



The Frantoio Press

February 2010

First of all a Happy and Prosperous 2010 to you and your loved ones!

Time goes fast and harvesting starts in about 2 months. The weather has been kind with high temperatures and no excessive rainfall; just enough at the right times.

Olives handled the dry conditions well, be it that they may abort some fruit (Leccino in particular), visible as hard dry brown olives amongst healthy looking green ones.

On Orchard

Pruning

Remove suckers and water shoots growing in the centre of the tree to get sunlight on the fruit and future producing wood.

Skirts can be pruned up and some light “under-cutting” will also help to get light into the tree.

Wood exposed to full light will produce more flowers, and hopefully more fruit.

Spraying

Put a copper spray on before the end of the month to protect the new leaves of the summer flush from peacock spot. A later application may leave residue at harvest time, potentially affecting your oil.

Leaf analysis

A leaf analysis now will give you an indication of the nutrients uptake. Phosphorus is important for healthy bud development a check on this may be worthwhile and if need be apply a light side dressing.

Girdling

If you have the courage, now is the time to girdle or ring bark. The warm temperatures will help the healing process. Take a 3mm strip of bark out right around the trunk with a double bladed knife. It is not a time consuming job, but it is important to remove the bark as much as possible to optimize the effect of the treatment.

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My experience is that girdling will lead to heavy flowering in spring and a consequent heavy crop (trees were carrying up to 50kgs of fruit). Winter pruning and summer pruning will be less in the year to come.

However there are a number of negative aspects.

Not every variety responds the same. I have achieved the best results with J5, Frantoio and Leccino. Koroneiki seems to fruit consistently so there is not a real reason to girdle them. Varieties with a thinner drier bark can severely suffer and I would give them a miss as well.

Girdling puts the trees in stress shown by a yellowing of the leaves. But hold your nerve, they will usually come right again and reward you 15 months later

Fruit on girdled trees matures a bit earlier than on the non-girdled trees.

I girdle only half of the varieties that can handle girdling to get two opposite biennial cycles.

Certification and licenses

My NZGap certification will be renewed again before the harvest season and my Western BOP Food premises license is up-to-date.

Currently I am in the third year of organic conversion. The 2011 crop will be a Biogro certified organic one.

With pressing operation I need to press organic certified fruit first each time to avoid oil becoming mixed with non-certified product.

Preparations

The pressing line has just been cleaned for the second time since last harvest.

The equipment is completely dismantled, cleaned with caustic soda, disinfected and thoroughly rinsed with clean water, re-assembled again (no screws left over!) and is ready to go.

Spare parts for the pumps are on the way from Italy.

I have ordered extra 50 liter drums for settling oil. On occasions last year I had to turn over the drums too quickly resulting in the oil being less clear as I would like it to be. The extra drums will give a bit more time.

Harvest 2010

Last year I had to leave quite some trees unpicked as I can't pick when I am pressing or when it is raining.

This season I will do more mechanical harvesting to speed up the harvest and pick more on the day, which at the same time makes processing easier.

I will also hand pick olives for the table olive side I am developing.

The Manzanilla has taken notice of my bad intentions for not producing and are carrying a good crop to save their lives!

These olives are the preferred variety to produce green table olives.

I will try some natural fermentation which can take up to 2 years before they are ready for sale.

All part of the fun!

Pressing charges 2010

I have kept the pressing charges the same as last year and the year before.

A minor change has been made for processing small volumes as these are very time consuming and incur a lot of additional

costs. Quantities of less than 100 kg may be combined with fruit of the same variety.

Unfortunately I am not in control of the cost of goods I have to buy in and I have to pass on these increases, e.g. bottles, talc and enzymes.

A deposit will be payable on nets, rakes & crates as I have lost some last year and can not afford to continue.

The Services Lists & Charges 2010 is attached. Additional copies are available on request.

Contact me as usual by phone on 07-5491467. Please leave a message as I am mostly in the shed or the grove and don't have a cell phone. It wouldn't work in the shed anyway.

I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Oil Sales

Oil sales are steady and gradually expanding.

Farmers markets etc are still the major avenue and I attend is Katikati, Tauranga, Mt Maunganui, Morrinsville and Thames.

Seven shops around the area are stocking the "Viridis Grove" brand and it is getting a good reputation

Once formal organic certification is obtained I will look at export opportunities again.



This is a Katikati Frantoio Limited publication. For further information please contact Bert van Heuckelum, 117 Lindemann Road, RD1 Katikati, tel . 07-549 1467, email heuck@clear.net.nz

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