

Vine & Branches

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

John 15:5

Find out what grapevines can teach us about our need to abide in Jesus Christ.

GRAPEVINE

Plant name: *Vitis vinifera*

Plant type: perennial, dicotyledonous angiosperm

Like other flowering angiosperms, a grapevine has a solid, woody stem, which supports the plant and carries water and nutrients from the anchoring roots.

The use of stakes and trellises for training the growth of grapevines has been practiced for over 2,000 years. This allows farmers to make sure the plants receive the right amount of sunlight and aeration, as well as to make sure that the branches don't lie on the ground, where the grapes are more likely to become spoiled.

Anciently, grapevines were pruned at two main times of the year: in the autumn after the harvest (a major purge) and in the spring before and after blooming (minor trimming to control growth and ensure a fruitful crop).

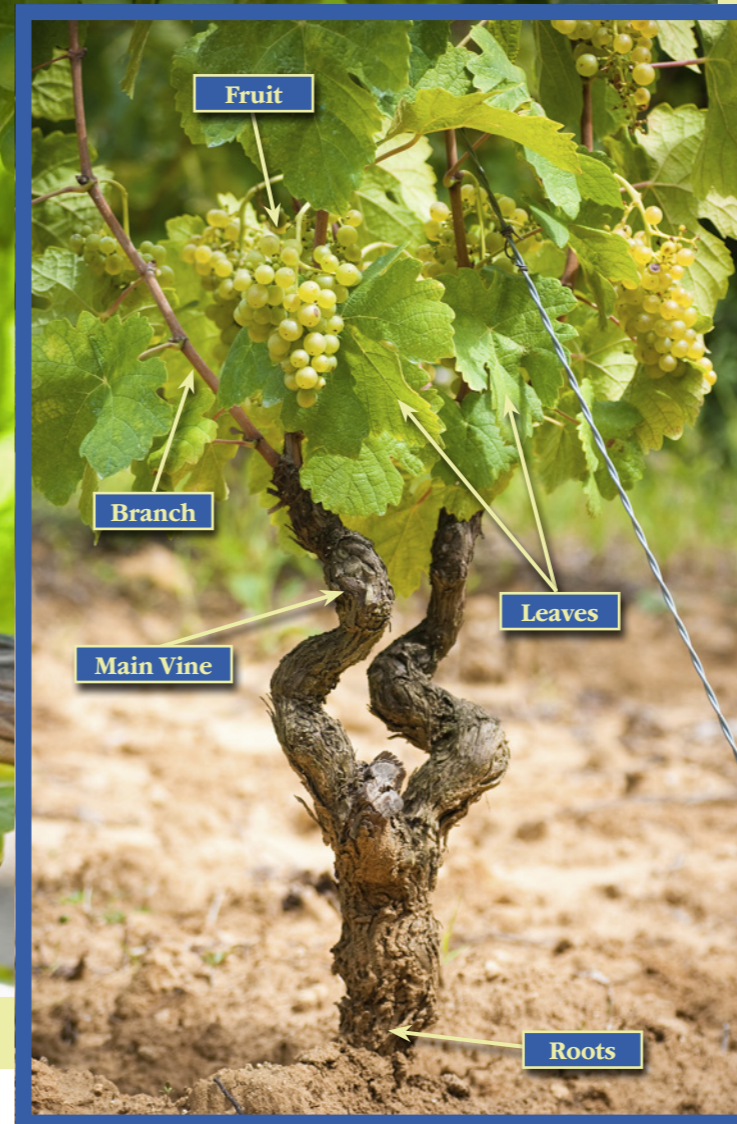
WHAT WE CAN LEARN

A grapevine:

Feeds the branches. Our spiritual nourishment comes to us through the Savior. Both individually and as a church, if we do not abide in Him, we can do nothing—nothing, that is, that would be fruitful for us or the world in terms of helping people return to Heavenly Father and become what He desires us to become.

Gives water to the branches. Jesus Christ is the living water. Our souls are refreshed and enlivened by Him. Without Him, we would wither spiritually.

Lifts, supports, and anchors the plant. Our heavenward growth is made possible only through Jesus Christ, whose grace holds us up when we are weak. He is also our source of hope, which "maketh an anchor to the souls of men" (Ether 12:4).



Branches of a grapevine:

Bear fruit. As we abide in Christ, we bring forth the fruits of the gospel—Christlike attributes in our lives, service to our fellowmen, peace and joy in our hearts, the preaching of the gospel, repentance and conversion in ourselves and others, sacred covenants with God, happiness in our families and communities, and much more.

Bear more fruit if they are carefully pruned. When grapevines are properly tended and pruned, the bunches that form on the branches have large and numerous grapes. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Hebrews 12:6). If we are teachable and will endure correction, we will bring forth fruit abundantly. But if we are willful, prideful, and "grow wild," we no longer abide in Christ and will not be as fruitful.



OUR TRUE SOURCE OF STRENGTH

"Jesus said, 'Without me ye can do nothing' [John 15:5]. I testify that that is God's truth. Christ is everything to us and we are to 'abide' in Him permanently,

unyieldingly, steadfastly, forever. For the fruit of the gospel to blossom and bless our lives, we must be firmly attached to Him, the Savior of us all, and to this His Church, which bears His holy name. He is the vine that is our true source of strength and the only source of eternal life. In Him we not only will endure but also will prevail and triumph in this holy cause that will never fail us."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Abide in Me," *Ensign*, May 2004, 32.

BIBLE FACTS

The house of Israel was sometimes compared to a vineyard (see Isaiah 5:7).

When the Savior taught, "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:5), it was in the early spring, around the time when grapevines would be trimmed to improve the crop yield.



FUN FACT

Because of its importance as a fruit crop, the grapevine was one of the first plants to have its entire genome mapped.

Are trained to grow off the ground so they'll be most healthy and fruitful. Christ's gospel and His Church help us overcome the tendency of the natural man to sag in sin and selfishness and to wallow in worldly things that harm us spiritually. By living the gospel and keeping covenants, we are lifted up to greater joy, peace, and service. ■

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