

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 Bumper Crop. 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.

Start Seeds Indoors: Seed-starting heat mats are helpful. Start seeds in mid-April if you have grow-lights or florescent light fixtures. If you start them earlier, you'll need a higher intensity light system. Seeds of regular Cannabis won't flower earlier even when started earlier, since these plants are triggered into flowering by longer nights. You can start seeds on a wet paper towel in a warm place, but transfer immediately to a pot of damp soil when the seed sprouts. Won't sprout in a cold place.

Plant outside: Plant Cannabis plants outdoors only once the *night-time temperatures* are reliably above 50°. Harden off inside-grown plants by introducing them to the "real world" gradually. (A couple of hours of morning sun at first – then bring them back inside. Gradually increase the amount of time they are outdoors. Remember that wind is also a stressor for plants that are moving from inside to outdoors.

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 plants are shorter. Be sure the drainage holes are open and unobstructed. Large Smart Pots are very good for growing Cannabis.

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, or auto-flowering types, if you want to either have a low-profile plant in your gardens, or smaller potted plants.

Grow this plant in full sun. At least seven hours of direct sun, including the hours between 10 and 2.

The Process from Seed:

If you have high quality lights, a warm room and space, you can start plants as early as mid-late February. If you are using regular fluorescent bulbs or a sunny window, wait until mid-April into May.

Seeds need warmth to germinate. Using a seed-starting heat mat is advised.

Minimize transplantation. Moving plants from one pot to another is the prime time that you'll tend to lose plants. Do not move a young plant into soaking wet soil.

Fertilizers. If growing in the ground, get a complete soil test done. Never assume you need to fertilize...find out what nutrients you already have or don't have, then get a product that supplies what you might need. Too much of any one nutrient can throw off the absorption of other nutrients.

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. A basic, synthetic fertilizer such as MaxSea is appropriate for all 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.

You don't need a special “bloom” fertilizer for flowering. That's triggered by days or day-length.

Regular Cannabis is what's known as a “short day plant.” It is triggered into flowering by periods where the days and nights are equal in length, and the nights are getting longer. This happens naturally around the Autumnal Equinox, September 22 and 23, so usually plants don't come into flower until late Aug. or early Sept. if they are growing outside. The Cape has a long growing season, so there is time for plants grown outdoors to bloom, but fall rains and cool temperatures may lead to mold.

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 **Revitalize** or another bacterially based fungicides. Country Garden sells Bio-Remedy that can be used as a fungicide. Apply as soon as mildew is seen. Regularly coat the all sides of the leaf and stems. PM can make leaves turn yellow.

Gray Mold is a more difficult problem because once the buds have it you shouldn't use these if you're smoking your crop. In early stages of mold on buds, harvest and use for edibles only. Gray mold (aka botrytis) usually appears in cool, damp weather. It is the most problematic in the fall.

Yellow leaves? Where are the yellowing and when? Some older, lower leaves yellowing 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, the leaves have mildew, or the plants need fertilization. If the new growth is yellow, that's probably a nutrient issue. Come into the store for recommendations.

Insects: Plants grown outdoors aren't as prone to insect pests. Groups of brown dots on leaves are caused by four-lined plant bug, which isn't usually worth treating. Treat aphids with insecticidal soap. Spray with Bt or Spinosad for bud-worm. Avoid Neem if you are going to smoke the plant.

Reference books: *Growing Weed in the Garden* by Johanna Silver, *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),

Relax! Cannabis is an easy plant to grow, especially when you're growing it outside.

Come into the store and talk with our Garden Department staff if you need advice about products or problem-solving. 380 West Main Street, Hyannis, MA



www.HyannisCountryGarden.com