



ABCCORK PRESENTS

Fermentation at its Fullest and Re-hydrating Yeast.

Fermentation is arguably one of the most important steps in making wine. This process is dependent upon one ingredient: yeast. The article will discuss the importance of re-hydrating your yeast as you prepare to make your wine.

Yeast is one of the most inexpensive supplies in the winemaker's list of ingredients. However, proper or improper application of this ingredient can mean the difference between a great wine and a good wine. Re-hydration of yeast is often skipped in the winemaking process, however this step is essential to ensure that the yeast functions properly in the fermentation process. The re-hydration process involves replacing the water that was removed from the yeast when it was manufactured. This step is necessary because yeast is a living organism and depends on water to live. For the wine yeast to be functional a winemaker must return the water that was removed. Water is necessary for the yeast to process sugars, specifically; oxygen from the water is needed to transfer nutrients.

Here we outline the steps to re-hydrate yeast.

- 1) Starting fermentation temperature of the must should be between 10 C and 30 C (50 F and 86 F).
- 2) Mix the contents of the wine yeast packet with 50 ml (about 1/3 cup) of 40 C (104 F) clean, chlorine-free water.
- 3) Lightly stir the mixture
- 4) Leave the mixture to stand for a minimum of 15 minutes, but no longer than 30 minutes.
- 5) Slowly add the yeast mixture to the must. Gently stir.

When re-hydrating the yeast avoid extremes of hot or cold water temperatures, these could kill the yeast bacteria. Furthermore, make sure the re-hydrated yeast mixture, often called slurry, is close to the temperature of the must. Take the time to align the temperatures.

Re-hydrating the yeast before adding it to the must has many advantages as experienced vintars will tell you. For starters, re-hydrating the yeast ensures that the yeast bacteria have enough water and oxygen to properly function. This allows the yeast to ferment more efficiently. Re-hydrating the yeast protects it from high levels of SO₂ that are sometimes present in the must. SO₂ can kill yeast bacteria, but once re-hydrated the yeast cells do a better job of resisting the SO₂. Lastly, re-hydrating the yeast creates a mixture that guarantees the yeast will be more widely dispersed throughout the must.

Fermentation is a critical step in winemaking and yeast is crucial to this process. Take the time to properly re-hydrate your yeast; you will taste and smell the difference! In addition, take care to ensure that your mixing utensils and equipment are clean and sterile.



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