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Dog's Sniff Out Vineyard Pests

Napa, Calif. (KCBS) -- Man's best friend is being put to work in the wine country to sniff out a vintner's worst enemy- the Vine Mealy Bug.

The highly trained animals are taught to find the grape-vine killer, then bark to alert the trainer/vineyard owner when the pests are found.

Caroline Upton, the co-owner of Insect Detection Dogs based out of Calistoga, said the animals are specially trained to find the pests, which can decimate an entire vineyard if left unchecked.

"This is a whole new way of using dogs in an agricultural setting," said Upton.

Upton also said that in the future, some dogs that are trained in search and rescue could potentially be taught to pick up on other pests, possibly including the light brown apple moth.

Although the tiny bugs crawl underneath the bark to get to the grapes, Upton said the dogs can often spot them soon enough that a vineyard owner can eradicate them without spraying large areas with pesticides.



(cfu)

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Print Current Page