

Cheaper, Labour – Saving Method for Desuckering Grapevines



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SPOTLIGHT PLUS HERBICIDE - a unique carfentrazone and oil formulation – is rapidly being adopted by grape growers for chemical desuckering, to reduce labour costs and to replace less effective chemicals.

The 60g/L formulation of carfentrazone-ethyl was purpose-built for the horticulture market, with an inbuilt oil to minimise drift and any potential damage to vines.

This standalone treatment for desuckering grapevines can also be used for post-emergent broadleaf weed control in young or established vines, and in orchards.

Spotlight Plus has proven a wonderful tool for saving labour when winegrape pricing is under pressure.

More than 80% of growers have a vine desuckering program - with 60% removing suckers manually - so the market scope is huge.

Crop Care technical sales representative for southeast Queensland Ed Bracey: “Unwanted sucker growth competes with the vine’s productive canopy, interferes with fruit access during harvesting, and can harbour pests and diseases.

“Pruning is expensive, time-consuming and backbreaking – costing as much as \$300/ha, compared with \$70-\$80/ha for an application of Spotlight Plus.

“The use of Spotlight Plus in trials and commercial vineyards has achieved at least 80% reduction in sucker growth in both red and white wine grape varieties. Some growers have achieved more than 95% control of suckers with careful use of a hand lance from a tractor-mounted spray unit.”

Spraying Spotlight Plus on suckers arising from the rootstock at the base of the vine results in rapid burndown of suckers. Any regrowth is likely to be less vigorous, but may need a repeat application for season-long control.

Crop Care recommends an application setup that produces slightly coarser droplets and reduces the percentage of fines for improved drift management. Spotlight Plus should preferably be applied with a fully-shrouded sprayer especially designed for the purpose, or applied with a directed sprayer targeting the bottom 60cm of trunk. The spray should be directed downwards and away from canopy foliage to minimise drift damage to leaves and green stems.

Coverage should wet the foliage and stems of unwanted shoots to the point of runoff. The recommended minimum spray solution volume is 50litres per kilometre of vine row (both sides sprayed).

Spotlight Plus should not be applied to vines less than 2 years old – or vines with green bark - unless they are protected from the spray solution by a physical barrier. For best results, apply to suckers before they are 300mm long, early in the growing season before they begin to lignify.

Spotlight Plus satisfies the high quality demands of the wine industry – with nil residues in Australian, French and German trials; nil taint in French wine taste tests; and no impact on yield in European tests.

For More Information:

Kerrie Mackay
National Horticulture and suSCon
Business Manager
Ph: 07 3909 2008
Mob: 0413 458 069
Email: kerrie.mackay@cropcare.com.au



Crop Care Australasia Pty Ltd

ABN: 53 061 362 347

Portal North – Unit 15/16 Metroplex Avenue Murarrie QLD 4172

PO Box 84 Morningside QLD 4170

Phone: 07 3909 2000 **Fax:** 07 3909 2010 www.cropcare.com.au

