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Frost Destroys 40% of Champagne Buds

The damage marks the second-worst spring frost loss on record in the region since 2003.

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Recent frost episodes have destroyed 40% of the buds in Champagne’s vineyards, the region’s interprofessional wine committee said Tuesday, marking the second-worst spring frost damage on record after 2003.

The Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne, known as the CIVC, said the losses were measured after several cold nights hit the region at a time when the vines were already about three weeks ahead of schedule. That early development made the buds more vulnerable, because they had opened sooner than usual and were exposed when temperatures dropped.

In 2003, frost destroyed 45% of the buds, the committee said. This year’s damage is severe enough to raise concern across the appellation, but officials said it is still too early to estimate what it will mean for the harvest. The vine’s cycle is not finished, and weather conditions in the coming months will continue to shape the final crop until harvest.

The CIVC also noted that the amount of grapes harvested does not directly determine wine quality, which depends on conditions throughout the growth of the fruit. Even so, a smaller crop can affect production volumes and sales in a region that has already seen weaker shipments.

Champagne shipments fell for a third straight year in 2025, reaching 266 million bottles, according to figures released by the interprofessional group in January. Excluding 2020, when the pandemic disrupted global trade and consumption, that was the lowest level since 2001, when shipments totaled 263 million bottles.

The frost damage comes as growers across France have been watching spring temperatures closely after several recent years of weather-related pressure on vineyards. In Champagne, where reputation and supply are tightly linked to annual harvest conditions, the latest losses add uncertainty at a critical stage of the season.