



# Case Study



## Horticulture, Landscape Tags & Labels

A clever alternative to generic labels, the new custom picture tags from Pine Island include a full-color product image and important planting information. The three- by five-inch poly/vinyl media with UV coating is an invaluable marketing tool and provides opportunity to educate customers as to the care of each item. The custom picture tags have turned generic product identifiers into an easily recognizable brand label that works for customers and distributors.

Effective branding is one of the most important elements of success in the retail market, and one of the biggest challenges. For fruit tree supplier Pine Island Nursery, establishing its brand in the crowded landscaping marketplace meant developing an easily recognizable label for its trees that could also provide valuable product information for retailers and consumers. With the help of SATO America, the company designed and developed a new tag for its trees that has served as both a valuable marketing and education tool.

Miami-based Pine Island Nursery specializes in tropical fruit, nut and spice trees (mango, avocado, star fruit, etc.) that it sells directly to consumers at its own facility, and



## Harvesting the Benefits of Better Labeling | Colorful, informative tags help fruit tree producer, Pine Island, stand out

through landscaping companies, garden centers, and large retailers and home improvement stores. Approximately ten years ago, Pine Island began looking for an alternative to the generic tags that it used to label its trees. These plain labels included some product information and planting instructions, but the company wanted the tags to do more. Pine Island wanted a custom tag to put on all trees heading to what it calls the “dooryard market”— anything headed to a customer’s backyard for private use.

“The mindset in the industry has changed a lot,” says Erik Tietig,

vice president at Pine Island. “The idea of having branded products, especially inside independent garden centers, is widely accepted now. People seek out those brands, just like they would seek out a specific brand of clothing or shoes.”

Tietig approached three different tag providers and asked each to come up with a design that would provide all of the information the company needed. Ultimately, Pine Island chose SATO America as its vendor. “The size and design that SATO offered was better than the others, and the price was competitive,” Tietig says. “We wanted to have a tag that really



stood out, and that you could easily identify as belonging to Pine Island Nursery.”

SATO offered up a custom picture tag, which is a three-inch by five-inch poly/vinyl tag with a UV coating. Each tag would feature a full color, variety-specific photo of the fruit, along with planting information. The tag theme SATO developed also reflected the nursery’s other printed materials, as well as its website. “They did a great job of mirroring what we had in place for consistency,” Tietig says.

SATO also provided a 12-inch high trunk wrap sheet for trees destined for box stores (like Walmart and Home Depot) that say “fruit” in large letters, along with some planting instructions and a QR Code.

SATO prints and ships the tags for Pine Island. Tietig says he orders two runs per year of 75,000 to 125,000 tags. The company currently uses 91 different tags for its trees.

Before placing a new order, Tietig evaluates current plant inventory and sales, and creates projections to determine how many tags he may need, and if he needs to send along updated high resolution photos. “I can put the quantity of tags I need on the spreadsheet that SATO provides,” Tietig says. “I can make any changes to the text or layouts on that spreadsheet, add the quantity, and then send the entire spreadsheet to SATO.”

### Full Color Tags Make an Impact

The tags include full-color photographs of the trees and fruit, the variety name, botanical name, a brief description of the fruit, along with the behavior and appearance of the tree. On the reverse side, the tag includes growing conditions, cold heartiness, plant characteristics, average height and width, tree space, water and light requirements, and a schematic with planting instructions.

“We’ve also added a strip above the planting instructions with a few small thumbnail photos of other products we grow, to show the customer other options they may later decide to purchase,” Tietig says.

Having enough space on the tag to include detailed planting and care instructions was important to Pine Island because of the nature of the trees they sell. “Since our products are unique, there is a lot of education that we have to provide customers because most aren’t familiar with tropical fruit trees,” Tietig says. “Even customers who are familiar with mangoes, for example, aren’t familiar with the different varieties available.”

The photos are invaluable when it comes to helping customers choose a tree, since the trees may bear unfamiliar names, even if the fruit is recognizable. “Pictures are worth a thousand words in this industry,” Tietig says. “Those photos help them recognize the plant and having a high quality photo is vital to the success of the tag.”

Pine Island has also benefited from the highly visible branding that the tags provide. “We wanted to brand our product to make it recognizable to anybody in another store or garden center,” Tietig says. “People can instantly recognize our product.”

Response from customers and distributors has been positive. “The fact that other garden centers accept our tags, with our website and name on them, inside their stores says a lot,” Tietig says. “They know how important the tag is to their own staff and consumers to help make them aware of what the product is, and how to care for it.”

Tietig says SATO has provided fast, reliable service, in addition to a winning tag design. “They came up with a good design, and it’s easy for me to tweak it as necessary,” Tietig says. “We’re very content with their quality, service, and price.”

That design continues to be tweaked. Last year, Pine Island added a QR Code (Quick Response Code) to the tag that, when scanned, directs the customer to the company’s website, where they can get more detailed information about the trees.

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### LABEL MANUFACTURING, SERVICE & SALES

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