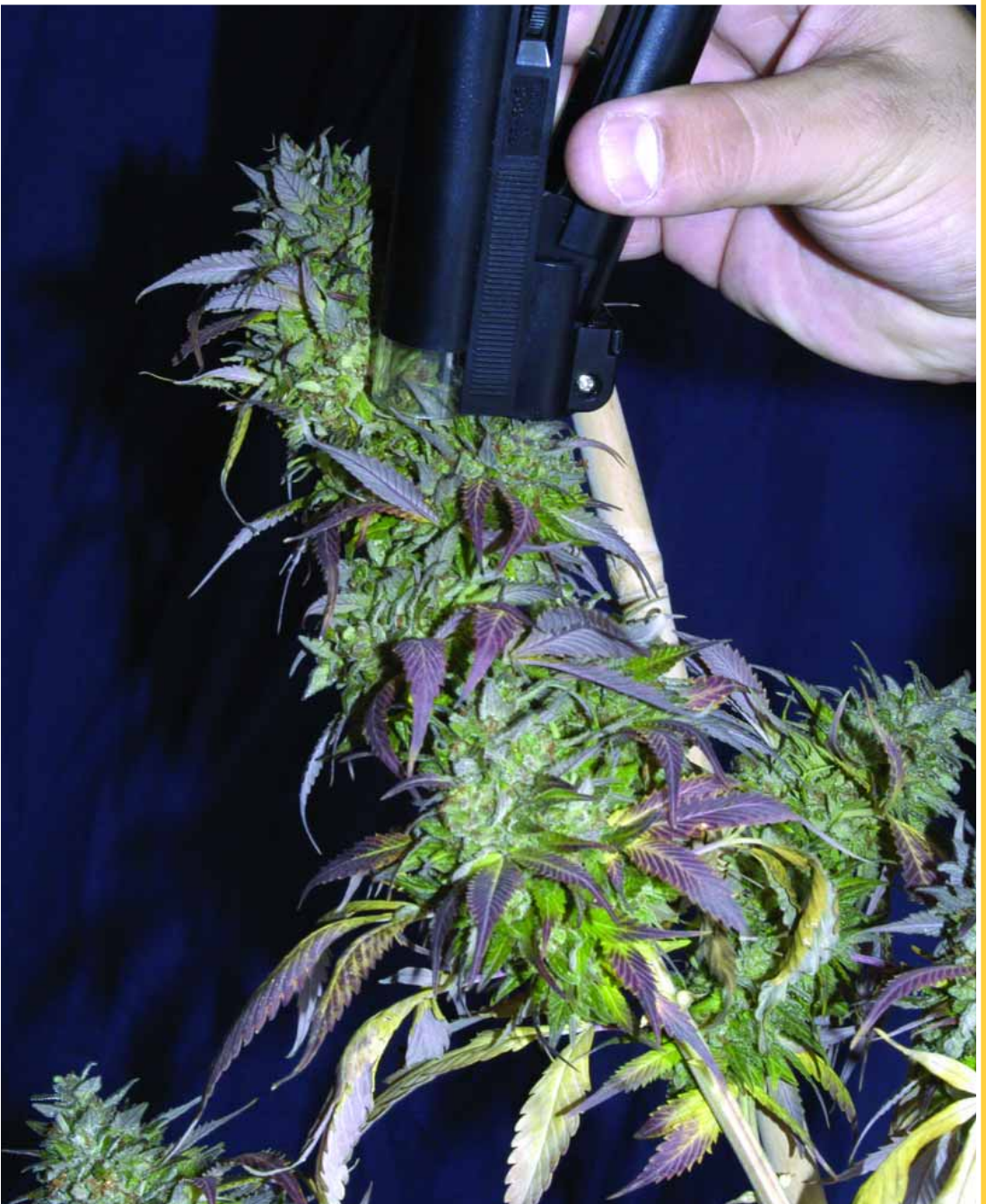
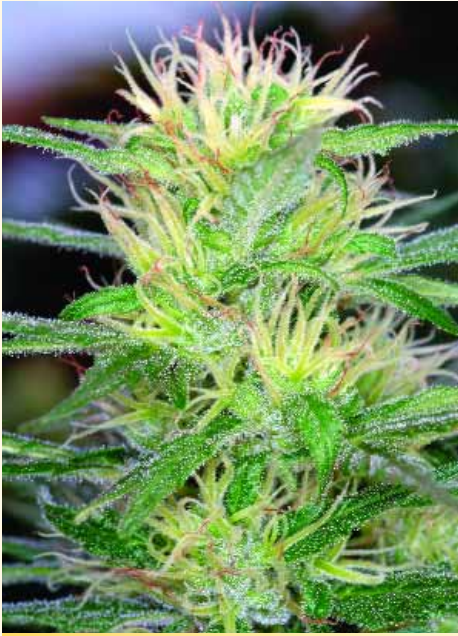


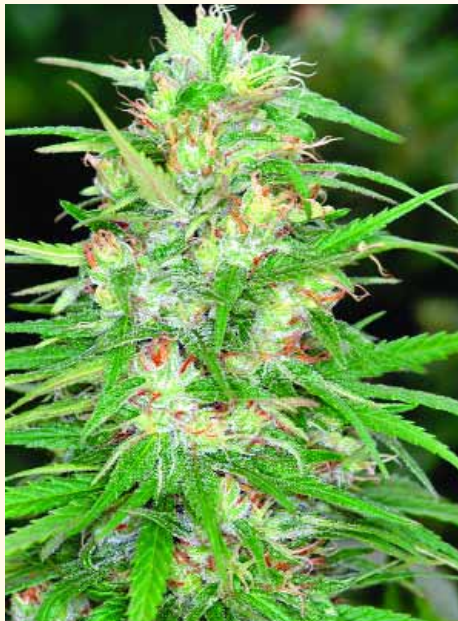
Chapter FIVE H A R V E S T



Inspect resin crystals with a 30X microscope to discern the exact time to harvest.



This 'Thaitanic' is not ready for harvest. The white pistils are just starting to turn color.



This 'Thaitanic' is at the point of harvest. Note that many of the pistils are turning color.

Introduction

The payoff for all the research, work, risk, expense, and the long, patient wait is a bountiful harvest. Strong, healthy, well-grown clones and seedlings yield the heaviest harvests. A well-organized pre-harvest and harvest are essential to preserve cannabis quality and decrease the workload.

Harvest when plants are at peak ripeness. Depending upon the high you like, which is discussed below, harvest timing is critical. The peak harvest window is open for about five to seven days.

Once harvested, most growers manicure buds before drying them slowly and evenly so THC is preserved. After drying, buds should cure to achieve full aroma and flavor. Like a fine wine, aging or curing improves taste and fragrance. Once cured, proper storage will ensure buds retain all of their essential qualities.

Before Harvest

Fragrance is often a problem before, during, and after harvest. Control fragrance by keeping drying and manicuring rooms well-vented. If possible, allow plenty of fresh circulating air to pass through the drying room to remove odors quickly. If air in and around drying and manicuring room is stagnant, odors linger and accumulate. Keep temperatures below 70°F (21°C) so essential oils in cannabis do not volatilize and release pleasant but unwanted fragrances. Contain cannabis fragrance in sealed drying and manicuring rooms. Filter air before expelling with a carbon filter. See "Odor" in Chapter Thirteen for more information on controlling fragrance.

Avoid the taste of organic or chemical fertilizers in harvested buds by flushing with plain water or a clearing solution to remove any residuals and chemicals that have built up in soil or plant foliage. Ten to fourteen days before harvesting, flush the garden with distilled water or water treated with reverse osmosis. Use a clearing solution such as Final Flush® if you have to

use plain tap water that contains dissolved solids. Some growers fertilize until three to four days before harvest and use a clearing solution to remove fertilizer residues. Apply this water just as you would apply nutrient solution. Always let at least ten percent, preferably more, drain out the bottom of containers. If using a recirculating hydroponic system, change the water after the first four to six days of application. Continue to top off the reservoir with "clean" water.

How to tell when fertilizer will affect taste.

1. Leaf tips and fringes are burned.
2. Leaves are brittle at harvest.
3. Buds crackle when burning.
4. Buds smell like chemicals.
5. Buds taste like fertilizer.

Do not water for one or two days before harvest. The soil should be fairly dry, but not dry enough that plants wilt. This will speed drying time by a day or more and not affect the quality of the end product.

Harvest

Growth stops at harvest and the THC content cannot increase. It will stay the same or decrease after harvest. Proper handling is the key to retaining THC potency. Prolonged periods of light, temperatures above 80°F (27°C), friction from fondling hands, and damp, humid conditions should be avoided because they all degrade the THC.

The THC chemical is produced in leaves, flowers, and stalked glandular trichomes, lovingly referred to as "resin glands" or simply "trichomes." Stems and roots may smell like they should be smoked, but contain few mind-bending cannabinoids, if any, and the resin is not very psychoactive. Male plants contain much less THC and are harvested before they pollinate females. Female plants are harvested when trichomes show peak ripeness. Leaves are harvested first.



Manicuring plants takes a long time. One pound (454 gm) takes four to six hours to manicure by hand with scissors and one to two hours to manicure with an automatic trimmer.

Growers hang plants upside down because it is simple, convenient, and effective; not to drain existing THC-potent resin into the buds. Also, boiling roots to extract THC is crazy!

Leaves

Once the large leaves are fully formed, THC potency has generally peaked out. Smaller leaves around buds continue to develop resin until buds are ripe. Peak potency is retained, as long as leaves are healthy and green; nothing is lost by leaving them on the plant. Harvest leaves if they show signs of disease or rapid yellowing that fertilizer has failed to cure. Once they start to yellow and die, potency decreases somewhat. This is true especially with fan leaves that grow before the buds. The large leaves turn yellow when nitrogen-rich fertilizer is withheld during flowering.

Cut the entire leaf, including the leaf stem (petiole) and toss it into a bag. Paper bags breathe well and can be closed by folding over the top. Plastic bags do not breathe, so the top must be left open. If the petiole is left on the stem, it shrivels and dies back. This little bit of dead plant attracts moisture and mold. Removing it will avoid mold problems.

Keep the paper bag in a closet or area with 40-60 percent humidity and 60-70°F (15-21°C) temperature. Reach into the bag once or twice a



Put leaves in an open plastic bag to dry. Stir once or twice daily to mix moist and dry leaves.



Trim large leaves from plants before manicuring small leaves around buds. Make sure to remove leaves including petiole at main stem to avoid promoting mold.



These big bags of dried leaf and trimmings are ready to be made into hash.

day and stir leaves by hand. Leaves should be dry to the touch in five to seven days. Once dry, place in the freezer to get ready to make Ice-O-Lator hash.

Male Harvest

Male flowers can produce pollen as early as two weeks after changing lights to the 12-hour day/night schedule. Watch out for early openers. Three to six weeks after initiating flowering, pollen sacks open and continue producing flowers for several weeks after the first pods have begun to shed pollen. Once male flowers are clearly visible but not yet open, THC production is at peak levels. (See "Sinsemilla Harvest" below for information on trichome glands.) This is the best time to harvest. Once males release pollen, the degradation process speeds up and flowers fall.

Harvest males carefully, especially if close to females. Cut the plant off at the base, taking care to shake it as little as possible. To help prevent accidental pollination by an unnoticed open male flower, carefully cover the male plant with a plastic bag, and tie it off at the bottom before harvesting. Or, if you can see an open pollen sack, spray it with water to make pollen unviable. Keep males used for breeding as far from flowering females as possible. Make sure to install fine screens for air coming into the flowering room and wet them down regularly to discourage rogue pollen. Isolate males until needed. After a month, the male will start reverting to vegetative growth even though it



Spray male plants with water to deactivate pollen before harvest.