



VIRTUAL VITICULTURE

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Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

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Westover Vineyard Advising and Virtual Viticulture Academy



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The Goals

Strong live wood

Uniform growth

Sustainable production

Reduce wood diseases



Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Applies to Both Spur and Cane Pruning





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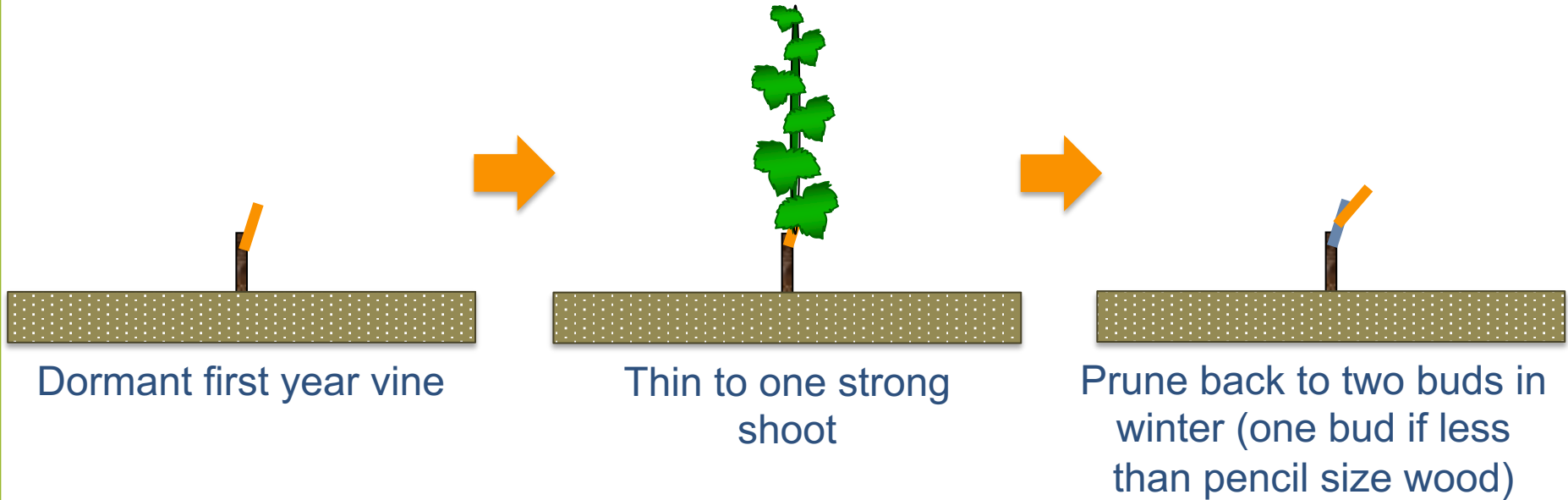
Mistake #1

Starting with a weak foundation

Scenarios from the Ground Up

1st Year Growth – Single Shoot

Fruiting wire



Scenarios from the Ground Up

1st Year Growth – Single Shoot



Dormant first year vine



Thin to one strong shoot



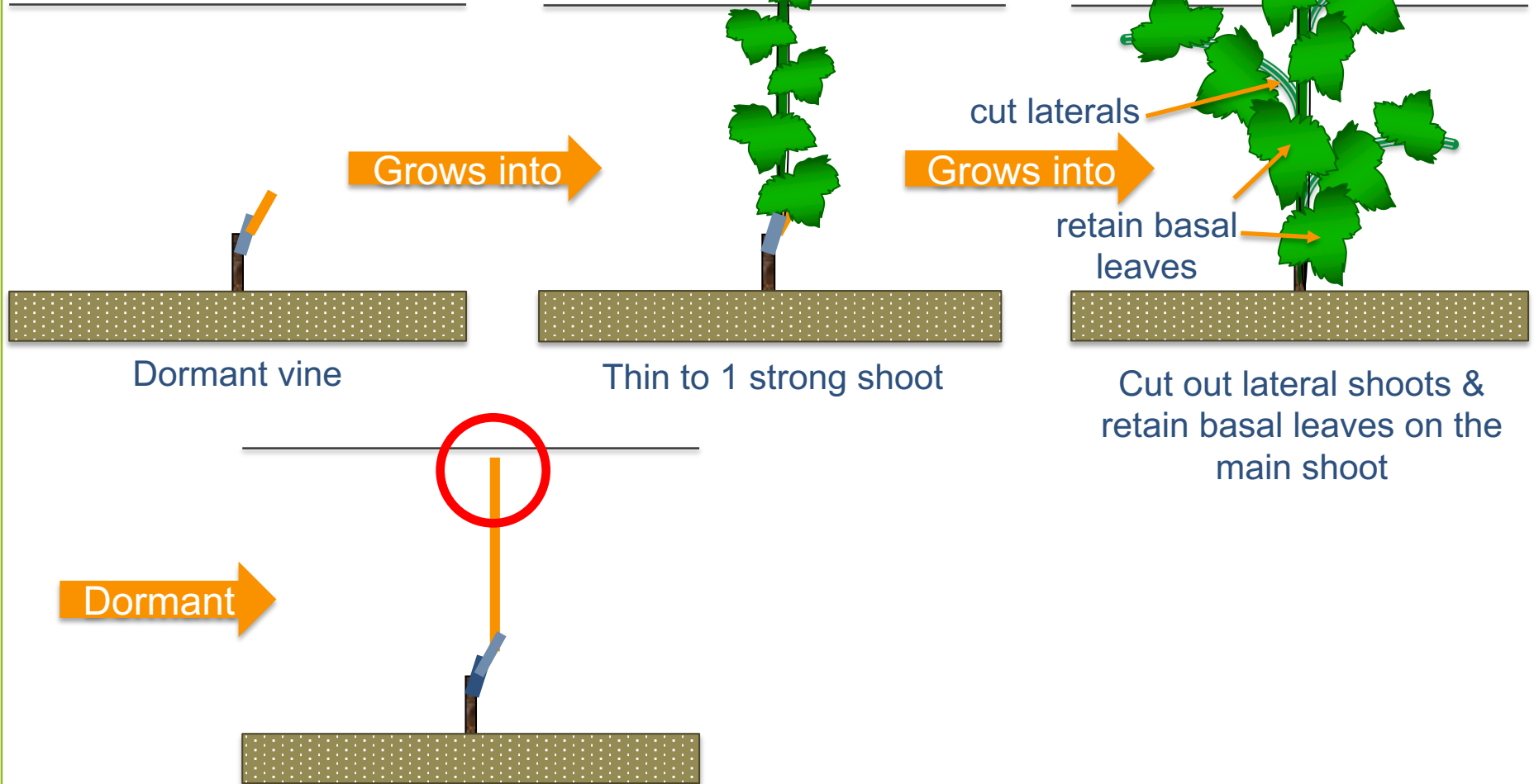
Prune back to two buds in winter
(one bud if less than pencil size wood)



Trunk Development

2nd Year Growth – Single Shoot to Single Trunk
Low to Moderate Vigor

Fruiting wire



Retain a trunk – cut so the top bud is below the fruiting wire
(Cut back to 2 buds if $\lt 3/8^{\text{th}}$ inch [9-10 mm] thick wood)

Scenarios from the Ground Up

1st Year Growth – Single Shoot to Single Trunk



Dormant first year vine



Thin to one strong
shoot



Cut out lateral shoots &
retain basal leaves on
the main shoot



Retain trunk - cut 2-4"
below wire if $>3/8$ " thick.
(Cut back to 2 buds if
 $<3/8$ " wood)



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Mistake #2

Cutting too close to the apical bud







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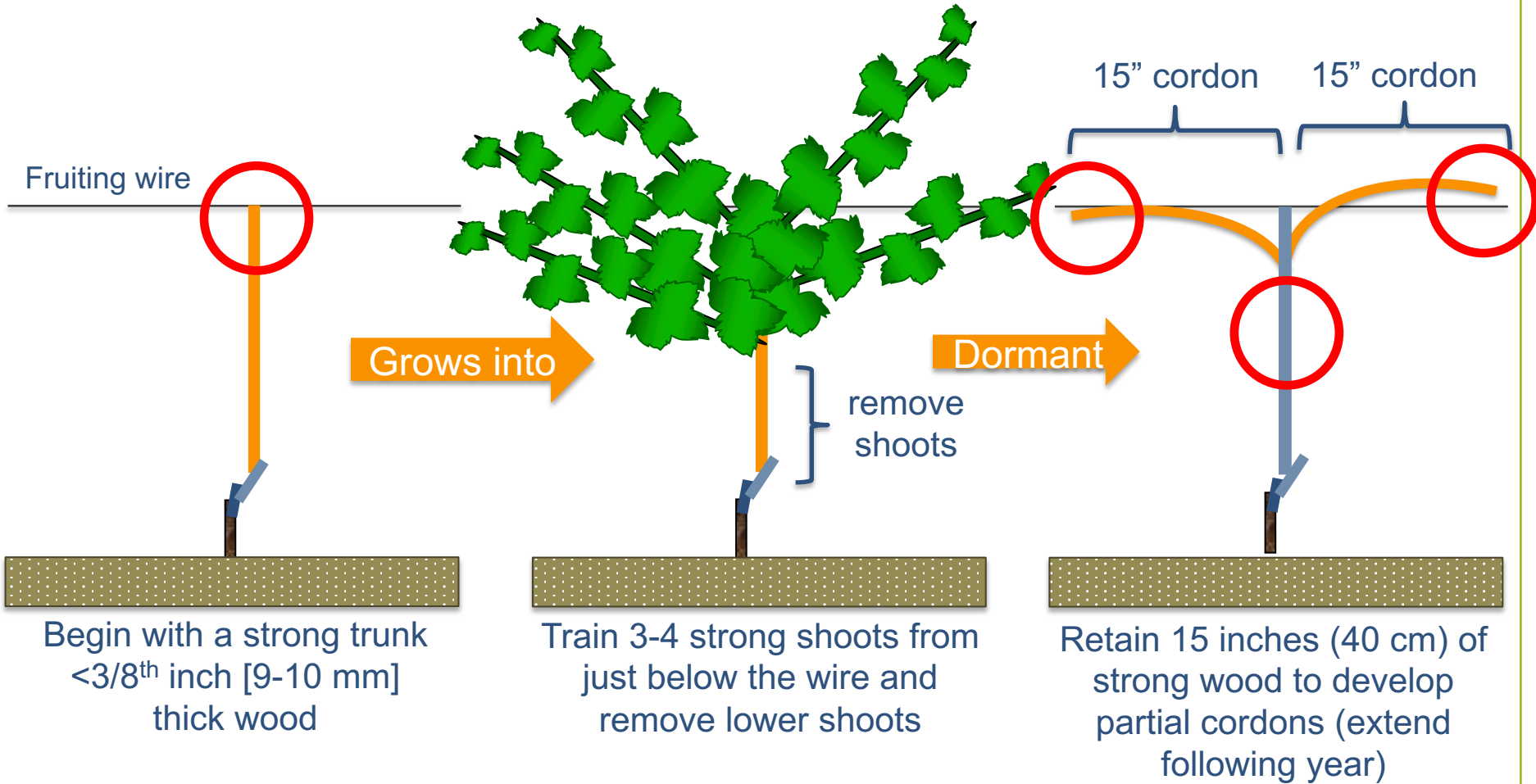
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Mistake #3

Extending new cordons too far

Cordon Development

3rd Year Growth – Single Shoot to Single Trunk
Moderate to High Vigor



Cordon Development

3rd Year Growth – Single Shoot to Single Trunk
Moderate to High Vigor



Begin with a strong trunk, <math><3/8^{\text{th}}</math> inch [9-10 mm] thick wood

Grows into



remove
shoots

Train 4 to 5 strong shoots (depending on site vigor) from just below the wire & remove lower shoots

Dormant



Retain 15 inches (40 cm) of strong wood to develop partial cordons (extend following year if needed)



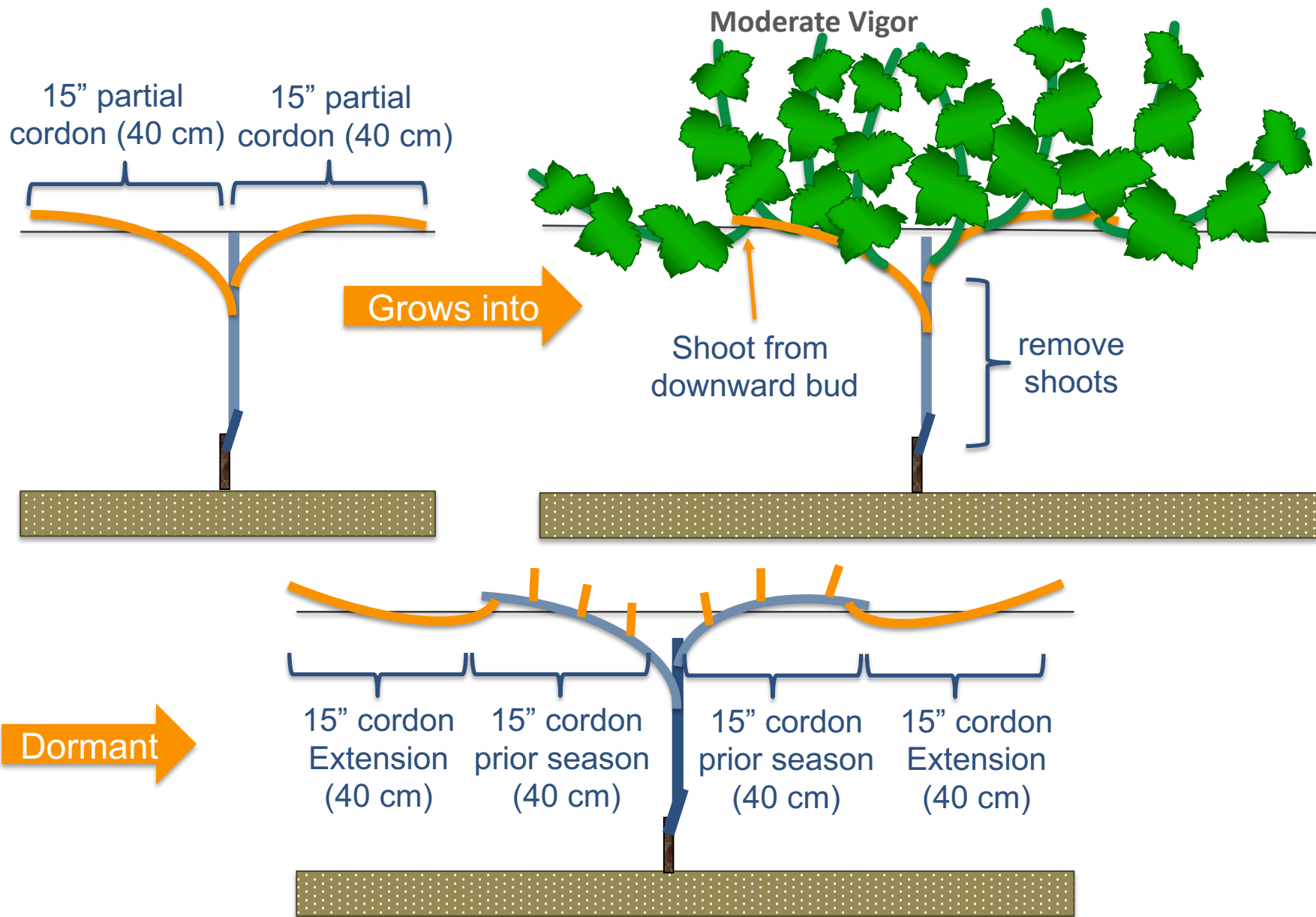
Cordons should be no longer than 15” or from “elbow to fist” in length





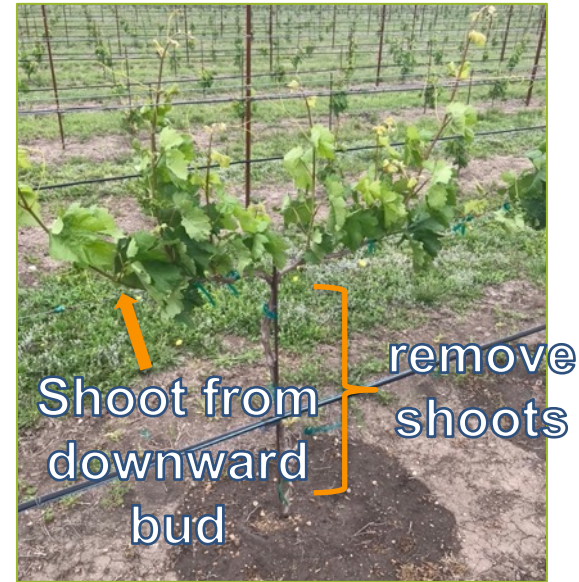
Scenarios from a Trunk and Partial Cordons

3rd or 4th Year Growth – Develop Cordons from Trunks and Partial Cordons



Scenarios from a Trunk & Partial Cordons

Develop Full Cordons – Second Phase





Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Canes longer than 15" can cause gaps





Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Canes longer than 15" can cause gaps







Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Gap in the Canopy



Each 10 inch gap can result in loss of up to $\frac{1}{2}$ ton fruit per acre

I'm serious about this one!





Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Trim away from distal, downward bud





Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Downward bud forms shoot along the wire





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Mistake #4

Using lateral canes as spurs



Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Remove all wimpy wood

Good canes but weak laterals



Remove this bud & weak lateral





Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Cut out all wimpy wood – leave base bud

Lateral less than pencil diam.



Cut back to base bud





Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Spur Development



No wimpy wood!



Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Laterals not ideal for spurs





Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

**Clean prune new canes to push
base buds = stronger spurs**





Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Long laterals are even worse!





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Mistake #5

Retaining weak or wimpy wood



Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Wimpy wood wrapped around the wire





15"

3/8"

COL
DEM



Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Reduce weak spurs to 1 bud if needed





Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Cutting back to good wood

Extension weak – poor wood



**Cut out weak wood –
extend strong**





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Mistake #6

Not removing dry, dead wood



Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard





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Mistake #7

Cutting too close on 2-3-year-old
wood

Global Vineyard Perspective











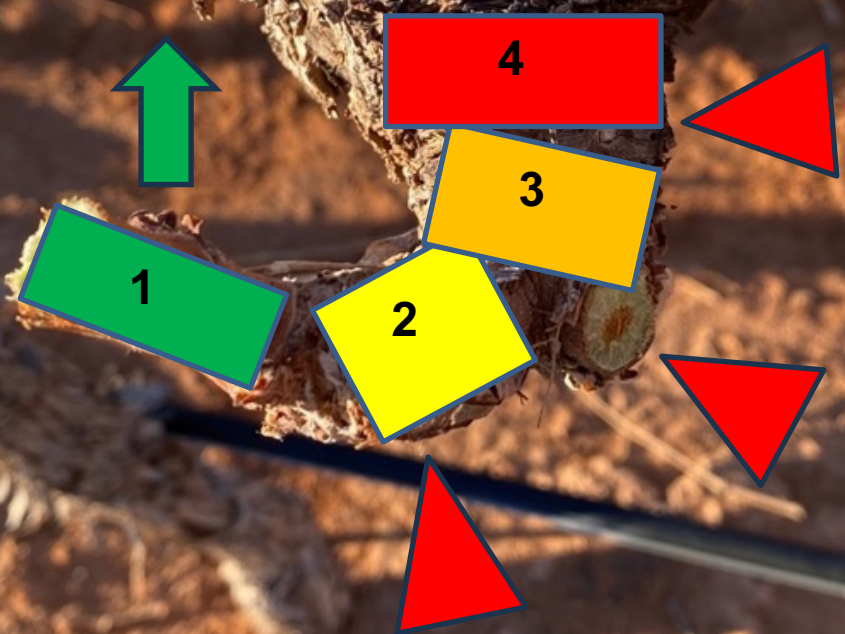
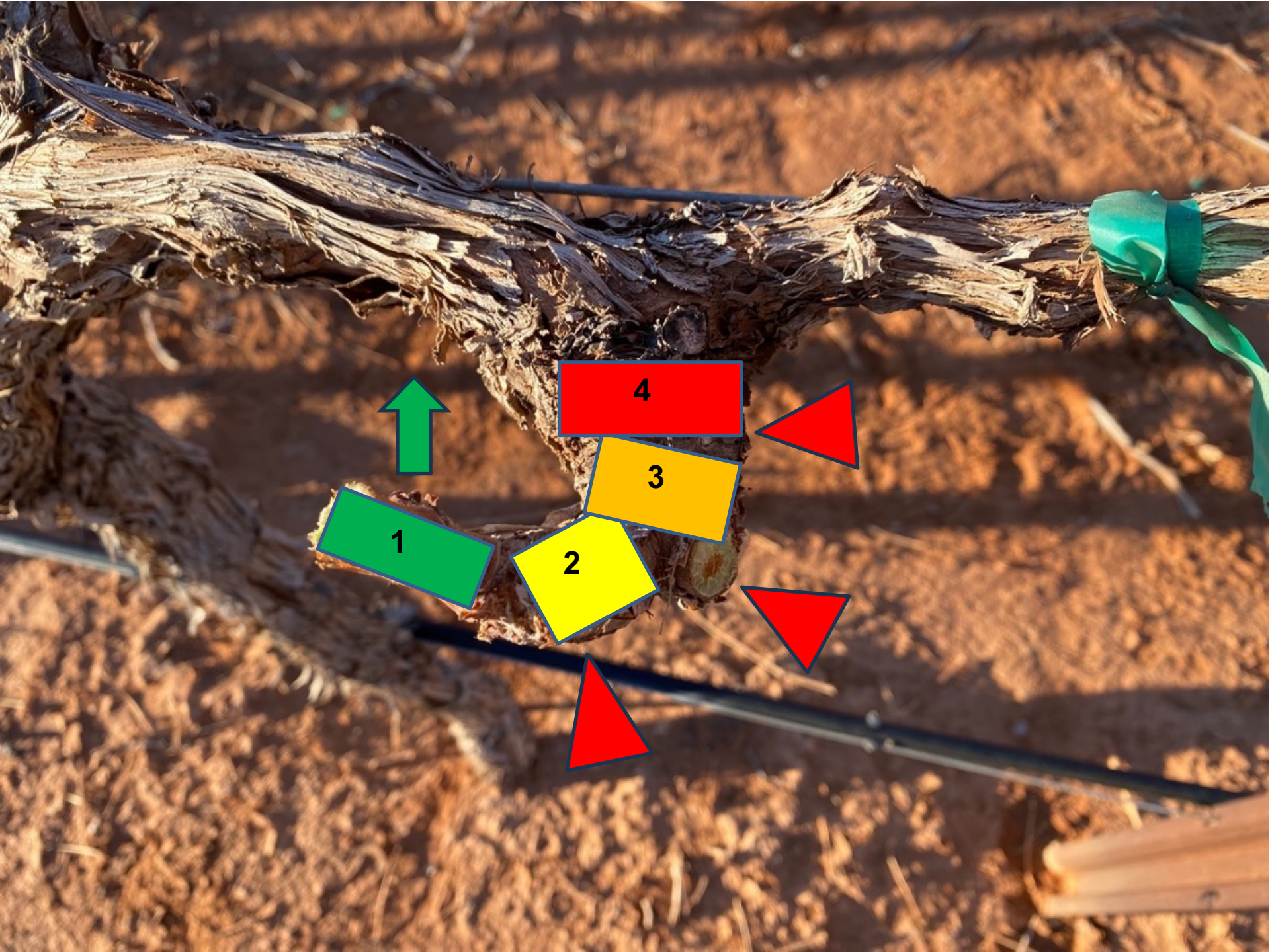






'Spur Sandwich'





'Spur Creep'





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Mistake #8

Retaining spurs near large cut wounds









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Mistake #9

Forcing the fit



Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Don't waste time with poorly sized and positioned canes







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Mistake #10

Large pruning wounds
“killer cuts”



Vine Pruning & Training to Promote Vineyard Longevity

GTD & Vine Decline



Is it the disease or the pruning?

































Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

Watch How-To Videos



THE PODCAST

learn

live advice

join

about

members



Pruning



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Assess, Purchase, and Plan: Are You Doing These ...

Video Course

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Converting Unilateral Cordons to Bilateral Cordons

Video

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Cutting Small Wood Back to a Strong Trunk

Video

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Effectively Managing Sheep in Vineyards

Video Course

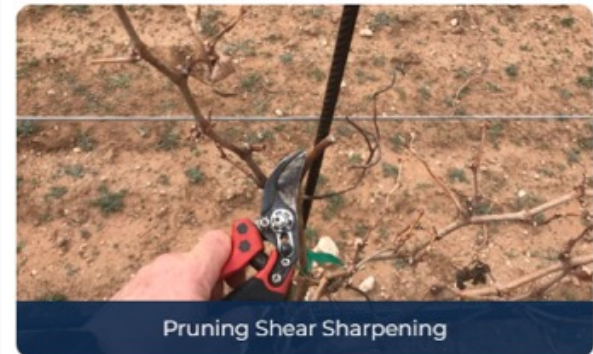
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Preventing Grapevine Trunk Disease

How-To-Guide

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Pruning Shear Sharpening

Video

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Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard

These techniques are covered in the videos






Vine Pruning & Training to Promote Vineyard Longevity



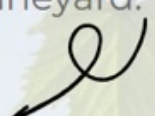
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Learn the art and science of growing exceptional wine grapes in a way that fits your life and vineyard.

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Unearth what it takes to Be a Better Grape Grower.

Host Fritz Westover shares best practices for being a successful winegrape grower, offers practical tips for your vineyard, and answers questions from growers like you.

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Bonus Mistake #11

Improper tying of canes and cordons



Top 10 Pruning Mistakes in the Vineyard







Resources for you...

Free Vine Tying Guide

Proper Vine Tying

posted on **JULY 6, 2023**



Proper vine tying is a necessary task for training new vines and maintaining vine structure into vine maturity. This quick 6 page photo guide provides a review of vine tying basics, common vine tying materials, and examples of proper and improper vine tying practices.

VIEW GUIDE

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Resources for you...

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