The flowers blossom into berries (or grapes) which are at this stage small, hard and green. Over the spring and early summer the berries will grow, soften and ripen and their sugar content will increase.

Harvesting and Drying

Harvesting begins in late summer, early autumn (February/March) when the grapes are ripe and ready for picking. There are two main harvesting methods used: traditional hand picking and trellis drying followed by mechanical harvesting.

Continued overleaf



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Australian Dried Fruits Association

Enjoy the grape taste

Growing, Drying & Processing