

OUTSIDE SPACE



Space in the sales area is usually very tight – there are always too many lines competing for too little space. However, some shops do have the potential to mount displays outside in the open, on forecourts, car parks or other space.

Traditionally, these have often been displays of fresh produce. Here a location out of the sun or else under very effective shading is essential; a south-facing position will significantly reduce produce shelf life. Other ranges traditionally sold from outside include sacks of coal,

kindling wood and, with suitable security, gas bottles.

But the potential for outside displays extends beyond this. For example, some village shops do very well selling bedding plants in season. There is the potential for good margins and sometimes you can negotiate sale or return terms with local nurseries – after all, it costs them just pence to produce a few extra trays of plants.

The resulting displays can provide a colourful and interesting feature to encourages impulse purchases. It helps to know a bit about your stock – at least the names of the plants – but much more than this, although desirable, is not essential.

Have a written crib by the till for staff to refer to but they will probably quickly learn a lot more from knowledgeable green-fingered customers. But remember, unlike cans of beans, this stock can protest at the way you treat it by actually dying, which does rather reduce its value to zero.





keep stock protected from the sun

Appropriate watering and care is essential. It is not too late to seek out good local suppliers ready for next spring.

The other obvious garden requisites to stock are growbags or compost. Price competition from supermarkets and garden centres means that percentage margins are usually much lower, but customers do appreciate being able to buy such basic lines locally, rather than having to drive to a distant garden centre.

The key point is that if you do have outside space, then this is an opportunity to make more sales. And as these sales are all extra, the additional profit is well worth having.



Close to 200 exhibitors will be at the show at the Birmingham NEC from March 1-3, 2009. For the first time Organiser William Reed Business Media is providing a voucher booklet which entitles visitors to exclusive money-off and special deals.

There will also a new live event with information to help make retailers more profitable, called 'Take More, Make More'.

Another reason for retailers to attend is the launch of Café+, a showcase for this booming sector, but with much to offer retailers who are thinking about offering food-and drinks-to-go.

See: www.cstoreshow.com for more details.