



Happy Bees; Happy Vineyards

Description

During my first visit to a vineyard in India many years ago, I saw a row of man-made beehives. Feeling curious I asked about these to the winemaker who had accompanied me and he simply said **â??happy bees mean happy vineyardsâ??.**



Man-made beehives at Grover Zampa Vineyards near Bangalore, India.

For a long time I took that as something given â?? like a thumb rule, without actually going into the why and how of it â?? *happy bees mean happy vineyards*. Period.

But soon my curiosity got better of me, which lead me to study about this. And the more I researched, more fascinated I got by the ***role which bees play in the a vineyard ecosystem***.

Plants and Cover Crops

But first we need to understand about plants and cover crops in a vineyard..



Growing plants and cover crops in between rows of vines at KRSMA Vineyards, India.

These are grown in between the rows of vines and are considered crucial in promoting a sustainable vineyard ecosystem especially in organic and biodynamic one.



Cover crops adjacent to vines at Domaine Sula near Bangalore, India.

Plants and cover crops help regulate the level of nitrogen in the vineyard and also increase the organic content of the soil.



Cover crops at Grover Zampa Vineyards near Bangalore, India.

They also help improve the water-holding capacity of the soil, eliminate the need for chemicals use and regulate vines growth.



Yours truly holding the soil at KRSMA vineyards in southern India. Cover crops help enriching the soils in vineyards.

And bees are the primary pollinators of such plants and cover crops.

Research has shown as to how bees help plants and cover crops (and also vice versa), and how cover crops help the soil's microbe, and how the microbiome helps the vines and the taste of the wines.



Rose plant is often planted at the head of each vine row. Besides enriching the soil, this also helps in early detection of onset of disease in vines

So to sum up, having plants and cover crops in the vineyard and consequently, bees, create a healthier ecosystem for vines that then produce better quality grapes.

I shall write more about this topic in future posts too as I feel it's an exhaustive subject and yet such a fascinating one.

Till then,

Cheers !!

Credits: Feature image by Fobes (Jordan Vineyard & Winery). Research reference from <https://www.evineyardapp.com> amongst other. Other pictures are self clicked by me at various vineyards in India.