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White Pine Roping Shortage

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According to M&M Wintergreens Vice President Shannon Kuhrt, there's a white pine roping shortage. Shannon wanted to get the word out about it—especially to you retailer types—about what's going on (essentially supply is down, price is up) and what you can do about it.

Here's the problem:

- There's a shortage of white pine trees in the Appalachian region. They've lost favor as a Christmas tree, so farms haven't planted as many. So a shortage in the trees means a shortage in the branches for roping.
- Manufacturers of the white pine roping, such as M&M, need to go farther afield to find the raw materials. That means more transportation and higher costs to bring the branches back for assembly.
- Labor shortages mean that it costs more to assemble the roping once it's at the factory. A shortage of both supply and labor means that prices for white pine roping have increased dramatically over the last few years.

Here's a solution:

Folks have certain expectations regarding white pine roping. They expect it to create Insta-worthy posts, but they also expect it to be cheap. But when it's twice as expensive as it used to be and still as much work to unravel the 75 -ft. spool onto a fence or around the house façade, demand might drop off.

Shannon suggests:

- Buying in the western roping, which is about three or four times thicker than the Appalachian white pine roping—but just as beautiful on Instagram.
- Using the shorter-length western roping as a door garland. At about the same price point, the western roping is actually an easier DIY project for customers. Set up a door garland with western roping at your store to show customers what the possibilities are with this “new-to-them” product.
- Sure, keep a few SKUs of white pine roping on hand for those who can't live without it. They'll buy it if they want it enough. **GP**