

## Minimize Your Disease Risks

By Randall Miller

I just finished reading the latest copy of California Agriculture after returning from “Grape Camp” in Fredericksburg, Texas. I realized after surveying several vineyards in Oklahoma, and what I have read and heard in other states, that deadarm caused by *Eutypa* dieback and *Botryosphaeria* spp. (one or more causes bot canker) is a widespread serious problem. Both show a similar symptom, wedge-shaped necrotic tissue (in cross sections) on the spurs, cordons, and trunks. In some areas it is thought that *Eutypa* is the only cause, but *Botryosphaeria* spp. are spreading or just haven’t been detected yet. A recent study in the northeast U.S. found this to be true. I’ve found deadarm is also infecting 4-5 year old vines, not older ones as described in the literature; at least, in Oklahoma’s extreme conditions.

So what can you do to protect your vines and minimize damage? While some methods are being researched, only a few have been proven. Train to two or more trunks: If you have to severely prune, you may still have at least one trunk or cordon to produce. Prune late in the dormant season and double prune (early winter and late winter). Avoid pruning or other damage to wood during warm wet weather. Don’t pull suckers, spray them (e.g., with Rely). Commercial products that contain flusilazole and/or fluazinam have been effective in the prevention of *Eutypa* dieback; as well as, a new boron based product called B-Lock, check your state for registration. Sanitize pruners as they can pass inoculum. Prune all cankers and discolored wood and then dispose of all cuttings (bury or burn).

And last but not least start with treated stock. Make sure your nursery takes measures to prevent the spread of pests like deadarm, crown gall, and Pierce’s disease, etc. Pierce’s disease has just been found near Oklahoma City, most likely because someone bought untreated Concord vines. It is believed to have spread, in the four years since they were planted, to several surrounding ornamental plants. No glassy-winged sharpshooter was found; but, native sharpshooters and other insects can vector PD, just not as effectively. Crown gall is another serious issue most are aware of, but how it spreads is debated. I and others believe it is spread by water and likely foot/machinery traffic. This is in addition to infected propagation material and pruners. The best thing to do is remove infected vines and use stock treated for crown gall.