



HARRIS SEEDS



EDITOR'S NOTES Mike Diesel

With all your markets approaching their busiest time of the year, we at

Harris Seeds wish you all a very successful and prosperous season.

We appreciate your feedback, suggestions and comments, so please contact us...and remember to update us with your current contact information or let us know if someone you know would like to receive our newsletter – please provide the name, market, address and e-mail address to growers@harrisseed.com to receive *Partners for Profit* via e-mail.

Please visit us at the OFA Short Course, July 14-17, 2007 – stop by the Harris Seeds booth (#1114) and say hello – we want to meet you.

Remember: National Farmers Market Week is scheduled for August 5-11, 2007

RESOURCE LINKS

USDA Website www.ams.usda.gov

Foodlinks America

bvauthier@tefapalliance.org



DISPLAY IDEAS Mary Ellen Latour

Eye-Catching Changes!



One of the maxims of selling anything is that you have about three seconds to catch the customer's eye. At the Farmers' Market that window of opportunity may be even smaller with so much activity around and with little time.

You need to draw the customer to your display. How do you do that?

- Use color and texture to enhance eye appeal, use color contrast.
- Bright, vibrant color contrast within produce grouping.
- The eye is drawn to yellow first - bright yellow boxes will show off green and red vegetables nicely.
- Create a color mixture by packaging or arranging cut-flowers among the product.
- Have large, full blocks of color rather than scattered and patchy blocks or create a checkerboard - black and red raspberries, for example.
- Tablecloths and coverings to create an up-scale look.
- Products displayed in similar basket-style containers.

MARKET SPOTLIGHT

Drake Neighborhood Farmers' Market (Des Moines, Iowa)



The Drake Neighborhood Farmers' Market started in 1997 as a joint non-profit community project of First Christian Church, the Drake Neighborhood Association, and Drake University to provide a fun and healthy weekly event, and to help improve the neighborhood's public image. In addition to regular farmers' market fare (featuring Iowa-grown produce), the Market has children's and healthy-lifestyle activities. It is located in a neighborhood filled with diversity – ethnic, age, family composition, economic.

The Drake Neighborhood Farmers' Market

has won several market competition awards, served as the initial project for Food Stamp usage at farmers' markets, and been the host market to national Food Policy Council conventions.

The Market is a charter member of the Iowa Farmers' Market Association, and its manager, Ginny Gieseke, serves as vice-chair.

We began with 8 vendors and now average 20 each week. We're open every Wednesday, June through September, 4 – 7 p.m.

It is an important part of the community; it provides a safe, healthy, weekly event in the neighborhood, which is a mixture of different ethnic groups, ages, family types, and socio/economics. The shoppers include families, singles, seniors and professionals from the university and downtown, people employed by local businesses, and Drake students. Some shoppers are people who don't enjoy the large crowds of the downtown or West Des Moines farmers markets.

The Market's niche in Des Moines is featuring Iowa-grown produce, home-baked goods, and home-made crafts. It has the feel of a "small town" farmers' market: we're friendly, easy-going, parking is free and

convenient. We have a "health tent" where folks get their blood pressure and blood sugar checked for free, weekly. This simple service has saved lives; diabetes and vascular problems have been detected.



Immigrants and refugees come to the market for fresh produce; it reminds them of the open-air markets of their homes. Often these shoppers are in their native dress, which adds color and beauty to the Market. Language barriers are crossed with friendly smiles and gestures as these "newer" residents interact with vendors and other shoppers.

The Market is operated by volunteers, with one paid employee, the manager. Volunteers are recruited from Drake University, DNA and FCC. They set up and take down the Market each week, serve as traffic guards, place and remove Market street signs, and help shoppers carry purchases to their cars.



PROBLEM SOLVERS' CORNER
Macy Brady

Running a Safe and Secure Market

With the popularity of Farmers' Markets on the rise, thousands of visitors are flocking to their local markets making an otherwise safe environment more population-dense, and at times dangerous. A demand for the safety and security of the market's customers, vendors, and community at large has become more of an issue for market managers across the country. In 2003, a vehicle accident at Santa Monica's popular Farmers Market resulted in ten deaths and serious injuries. Other incidents such as electrical fires, visitors falling or being hit by canopies from unexpected gusts of wind happen each year. Many of these could have been avoided with proper safety precautions. A well thought out crisis management plan can reduce the likelihood of accidents.

Here are a few suggestions to think about while devising a plan for your market this season:



- Are there adequate barriers surrounding the market from traffic?
- Are the sidewalks and working areas clear of any obstructions such as debris or electrical cords?
- Are there any uneven surfaces?
- Are vendor canopies secure to the ground?
- Are market managers and assistant managers trained in CPR?
- Does the market contain a first aid kit and fire extinguisher and are they located in a central location?

The safety of Farmers' Market shoppers should be the goal of every Markets' vendors and staff.

MARKET TRENDS
Mike Diesel

The USDA, which publishes a National Directory of Farmers Markets, reports that there was an **18% increase** in the number of farmers' markets operating in the US in 2006 from 2004 and an **82% increase** from 1996.

Their increased popularity account for the following statistics provided by USDA:

Total Markets	4385
Total Sales Volume	\$1 Billion
Avg. Annual Sales/Market	\$245,000
Avg. Annual Sales/Vendor	\$7108

With the average item in your local supermarket traveling 2,000 miles from farm to table and containing ingredients from at least five countries (Foodlinks America – 4/27/07), it is little wonder why the media has focused extensively on food safety and why consumers are demanding more locally grown produce and other food products. This certainly explains the popularity of Farmers' Markets.

The challenges that need to be faced, for continued growth, include supermarkets promoting locally grown produce, time demands and constraints on growers and the balance between keeping markets focused on produce and the introduction of arts/crafts and prepared foods.



PUMPKIN ETCHING
Sue Mears

Pumpkin etching has been around as long as children have had sharp instruments and imaginations, but modern technology has lifted pumpkin etching to a lucrative art form.



Photo from Vegetable Growers News

Pumpkins are etched while they're still growing, so take your tools right out into the field with you. Select healthy young pumpkins, and do your artwork when it's dry and sunny. Etch your design

using a Dremel tool or a sharp chisel, and be careful to just etch skin-deep. Don't break through the wall of the pumpkin's flesh.

Profitable? You can custom-etch companies' logos, your farm's name, and even a gorgeous fall design to display at the Farmers' Market. The Market can even sponsor a contest for the best etched design and charge a modest fee to enter the contest. And the bigger the better – try etching on a Dill's Atlantic Giant or on the new Big Moose pumpkin. The results are impressive, and etched pumpkins really grab your customers' attention.

FOR YOUR GROWER

Raker's "Season Saver" discount plug program on Summer, Fall and Winter crops allows growers to combine discounts and **save up to 38% off** regular prices now through 1/21/08. **9 months to save!!!!**



- Annuals in 128 and 288 plug trays
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- Great for areas with mild winters
- Summer, Fall and Winter Pot Crops
- Late-Season Vegetables
- Fall Pansies and Violas
- Holiday and Gift Plants

CREATE YOUR OWN EVENT
Mike Diesel



Have your growers plant different and unique types of vegetables in pots, which are size-appropriate, but easily transported. This will encourage visitors (especially children) to make regular, repeat visits to the grower's stall, to monitor the plant's progress and development over the course of the season. Try having a contest, where visitors guess various outcomes of what is growing. This simple idea will drive customers to your grower's particular area and will result in more sales.