

SULFUR DIOXIDE TREATMENT

The judicious use of Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) is one of the most important steps the home winemaker can take in making a sound wine. It is used in nearly every commercial wine made throughout the world. Sulfur Dioxide inhibits the growth of unwanted molds, bacteria and wild yeasts. It aids in preventing oxidation and helps prevent the formation of vinegar. Oxidation is one of the most common problems faced by the home winemaker and to prevent its occurrence, the wine should be treated as early as possible after fermentation. Sulfur Dioxide¹ is available as :

POTASSIUM METABISULFITE

CAMPDEN TABLETS

and is used at the following rates:

Potassium Metabisulfite

1 tsp = 5.5 grams

1 gram in 1 gallon = 150 ppm SO₂

1/16 tsp in 1 gallon = 50 ppm SO₂

5/16 tsp in 5 gallons = 50 ppm SO₂ ; 1/4 tsp in 5 gallons = 40 ppm SO₂

Campden Tablets

1 tablet in 1 gallon = 50 ppm SO₂

1/2 tablet in 1 gallon = 25 ppm SO₂

Fresh Grapes (Red or White)

Add the equivalent of 50 ppm of SO₂ to the crushed grapes immediately after crushing. This is equivalent to 1 Campden tablets to each gallon of must or a slightly rounded 1/4 tsp of Potassium Metabisulfite to each 5 gallons of must. You may wish to reduce this amount or even eliminate it completely if the fruit is in excellent condition or you plan on inducing a malo-lactic fermentation. Wait 24 hours before adding the yeast.

Fresh Purchased Juice (Red or White)

If you purchase fresh juice, either red or white, from a reputable source, the SO₂ will probably have been added. Even so, you should ask to determine how much has been added and when. If the amount of SO₂ added was less than 50 ppm, an appropriate amount should be added as soon as possible, then wait 24 hours before adding the yeast.

After Fermentation

Add the equivalent of 50 ppm of SO₂ at the first racking after fermentation and at the racking just before bottling. Add 25-30 ppm SO₂ at each intermediate racking.

Sanitation

All bottles and equipment should be sanitized before use with a concentrated solution of SO₂, followed with a thorough rinse. Use a solution of 1 tsp of Potassium Metabisulfite in a quart of water, or 13 Campden tablets in a quart of water. The released SO₂ will be more effective if used in a mildly acid solution. The addition of about 1/4 tsp of citric acid per quart is recommended.

note¹ Those who are on a low sodium diet may wish to avoid the Sodium Metabisulfite and the Campden Tablets, which are Sodium Metabisulfite, and use the Potassium Metabisulfite.

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