As winegrape growers, we are always looking out for practices that complement the Napa Valley watershed and protect our unique environment and natural resources. Often there is no “one right answer” to any sustainable best practices question, but we strive to consider the best and most environmentally sustainable practices whenever we are in the field. Listed below are considerations and resources that may help your decision-making when it comes time to decide “whether or not to burn” your prunings. We recognize that for the disposal of removed vines, burning may be the best practice due to pest and disease issues.

Other than burning, the three primary methods of disposing of grape prunings are: chop and disc; chop and cover crop; or chip with a wood chipper. Although there are valid reasons for considering burning grape prunings, the environmental benefits of the other primary methods of disposing of grape prunings should be given serious consideration.

In an effort to better understand the issues related to the management of grape pruning disposal, the Napa Valley Grapegrowers has put together some estimated costs and other facts related to the non-burning disposal of grape prunings.

CHIPPING
- Removal of vineyard prunings: 15 to 21 hours/acre (10 ft. rows vs. 6 ft. rows)
- Chipping of material (not spread): 4 to 6 hours/acre
- Gallons of fuel for PTO driven chipper: 1.5-2 gallons/acre
- Purchase of PTO Chipper (Bandit Model 65): $12,000

CHOPPING
- Chopping of brush:2 to 3 acres/hour (6 ft. rows vs. 10 ft rows)
- Gallons of fuel for tractor and chopper: 1-2 gallons/acre
- Purchase of Chopper (Perfect 150): $8,500

If you decide the burning of prunings or removed vines is necessary, please be aware that the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) has established regulation covering Open Burning
in Napa County. All BAAQMD regulations are designed to minimize visible smoke and the concentration of the toxic byproducts of burning in the lower air. Some of the key requirements regarding Open Burnings include:

- Notify BAAQMD in advance with Notification Form B, 'Vineyard or Orchard Pruning and Attrition Fires.'
- Burn only on Permissive Burn Days.
- No Burning before 10:00 a.m. or new material added less than 2 hours before sunset.
- Fires may not be ignited when winds are less than 5 mph.
- Smoke cannot drift towards a populated area.
- All prunings must have dried for a minimum of 60 days. However, for vines pruned after Feb 15 for integrated pest management purposes, the minimum drying time is 15 days.
- No smoke after sunset.
- All fires shall, "burn as rapidly as possible within conditions of safety and minimum pollution."
- Minimum burn pile height must be at least 2/3 the average width.

Bay Area Air Quality Management District contact information: Telephone (415) 928-4600, Fax (415) 928-0338, and email BAAQMD.gov. The 24 hour Burn Status Recording is (800) 928-0787.

Other resources:
Napa Fire Wise is a Napa County fire prevention organization that is providing a free service of chipping brush for those residents who are working to maintain the required 100 feet of defensible space around their home. You can contact them at 967-1426 or their web site at napafirewise@co.napa.ca.us.

www.napagrowers.org
To Preserve and Promote Napa Valley’s World-Class Vineyards