

# Grape Basics

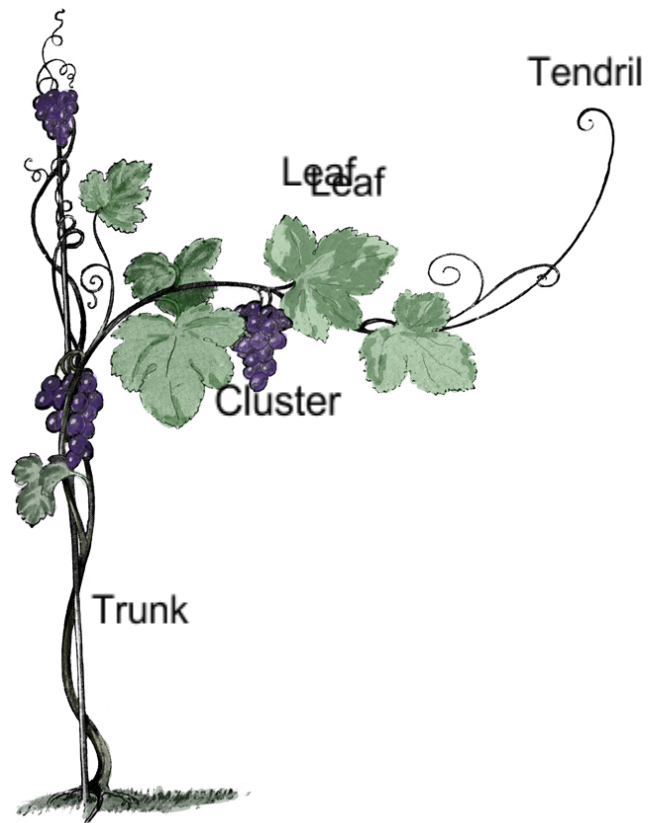
California's warm, dry climate is ideal for growing grapes. The state's native grapes were sour, so when Spanish friars arrived in California in the 1700s, they brought sweeter grapes with them from Europe.

Today, more than 800,000 acres across California are **vineyards** - farms where grapes are grown. These vineyards produce fresh grapes (known as table grapes) as well as grapes used to make wine and raisins. 99% of the commercially grown grapes in the United States come from California.

California's table grape season begins in late spring. First, grapes are harvested in the Coachella Valley, the southernmost growing region. By mid-July, Coachella's season ends and the harvest moves north to the San Joaquin Valley through late fall. In the winter, grapes go through **dormancy**, when growth stops for awhile. During this time the grapevines are **pruned** (trimmed) to produce as many quality grapes as possible. In early spring, tiny buds and green leaves appear on the vines. As the temperature gets warmer, the plant grows faster. Flowers bloom and then are replaced by tiny green grapes. Sunlight and warmth help the berries get bigger. As the grapes ripen, they change color from green to red or black; green grapes become translucent. Once grapes are picked, they do not become sweeter.

## Parts of a Grapevine

The parts of the grapevine that you can see above the ground are part of the **canopy**. The canopy includes the **trunk**, the **cordon** (the arm-like branches that stretch from the trunk), **clusters**, **leaves**, and **tendrils**. Stems grow off the cordon and clusters of grapes form around **stalks** on the stems. The study of grapes is called **viticulture**.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Comprehension Check

Where do most grapes eaten in the United States come from? \_\_\_\_\_

What are grape farms called? \_\_\_\_\_

What are some things grapes need to grow? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do workers first begin to harvest grapes? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do they go next? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What happens to grapes in the winter? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List some ways that grapes grow from winter to spring.

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How do you know when grapes have ripened and are ready to pick?

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What is the part of the grape plant that we eat called? \_\_\_\_\_



● SAN FRANCISCO

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

● LOS ANGELES

COACHELLA VALLEY



GROWING REGIONS