

# Tips to keep apples fresh in retail

Pomewest, serving West Australian growers, would like to see a better rate of passes in our retail quality tests.

As a retailer, keeping produce fresh and in optimal eating condition can sometimes be a challenge. Research tells us that care in handling and presenting apples will result in great eating experiences and results in return sales. The following are some practical tips for best practice which will assist you to keep your apple lines in tip-top shape for freshness and customer eating satisfaction.



## 1 Implement an effective stock rotation system

All fresh produce should be rotated using the first in first out method, to ensure older produce doesn't get lost in the back of displays. People buy with their eyes and people gravitate to the best-looking produce.

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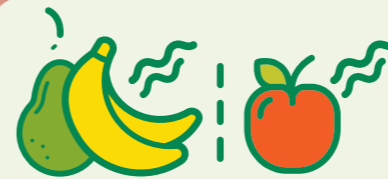
## Improve stacking procedures

Over stacking (more than two rows high), can also bruise and crush produce, reducing the quality of the fruit. Whilst apples are hard to touch, they can still bruise, so place them carefully to avoid damage.



## 3 Deal with damaged products

Ensure your employees are regularly checking for product spoilage as they carry out their daily store duties.



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## Be aware of ethylene sensitivity

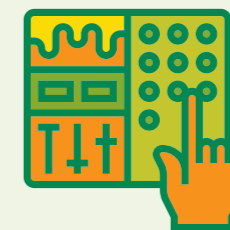
Apples produce high levels of ethylene and are best displayed away from produce that also produce high levels.

Avocados, bananas, peaches and tomatoes are examples to name a few.

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## Have the correct cold storage solution

Once in storage, apples should be kept in the correct type of refrigerated container or cold store. Apples are best stored at temperatures from 1–2 degrees to maintain pristine freshness, however that is not always a practical temperature when sharing space with other fresh produce in your cool room. Even at 4 degrees, some form of refrigeration is better than room temperature, for shelf life.



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## Check your deliveries

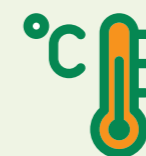
Before your stock even makes its way to the shelves, produce should be checked to ensure it has arrived under the correct conditions and has the capacity to store for long periods.

Try to avoid buying large volumes of cheap fruit to store for extended periods in your cool-stores. If it's cheap it may be that it has a specific use-by date. A fully trained member of staff should always check the temperature and visible quality of the produce.

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## Check temperatures

Retailers should have to an easily visible thermometer or electronic temperature measuring device in all cold store units and cabinets. To ensure that produce is at a safe and correct temperature, these should be checked regularly by a designated member of staff.



fresh tips



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## Clean storage areas

Much like on the shop floor, an unsanitary cold store unit can cause product spoilage. Off or damaged produce can cause unpleasant smells and leakage, both of which can contaminate 'good' stock. To keep food as fresh as possible in the summer heat, regularly check and clean your cold store units.



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## Educate employees

One of the easiest ways you can keep retail produce fresh is to educate your employees on the issues your store faces when temperatures rise.

Teach your staff how to recognise and effectively deal with damaged produce, and ensure everyone understands the importance of stocking produce lines correctly.