



CHAMPAGNE  
**POL ROGER**

## Flowering 2026: initial observations from the vineyards



After a start to the year with highly contrasting weather patterns, the vines are continuing their cycle with remarkable resilience and have begun to flower in the Pol Roger vineyards. Although unobtrusive, this flowering is a crucial stage that is already beginning to shape the profile of the 2026 vintage.

The growing season started early, with bud break beginning on 23 March on the Chardonnay and around 28 March for the other grape varieties, i.e. 16-21 days ahead of the ten-year average. However, this rapid progress was weakened by episodes of frost and cold weather in late March and April.

From the end of March, the vineyards were badly hit by repeated frosts. Across the Champagne region, 2026 was the second-worst year for frost damage since 2003, with average bud loss estimated at 38%. The Pol Roger vineyards experienced a similar level of impact to that experienced across the appellation, revealing significant heterogeneity, at times even within individual plots.

After an exceptionally warm and sunny March, with maximum temperatures around 2°C above the seasonal average and rainfall close to normal levels, April 2026 was the driest month ever recorded in the vineyards, with an average rainfall of only 7.1 mm.

This sharp contrast in weather patterns was followed in early May by the return of regular rainfall, which was heavy in some areas. These conditions required heightened vigilance as the wetter environment made the vines more susceptible to disease.



According to Pol Roger vineyard manager, Lucile Perard, *“this growing season perfectly illustrates the variable nature of our climate. Between frost, cool temperatures, prolonged dry conditions, and then persistent rainfall, the vines have had to adapt constantly... as have our teams.”*

With the return of milder, dry and sunny conditions at the end of May, the vines have resumed active growth. Flowering began a few days ago and is now gradually spreading throughout the vineyard. This stage in the vine's cycle is unobtrusive yet essential. Tiny flowers appear on the inflorescences and open within a few days to release their pollen, and, following fertilisation, develop into future grape berries. Although extremely short, this phase directly determines the structure of the clusters and the quality of the upcoming harvest. Weather conditions are critical: the warm, dry weather is expected to prompt rapid and homogeneous development. Observations throughout the vineyard plots continue to be encouraging, with very promising indicators – well-formed and homogeneous clusters – signs of good quality potential.

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*“Flowering is always a pivotal moment - everything is determined in just a few days. In the plots spared by the frost, the potential is there, even if heterogeneity is likely to be one of the defining characteristics of this vintage. The very promising indicators we are seeing in the vineyards, these future grape clusters now taking shape, must now continue to develop favourably until the harvest, which is expected in about 90 days,”* adds Lucile Perard.

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Early indications are for an early harvest, starting in August, in line with recent vintages. *“More than ever, this vintage illustrates the necessity of working with nature in all its complexity, adapting each day to its unpredictability with precision, patience... and humility,”* concludes Lucile Perard.

