

# Did You Know?

## Ethylene and the Ripening Process

### A Bit about Plants and Ethylene

Ethylene is a hormone emitted by fruits and some vegetables which continue to ripen after harvest. It makes tomatoes turn red, green bananas golden, and apricots turn softer and sweeter. Some fruits and veg that aren't big ethylene producers themselves are still sensitive to it. As well as triggering ripening of fruits and veg, ethylene also makes some commodities decay faster, so it is of special concern to those in the produce trade.



### Ethylene at Retail

Though your distributor has separate rooms to segregate ethylene sensitive fruits and veg away from high producing items like bananas and apples, you probably don't have the space at store level. Aside from building more coolers, you can reduce your shrink due to over-ripening by airing out your storage room and department at least once a day. This may be especially helpful for lower traffic stores with slower turnover.

There are detailed ethylene charts available for your reference, but here is a quick look at the most volatile items:

### High Ethylene Producers

Apple, Apricot, Pear, Avocado, Banana, Cantaloupe, Nectarine, Tomato

### Ethylene Sensitive Crops

Banana, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Chard, Melon, Greens, Kiwi, Lettuce, Mango, Papaya, Passionfruit, Persimmon, Treefruits, Tomatoes among others.

### Additional Resources

<http://www.produceretailer.com/produce-retailer-merchandiser>

<http://www.cjsethylenefilters.com/research/senschart.htm>