

FRUIT GROWING IN SUNRAYSIA

Hot and dry climate is most suitable for grape growing and citrus industry. Early newcomers and some Slovenian migrants were also attracted to the vine-growing business, some have bought a virgin land and planted grapes themselves, which we call it »fruit-blocks«.

Earliest farmers grew »sultana« variety of grapes, which is most suitable for dry fruit (rozine), but since dry fruit industry has lost its European market, our farmers were forced to change the variety of grapes to vine and table grapes, therefore many new vineries have opened up during the last 20 years. Slovenian grape growers are most successful and respected hard working farmers locally.

In Mildura there are twelve well known Slovenian families, who came here soon after their arrival to Australia some 40-55 years ago: (Family Abramović, Horvat, Golobič, Gerden, Osolnik, Plut, Štrubelj, Tonc, Žagar, Žalec, and a newest couple from Melbourne, Helena and Branko Sosič and late Sofija Kuzmic). If we also count our children of the second and third generation, there would be close to 100 »Slovenian Australians« living in Mildura. We never had an official Slovenian club, but we are able to organise ourselves quickly for any special occasions or if a need arises.

During the battle for the Slovenian independence, we've closely cooperated with the Slovenian National council in Melbourne, and during that time we even organised the Slovenian choir, under the guidance of our greatest soprano singer Agata Tonc. Some of our Croatian friends were also happy to join us in singing Slovenian national songs. Since then, many members have already deceased and are greatly missed, therefore we don't meet regularly any more as we used to.