

PRODUCE TALK

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CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY SELLING IDEAS

It's hard to believe that Christmas is just around the corner. Sometimes the Christmas holiday can be very stressful. Planning is the key to making sure your holiday season will be less stressful and more fun; the way it's supposed to be! Here are some good holiday ideas and reminders.

Remember the power of "Category Merchandising"! When you merchandise by categories, your impulse sales increase simply because your customer feels overwhelmed by the choices they have, so they end up buying more. Bagged salads, citrus, pears, apples, tropical, tomatoes, peppers, carrots, potatoes, onions, mushrooms, grapes and berries, all sell better when they are grouped together.



Floral sales will be great for Christmas – Arrangements, bouquets, potted and upgraded gift ready plants, poinsettias, mum-settias, pine roping, wreaths, it all will sell great; get them in early!

Have a "Gift Idea Center" featuring Theme Baskets, Gift Baskets, Cheese Baskets or any gift related item etc. Pick a location where the entire store can benefit.

Have a fruit basket building center on the sales floor, offering custom made baskets while they shop. This is a great opportunity to increase sales in your fruit basket category. Customers want a fresh, custom basket with grapes coming over the top and certain items that they really like. Offer organic fruit in baskets but be sure to up charge.

Set goals for fruit basket sales. Figure out how much fruit you will need to make them, order it in and make the baskets. A good plan is key to a good program.

Keep good records and save your order guides for next year's selling. If you need a fruit basket record sheet, ask your Crosset Merchandiser!

Fruit baskets will do well; your biggest day will probably be December 23rd, then the 22nd and then the 24th. Baskets will start to move on the 18th. Don't forget theme baskets and special order baskets and have a few big baskets for family size gift, ready to go.

Scheduling is important. Don't be afraid to ask your store manager for the hours you need. You must be in the department during peak selling times. Plan your scheduling needs for fruit baskets and schedule the hours. Make sure they are trained and ready to go. You're only as good as your help!

Don't get caught in that Christmas trap of you being in charge of the gift basket center and your department falls apart or vice versa. Remember HOURS cures everything!

Fruit sales will be outstanding; promote full and half cases. Put a bow on it. Clementines, navels, apples, grapes, grapefruit, pineapple, lemons and limes will really sell well.

Vegetables will sell well three to four days prior to Christmas, whereas fruit will sell great all week. Celery, cranberries, green onions, radish, mushrooms, parsley, yams, broccoli, cauliflower and watch red potatoes.

Baking bars should be cleaned up and gone by Christmas week, use the space for fruit baskets. After Christmas build a super bowl display using the same space. If you do this, it will really pay dividends and help move left over candies and nuts. In shell nuts displays should be cleaned up and one no later than New Year's Day.

Remember the week following Christmas is slow and fruit will not sell well.

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Value-Added Sections – Items like broccoli and cauliflower florets, short cut carrots, carrot and celery sticks, cole slaw, pre-cut veggies, salad, fresh cut fruit, golden ripe pineapples, dips and dressings will really sell through New Year's Day. Stay on top of the value-added section and it will pay big dividends. Your value-added section could be 15 to 18% of sales through the holidays, so please stay on top of it.

Party Trays – For Christmas and New Year's party trays are big sellers and will be popular the whole month. Spend time looking at last year's orders, make increases as needed and display them at the right time. **DON'T RUN OUT!!!!**

Christmas in many cases is the biggest produce sales week of the year. It takes extra planning and more labor hours than any other week. Don't get caught short in the department.

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Recipe (Source: Allrecipes.com)

PEPPERMINT BARK

Ingredients:

8 ounces high-quality semisweet chocolate, broken into pieces
2 teaspoons canola oil, divided
1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract, divided
8 ounces high-quality white chocolate, broken into pieces
25 peppermint candies, crushed



Directions:

1. Lightly grease a 9x9 inch pan and line with waxed paper, smoothing out wrinkles; set aside.
2. Place the semisweet chocolate and 1 teaspoon of the canola oil in the top of a double boiler over just barely simmering water, stirring frequently and scraping down the sides with a rubber spatula to avoid scorching. When the chocolate is melted, stir in 1/4 teaspoon of the peppermint extract. Pour the melted chocolate into the prepared pan, and spread evenly over the bottom of the pan. Sprinkle half of the crushed peppermints over the chocolate layer. Refrigerate until completely hardened, about 1 hour.
3. Place the white chocolate and the remaining 1 teaspoon canola oil in the top of a double boiler over just barely simmering water, stirring frequently and scraping down the sides with a rubber spatula to avoid scorching. When the chocolate is melted, stir in the remaining 1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract. Pour the white chocolate directly over the semisweet chocolate layer; spread evenly. Sprinkle the remaining crushed candy over the top and gently press in. Refrigerate until completely hardened. Remove from pan; break into small pieces to serve.

Western Vegetables

ARTICHOKES: Product is starting to ramp up as harvest has begun in Oxnard. Yields are producing good quality product.

AVOCADOS: Great supplies and promotable.

BROCCOLI: Market remains to have a wide range throughout the industry. As we move towards Christmas, broccoli heads hold through with strong quality and great volume.

CAULIFLOWER: The market has remained steady. We are seeing good quality heads that are on the larger side.

CELERY: Volume is starting to ramp up as Yuma begins harvest. Yields are expected to progress as we move near the holiday.

LETTUCE: The mixed leaf market remains steady. Outside of minor quality issues varying due to weather, all varieties of lettuce are coming in with great quality.

Value-Added

Supplies of raw product are good with the exception of spinach, Romaine and butter lettuce which have some quality issues causing occasional shortages of both conventional and organic value-added items.

Southern Vegetables

CABBAGE: Good supplies.

CORN: On about a ten day, two week skip; should be back on this weekend.

GREENS: Decent supplies on all greens out of the south.

PEPPERS: Markets increased.

YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH: Both fairly plentiful out of the south and Mexico.

Organics

BEETS: Beets still remain a challenge due to curly top virus that impacts the plant leaves and bulb. Supplies will be limited for a few more weeks until growers move to lower elevation new fields that should be clean.

BROCCOLI: Due to weather issues (heat) in growing regions in the west, we are seeing suppliers limit available supply driving market cost up. There will be discoloration to the tops as heat will cause a darker head on the broccoli.

BUNCH CARROTS: Supply has rebounded quite well and we are seeing much better quality.

CABBAGE: Regional supply has really come on from Ohio and other surrounding areas. Great time for promotion!

CAULIFLOWER: Supplies are starting to improve and the quality is good. Market has gradually decreased, high temperatures out west should not affect supply.

CELERY: Supply is getting better as we have moved up in to California regions. Pricing will remain stable for the next 2-3 weeks as we move closer to Thanksgiving.

CUCUMBERS: Supply is looking great right now as Florida product is coming on in the next couple weeks.

GREEN PEPPERS: Steady supplies regionally with good quality.

KALES: Great supplies of kale currently; plenty of regional product from all over the Midwest available. We are sourcing from North Carolina, Ohio and other regions. Product is in great supply and pricing is very promotable.

LETTUCES: Inbound quality on leafs from the west have rebounded in quality and we are seeing much better supply. Canadian and regional supply has finished up.

RADISHES: Supplies are improving with better quality tops. Very little damage now to the tops and they look much cleaner than they have been.

YELLOW SQUASH & ZUCCHINI: Supply has been very good out of Ohio on the zucchini with yellow being much more limited.

Asparagus

Good supplies overall out of Mexico and Peru have markets dipping for after Thanksgiving business. As we move into December, Mexican volume will begin to tail off and market will move upward. Organic supply back on the rise as volume is dripping.

Fruit

APPLES & PEARS: Michigan and Washington apples are still in great supply. All sizes of both Michigan and Washington Honeycrisp apples are plentiful as well. Volume on organic Pink Cripps have slowed a little, and we are now into the 100ct. size.

BLACKBERRIES: Still solid pricing but quality is iffy right now; starting to see a lot of red cell which is caused by excessive water in the fruit so blackberries need to be on a tight turn. Will be promotable with good pricing available.

BLUEBERRIES: Very strong market; supplies remain tight. The switch from air fruit to boat fruit is keeping the price up. Once boat fruit starts hitting, market will start to fall back off. Organic blueberries have come off and are very promotable.

CANTALOUPE & HONEYDEWS: Switching to offshore Guatemala fruit which will run through the rest of the season until the spring season begins.

CHERRIES: Better supplies and markets are decreasing. As December moves in, 3 week window to promote cherries for Holidays. New crop Rainiers will also be available come late next week.

CITRUS: The California navel orange season has begun; early quality is good. Supplies are starting out light but will continue to improve in the weeks to come. Florida grapefruit and tangerines are available; early quality is good.

CLEMENTINES: Plenty of varieties of clementines. Good varieties on the Spanish fruit and Halo's are in; 4x5's going on next week so there's opportunities to promote.

GRAPES: At the tail end of the California season; markets are getting a little more active and quality is average. Reds still look the best but seeing some pale color in the Crimson variety. Holidays will continue to ship. Seeing some irregular sizing and some softness in the grapes. Organics are virtually finished; whites are off and the last reds are in and will be taken off order guides next week.

PINEAPPLES: Steady volume and pricing.

POMEGRANATES: A lot of issues with pomegranates. The heatwave that hit California earlier in the season while they were getting ready for the harvest, has caused some damage to the product. Market will remain strong.

RASPBERRIES: Supply has been affected by delayed inbounds on the east coast leaving us to move out west on orders. Supply should bounce back to loading in the east.

STRAWBERRIES: With the increased temperatures in growing regions, we are starting to see loading and available supply slow down. Inbound quality will be an issue as with higher temperatures will bring increased bruising and sun-scol.

Tropical Fruit

BABY FRENCH BEANS: Good supplies.

KIWI: Italian deal is underway; pricing steady with good volume.

LIMES: Prices has firmed up and increased on some sizes with better demand this week. Size 200 and large remained limited. Overall quality is very nice.

MANGOES: Organic markets continue to drop and should see promotable prices soon.

MARIDOL PAPAYAS/ GOLD PAPAYAS: Stable market; excellent quality on Caribbean Red Maridol papayas and Brazil Gold.

SUGAR SNAP PEAS/SNO PEAS: Supplies improved; markets easing back down.

Merchandising Tips

Now that December is upon us, it's time to get aggressive with your citrus displays. By now, you should have citrus right near the front of your department. In your bulk displays, you should have red grapefruit, navels, lemons and limes. You may want to try the stem and leaf mandarins, blood oranges and finger limes or Kieffer limes. Look for Sunburst tangerines and Meyer lemons to arrive soon. Perhaps you can cut one of each variety in half to show off the inside. In your bag citrus section, you should have 5# grapefruit, 4# navels, 2# lemons and 3# halos. You may want to consider the 5# box clementines and 1# key limes; 8# navels are available now too. Expand those displays and watch your sales climb!

CROSSET NEW ITEM & DELETION SHEET

W/B: 12/10/17

ITEM #	<i>NEW ITEMS</i>	SIZE
41410	Navel Oranges	14/3#
104320	Spicy Avocado Veggie Dip	6/14oz
104714	Scirach Ranch dip	6/14oz
27812	Walnuts 1#	24/1#
28304	Almonds	36/1#
13505	OG Bagged Red Beets	24/1#
78004	OG Strawberries	8/1#
3030	CV Purple Sweet Potatoes	40#
3060	CV Oriental Sweet Potatoes	40#
66602	OG Cider Cripps Pink 12oz	8/12oz
66605	OG Cider Cripps Pink 32oz	4/32oz
78545	Blueberries	8/18oz
55072	OG Satsuma Mandarins	22#
55040	Halo Clementines 5#	4/5#
55062	Halo Clementine's 3#	10/3#
69416	MC Holiday Red Seedless	19#
	<i>DELETIONS</i>	
610430	Cream Drops	30#
610446	Caramel Nut Cluster	23#
94850	Peanut Brittle	20#
30050	Aurora Apple	40#
69421	OG red Seedless Grapes	19#
69440	OG red Seedless Grapes -FM	19#
69204	OG white grapes	19#
69413	OG Black Seedless Grapes	19#
205	Cantaloupes	6ct
16530	OG Asparagus	11#