

Some Basics About Growing Cannabis On Cape Cod

Massachusetts law allows an individual over 21 years of age to grow up to six plants in their home. If there are other individuals over 21 years of age living in the residence who wish to grow, the maximum number of plants that may be grown in a residence is 12 plants. The plants must be grown in an area that is equipped with a lock or security device. The plants cannot be visible from a public place without the use of binoculars, aircraft or other optical aids.

When growing cannabis from seed or cuttings, start out with a growing media that is high in perlite. **Stonington Blend**, by Coast of Maine, or **Sohum Living Soil** are both formulated for these plants. When transplanting into large pots, move plants into the same soil that is damp but not too wet. Cannabis plants are prone to collapse if placed in overly wet soils. When growing plants directly in the ground, do so in sandy soils that have been amended with compost such as Penobscott Blend or Moo Doo. Do not overly amend soils...a light application is better.

Soil pH for cannabis should be around 6 – just slightly acidic. If growing in the ground, don't assume you know what the pH is - have a test done. The Cape Cod Cooperative Extension in Barnstable tests for pH, and the UMASS Soil Testing Lab does a full nutrient report. Stonington Blend and Sohum potting mixes are adjusted for the right pH already.

When growing in containers, place only one plant per pot. Use a container that is at least 20 inches in diameter, and even larger is better. Regular Cannabis plants will grow 5 to 6 feet tall (or more!) in a pot, so smaller containers won't support maximum growth. Auto-flowering are shorter. Be sure the drainage holes are open and unobstructed. Fill the entire pot with soil...*don't* put rocks, mulch, or other debris in the bottom. Plants that are in smaller containers dry out quickly and won't grow as many buds. Note: new varieties of shorter cannabis are being introduced all the time. Look for these if you want to either have a low-profile plant in your gardens, or smaller potted plants.

Grow this plant in full sun and fertilize regularly. If you are using organic fertilizer, realize that it takes about *four to six weeks to become available to plants*. So organic fertilizers that are made to promote "bloom" need to be applied to regular Cannabis by mid-summer if they are to help with flowering. Use any basic fertilizer such as Maxsea for autoflowering varieties. Synthetic fertilizers are instantly available. When applying synthetic fertilizers, water the plants well first; never fertilize a thirsty plant. Mix fertilizers according to directions. Stop fertilizing about 2 to 3 weeks before harvest.

Regular Cannabis is triggered into flowering by periods where the days and nights are equal in length. This happens naturally around the Autumnal Equinox, September 22 and 23. So do not be surprised if your plants don't come into flower until late Aug. or early Sept. if they are growing outside. Some varieties produce buds earlier, however. The Cape has a long growing season, so there is time for plants grown outdoors to bloom.

Autoflowering Cannabis comes into bud in a set number of days. Typically, seeds started in May will begin budding in June and be ready to harvest in mid to late July.

Powdery mildew on the leaves? Use **Serenade** or **Revitalize**, both organic, bacterially based fungicides. Apply as soon as mildew is seen. Regularly coat the all sides of the leaf and stems.

Gray Mold is a more difficult problem because once the buds have it you shouldn't use these. Gray mold (aka botrytis) usually appears in cool, damp weather. It is the most problematic in the fall.

Yellow larger fan leaves? This is normal as the season progresses but will be worse if the plants dry up between waterings. If the new growth and smaller leaves in budding area are deep green, you don't have to worry. If the majority of the plant is yellow, you are either over watering or the plants need fertilization. Come into the store for recommendations.

Reference books: *DIY Autoflowering Cannabis: An Easy Way To Grow Your Own* by Jeff Lowenfels *What is Wrong With My Marijuana Plant?* By David Deardorff and Kathryn Wadsworth & *The Cannabis Encyclopedia* by Jorge Cervantes (aka George Van Patten)