

Conservation Ag Burning

A New Approach

Top Down Burn



Start the burn around the top perimeter of the pile using a propane weed torch. If it is windy light the pile at the top on the downwind side so that most of the the smoke will be pushed through the flame front and incinerated.

Reduce Pollution



The flame front and heat column will consume most of the smoky emissions from the fire. We estimate this protocol can reduce burn pile pollution by 75% to 85%.

Burn to Charcoal, Not Ash



As the center of the pile burns down, move unburned edges into the burning area to ensure complete combustion. Spread the pile out when all material has been burned **but before it disintegrates into ash.**

Extinguish with Water



As the pile burns down and is spread out, douse fire with water, raking coals with a fire rake or McLeod so all hot spots are extinguished completely. Wear protective gear.

Add Biochar to Compost



Up to 50% of the carbon emissions can be reduced and saved as as biochar, and total emissions reduced significantly. Add biochar to compost to sequester carbon while increasing organic matter, nutrient availability and water holding capacity in soil.



VS.



Biochar, or charcoal, has been used for centuries as a soil amendment, but only recently has it been scientifically considered for viticultural applications. Studies conducted primarily in Europe and Australia indicate that biochar has tremendous potential to improve soil conditions for growing grape vines. Both Cornell University and U.C. Davis have begun to verify and quantify its potential for soil enhancement, environmental remediation and economic viability. Most of the pictures above were taken during a Conservation Burn Workshop on Red Fan Vineyard (Simi) February 2014.

Pictures: Ricky Mendoza & Raymond Baltar
Poster: Paul Sequeira
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