

Training Guide

CALIFORNIA TABLE GRAPE COMMISSION

The fresh California grape season begins in late spring when the first grapes are harvested from vines in the Coachella Valley, the state's southernmost growing region. The warm, desert climate helps ensure that fresh grapes will appear in markets across the country around mid-May.

As the season in Coachella comes to a close in early July, harvest begins in the 200-mile-long San Joaquin Valley and often continues into December.

Because of sophisticated storage technology, varieties of both seedless and seeded fresh California grapes are available through January.

Grape Display Handling Best Practices¹

■ Bagged grapes

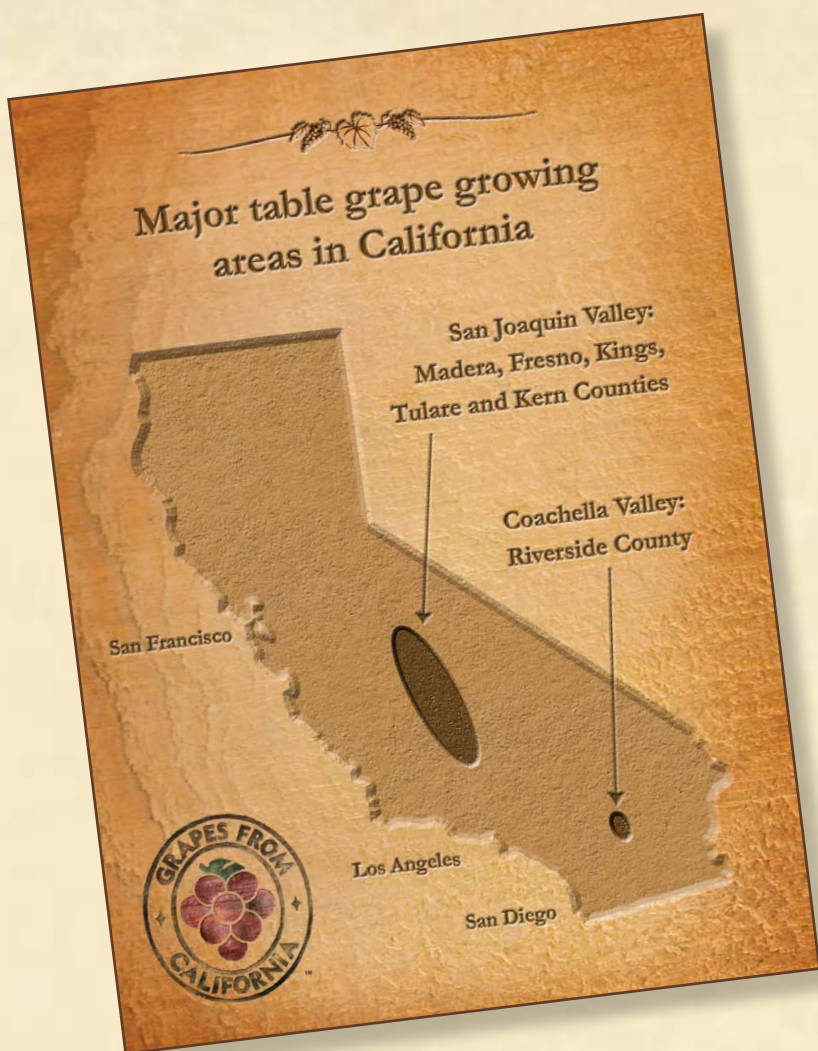
- If grapes are refrigerated, they can be displayed for up to 48 hours before visible shrink occurs.
- If grapes are not refrigerated, grapes can be displayed for up to 24 hours before visible shrink occurs.

■ Two-pound clamshell grapes

- If grapes are refrigerated, they can be displayed for up to 72 hours before visible shrink occurs.
- If grapes are not refrigerated, grapes can be displayed for up to 48 hours before visible shrink occurs.

■ Four-pound clamshell grapes

- If grapes are refrigerated, they can be displayed for up to 72 hours before visible shrink occurs.
- If grapes are not refrigerated, grapes can be displayed for up to 48 hours before visible shrink occurs.



Receiving and Backroom Grape Handling Tips

- Maintain a consistent cold chain. Place grapes immediately in refrigeration when received. The ideal condition for grapes is 30-32°F with 90-95 percent relative humidity.
- Keep grapes away from water or ice, as moisture will decrease their shelf life.
- Gently stack grape boxes in the cooler so that air can circulate around them. Dehydration of grapes will accelerate if they are stored near the cooling unit's direct air path.
- Grapes tend to absorb odor so try to avoid storing them next to green onions and leeks.
- When stacking grape boxes remember to keep them off the ground as any excess moisture or a dirty surface may cause damage to the grapes.

Merchandising and Display Tips

- When building a display, bagged grapes should be gently stacked no more than three layers high. Two-pound clamshells can be stacked up to four layers high and four-pound clamshells in original shipper boxes can be stacked up to six layers high. These stack height recommendations will assist in decreasing shatter and breakdown of the grapes.
- Rotate grapes by moving older product to the top and center of the display.
- Refrigerated grape displays will have an increased shelf life.
- Display grapes with proper country of origin signage as well as variety and price information.
- Maintain a good sanitation program. Remove any debris that can detract from the look of the display and damage grapes.
- Remove any poor quality, tired and non-appealing grapes from the display.
- Abundant, fresh, high quality and well maintained grape displays generate increased grape sales.
- Increased variety and selection across all three colors will increase total grape sales.
- Mix grape colors, sizes and varieties to add a dramatic look and provide customers with convenience while selecting grapes.
- Build eye-catching spillover or waterfall displays to give grapes greater exposure.
- Create secondary displays to drive additional sales and highlight unique varieties.
- Expand display space for grapes and generate increased sales.



Food Safety and Consumer Questions

Any number of food safety issues can occur in the produce department. The most important factor in dealing with them is how you deal with your customers. Showing a customer respect and sympathy when they have a food safety concern can keep a small problem from becoming larger.

We are here as a resource for you and are available to assist you with food safety issues, consumer questions, and nutrition information about fresh California grapes. Please contact our office if we can help you in any way. You can reach us at 559.447.8350 or info@grapesfromCalifornia.com.

Grape Terminology

Bloom – Fresh California grapes are often covered with a natural bloom, which is a delicate white substance common to many soft fruits. The bloom protects the grape from moisture loss and decay. Bloom is sometimes mistakenly thought of as dust.

Shatter – Detachment of berries from the cluster is called shatter. Shatter increases with rough or excessive handling and can be reduced by gentle handling and maintaining recommended temperature and relative humidity.

Amber – A special characteristic of many green grapes is the quality known as amber. Sometimes, normally bright-green grapes have a golden-yellow hue. This honey color means the grapes have been left to ripen longer and, as a result, the grapes are particularly sweet and juicy. Although some people might think that amber color means something's wrong with the grapes, it is in fact, a special quality, prized by knowledgeable grape lovers.

Seeded – Grapes that contain naturally occurring seeds in their berries.

Seedless – Grapes that do not have seeds in their berries.

Seed Trace – Soft, underdeveloped, portions of a seed in some seedless grapes. Development is related to the weather during the early phases of the growing season.

Category Management Research

After years of category management trade research, we have many proven strategies that will help you improve grape category performance. We know a lot about the grape category and would like to share what we know to help you sell more fresh California grapes.



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