



Compost for vineyards – a case study from Kalleske Enterprises Pty Ltd, Greenock, SA

Who

Kalleske Enterprises Pty Ltd

Where

Greenock, Barossa Valley,
South Australia

What

Winegrapes

Aims

- increase organic matter
- improve soil structure
- improve soil biology

Outcomes

- improved soil health
- slow release of nutrients
- fertiliser costs 40% less than growers in similar situation
- more friable soils
- better moisture retention
- increased earthworm population

Kalleske Wines Pty Ltd

The Kalleske family have been growing grapes in South Australia's Barossa Valley for seven generations. Their oldest vineyard dates back to 1875 and the average vine age is 50 years old.

Each generation's environmentally conscious practices have improved the land for the following generation. Kalleske's vineyards are certified organic and biodynamic and the winery is also certified organic.

Traditional winemaking techniques ensure that grapes from their low yielding vines produce top quality wines that are respectful of the unique characters of their vines and varieties.

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**“Better soils,
better crops and
more earthworms.”**

Kym Kalleske, Vigneron





Why compost?

Kalleske Enterprises want to ensure they continually improve their soil health by increasing organic matter levels and improving the biology and structure of their soils. Over the past nine years they've tried straw mulch under vines, a commercial compost product and now they make their own compost.

"Compost is a very cost effective option."

Kym Kalleske, Vigneron

"The soil is generally easier to cultivate, holds more moisture."

Kym Kalleske, Vigneron

Compost application

Kalleske Enterprises make their compost from a combination of grape marc, chaff dust, hay waste, basalt fines, gypsum, lime, humates, composted cow manure and chicken manure. Biodynamic compost preparations are also added. They spread the compost with a belt spreader once a year at 2 t/ha at a total cost of \$70–80/ha. Initially they used compost at a rate of 4 t/ha, but continual improvement in soil health means that they can now use half the rate.

Where to from here?

Kalleske Enterprises see using compost as one of the best things they have done for their soils. As a certified organic and biodynamic vineyard, compost fits with their philosophy of producing grapes and wines as naturally as possible. Kalleske Enterprises recognise that compost is a sound investment in the sustainability of their business and they will continue to make and use compost in their vineyards.

The bottom line...

Kalleske Enterprises saw the benefits of using compost in their vineyards within the first 12–18 months. Vigneron Kym Kalleske said using compost over the last nine years has continually improved the health of their soil. The soil now holds more moisture, is more friable and earthworm numbers have increased.

Kalleske Enterprises don't use synthetic fertilisers and have found that compost provides a slow release of nutrients for their vines. They estimate that by using compost they are spending around 40% less than growers who use synthetic fertilisers.

It's difficult for Kalleske Enterprises to estimate the complete return from compost use, as improvements in soil health can be hard to measure in dollar terms. Compost is a very cost effective option for them and investing in compost has made a big difference to their biggest asset, their soil.

"Compost is one of the best things you can do for your soil and soil biology."

Kym Kalleske, Vigneron



For more information on the program contact:



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www.compostforsoils.com.au

the resource for compost users