

Liner Shipping

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What a customer sees when opening the shipping container is what's important. The customer doesn't care how good a grower you are. The customer doesn't care how good the plants looked when you packed them. The customer doesn't care about the shipper's problems or the kind of box you buy or the cost of the freight or the price of the plants or your reputation for making things right.

What the customer wants is "perfection". They may not say it that way but it's true. The first impression when seeing your plant material is the one remembered. The better the plant material looks when it's received the better off the liner grower is going to be. If there is a problem growing the plant material at a later date, customers will look inward at their own company, and what their employees may have done or what else may have happened during the growing cycle. If the plant material looks smashed or jumbled, has broken branches, dead leaves, isn't in the pots anymore, or what ever, you can bet everyone will remember, and your poor quality liner will get the blame for every problem known to mankind.

We have been successful with a few different shipping methods for potted liners.

RACKED DELIVERY TRAILERS

Racked delivery trailers are nothing really new in the industry but very successful in delivering plant material that looks good when delivered. The number one problem is that small orders cost more to deliver than their worth and you can't get to everyone everywhere if you sell in a large market. Either everyone wants it the same day or everyone wants it a different day and you won't be able to do either.

ROLLING CARTS

Rolling carts are being used successfully in Europe and now in the USA in the bedding plant industry. Carts can be loaded right in your greenhouse and then rolled onto a semi trailer for delivery. Carts breakdown for backhalls or for ease in unloading at delivery. They also take up less storage space during the off season. Rolling carts work well for us when delivering large orders for longer distances.

PALLET SHIPMENTS

Pallet shipments are now the standard for liner shipping. The pallet shipment for potted liners was developed at Spring Meadow Nursery Inc. about 5 years ago. With each flat individually boxed in an upright position the boxes are stacked on pallets and stretched wrapped together to ship as one unit. The trucking industry has changed dramatically in the years since deregulation and service is continuing to improve. We receive next day delivery service in 6 states and 2 day service in 12 states with the whole USA in 4 days, shipping Monday with delivery on Friday. Our customers are very pleased.

UPS DELIVERY

UPS delivery at Spring Meadow Nursery, Inc. is a box with cardboard "partitions" that keep the plant material from shifting around in the box. Plants are shipped upright in the growing tray, 3 trays, 96 plants per box. By holding down the pots and tray with cardboard partitions the box can ship in any position without damage to the plants. When unpacking, the partitions pull up out of the box easily leaving the plant material looking like it just left the nursery. Our feeling is that this new level of excellence in UPS shipping will also become an industry standard.

So remember that whatever method you use to ship your plant material, it's only as good as your customer's perception.