

# Topped Bananas

SAN DIEGO'S BPA-FREE SILICONE CAP HELPS PREVENT HEALTHFUL FRUIT FROM RIPENING TOO QUICKLY **BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN**

**H**ERE'S A CUTE, novelty-type invention that serves a purpose.

No one likes an overripe, withered-brown banana—unless you are making a banana cake with spotted, old bananas.

Sean Adler of San Diego created a way to preserve those versatile fruits: with colorful Nana Hats, a recent “Shark Tank” winning deal.

**Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): What is your background, and have you ever invented anything before Nana Hats?**

**Sean Adler (SA):** Born and raised in San Diego, I have spent my entire career working in financial services. I have always had a personal dream to start my own business and become my own boss.

You never know when an amazing idea will pop in your head, so I would always make an effort to log my invention ideas in my designated “idea book” journal. The journal is currently full of ideas, but Nana Hats was my first attempt to actually create one of my inventions.

**EGT: How did Nana Hats come about, as you indicated on your website (nanahats.com), during COVID?**

**SA:** During COVID, my corporate office was closed and I was learning to work from home, remotely. I always would use the excuse that I “don’t have enough time” or I’m “too busy” when I would think about actually creating one of my inventions. But with

everything being closed due to the pandemic, I knew that I had no excuse not to actually create and launch this product.

I thought Nana Hats would be created over the course of a weekend project, with a few trips to the hardware store and prototypes ready by Monday. Boy, was I wrong!

I actually ended up spending 10 months in research and development, which entailed meeting with international manufacturers over Zoom, patent attorneys to file intellectual property, and various product designers. I was so relieved to finally launch the company in November 2020 and share Nana Hats with the world.

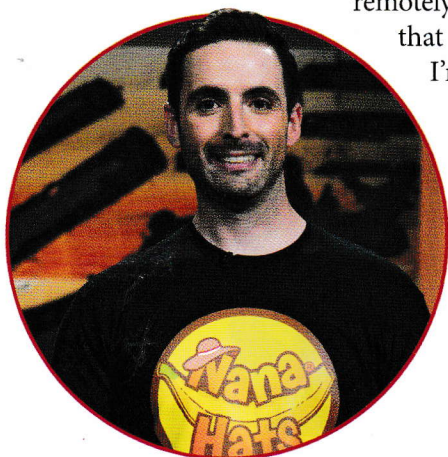
**EGT: What are the components of Nana Hats, and how do they preserve the shelf life of bananas?**

**SA:** Bananas produce a natural ripening agent, ethylene gas, as they begin to ripen. By securing our patent-pending, BPA-free silicone cap to the crown of your banana bunch, you are helping to inhibit the absorption of the ethylene gas, slowing the ripening process.

Nana Hats are reusable and much more eco-friendly when compared to alternative methods that rely on single-use plastics.

Every Nana Hat comes with one BPA-free silicone cap and one Nana Hat style. They are attached by magnet and are easily separated if you’d like to change the cute little hat on top to a different style.

Nana Hats are guaranteed to be the conversation piece on your kitchen counter!



**“I thought Nana Hats would be created over the course of a weekend project ... I actually ended up spending 10 months in research and development.”** —SEAN ADLER

**EGT: Are you manufacturing in the USA or overseas? If overseas, have you had any significant quality control issues?**

**SA:** We currently manufacture overseas. Quality control is a constant priority. Due to the intricacies associated with handwoven items, we have to continually check our products for any defects prior to their leaving our factory.

**EGT: How many different SKUs are you featuring?**

**SA:** We currently have 14 SKUs, and the list grows every time we launch a new Nana Hat style.

**EGT: Are the Nana Hats patented? Please share that experience.**

**SA:** Nana Hats are utility patent pending. It has been a very long, three-year process. We have recently received our first action review letter, so I am hopeful that we will finally be issued our patent soon.

Since appearing on "Shark Tank," many copycat products have been released. We look forward to having our patent protections put in place.

**EGT: On "Shark Tank," did you land a deal?**

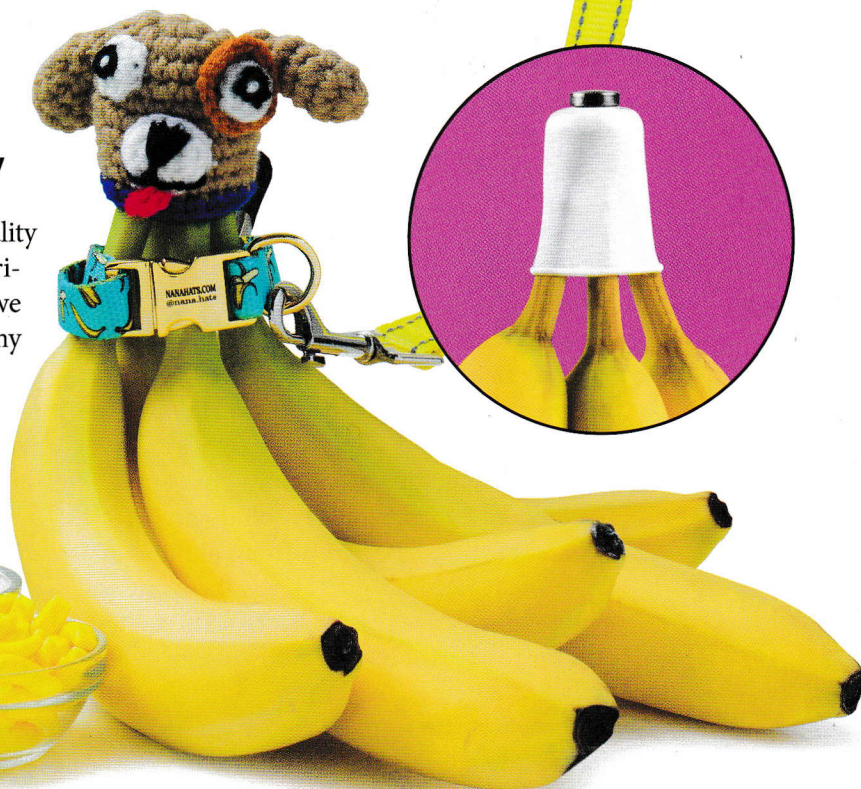
**SA:** We were offered a deal with Lori Greiner and Peter Jones. It was like a dream come true!

I was amazed with how the show editors were able to convert a 60-minute negotiation into nine minutes of quality TV. The final segment that aired on TV was completely perfect. I was so happy with how everything turned out.

The "Shark Tank Effect" is actually a real thing! We had over 30,000 unique visitors on our website when our segment first aired and had over 125,000 unique visitors by the end of the weekend. Luckily, our website didn't crash!

This all contributed to oversized sales. We are so grateful for the entire "Shark Tank" experience!

**EGT: What has been your biggest obstacle in product development?**



**SA:** Tooling. I had no prior experience in creating a mold. I learned so much about the complexities involved through the process.

**EGT: Will you add to your product line?**

**SA:** Yes! We have new and exciting Nana Hat styles coming soon. We also have plans to release complementary products.

**EGT: Can you share your experiences with developing an invention for newbies?**

**SA:** I would recommend being very careful when choosing an overseas manufacturer to create your product. Many of these factories will steal your idea and start manufacturing your product on their own without your consent. Make sure you only pursue manufacturer referrals from trusted contacts. 🐾

*Details: support@nanahats.com*

Bananas produce a natural ripening agent, ethylene gas, as they begin to ripen. Securing the patent-pending, BPA-free silicone cap to the crown of your banana bunch helps inhibit the absorption of the ethylene gas, slowing the ripening process.

Edith G. Tolchin has written for *Inventors Digest* since 2000 ([edietolchin.com/portfolio](https://edietolchin.com/portfolio)). She is the author of several books, including "Secrets of Successful Women Inventors" (<https://a.co/d/fAGlvZJ>) and "Secrets of Successful Inventing" (<https://a.co/d/8dafJd6>).



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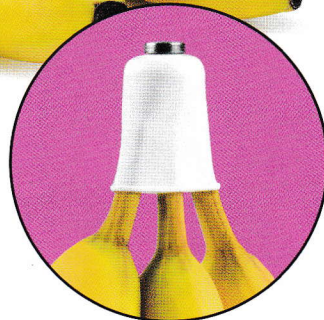


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# Inventors

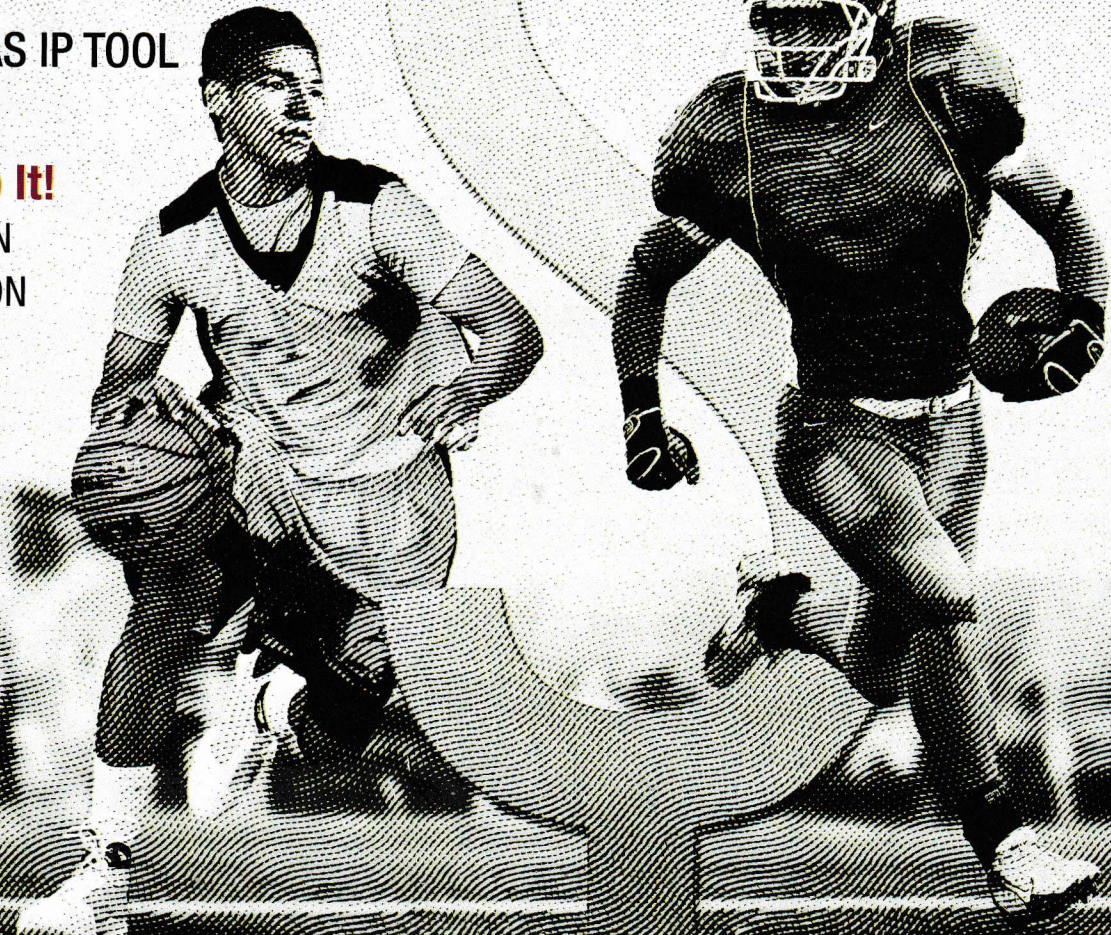
DIGEST

## A NEW GAME

NIL EXPLODES AS IP TOOL

**Yes, You Can Do It!**

WRITING YOUR OWN  
PATENT APPLICATION



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