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Frost Destroys 40% of Champagne Buds

The damage could affect the 2026 harvest in France’s famed wine region.

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Champagne’s wine industry said Tuesday that recent frost episodes destroyed 40% of the buds in the region’s vineyards, a blow that could affect the 2026 harvest in one of France’s most important export industries.

The Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne, known as the CIVC, said the damage was the second worst since 2003, when 45% of buds were lost. The group said the frosts came at a fairly normal time for the season, but the vines were about three weeks ahead of schedule, which made them more vulnerable. Bud break had happened

earlier than usual, so the cold caused more damage than it otherwise would have.

The interprofessional group said it was still too early to estimate how much of the crop would ultimately be lost. The vine cycle is not finished, and weather conditions in the coming months will still play a major role before harvest. The amount of grapes picked does not directly determine wine quality, which depends on conditions throughout the growth of the fruit.

The warning comes after a difficult period for Champagne shipments. In January, the CIVC said exports and domestic shipments fell for a third straight year in 2025, to 266 million bottles. That was the lowest level since 2001, excluding 2020, when pandemic-related disruptions pushed shipments down to 244 million bottles.

For growers in Champagne, late frost has become one of the most closely watched risks each spring because it can reduce yields quickly and leave producers with less wine to sell in a market that relies heavily on global demand.