



Cultivating Cannabis

Transcript – Harvest & Curing

Welcome back to Cultivating Cannabis. This is module seven and it's harvest time. We're going to show you what you need to know so that all your hard work pays off; when to harvest, how to harvest and how to preserve or cure your crop.

Nate: I love this pretty little plant so much. Blueberry Moonshine, I wish you could smell it through here.

Stephanie Syson: Alright Nate, now what all of the viewers at home have been waiting for harvest time.

Nate: Harvest, best time of the year.

Stephanie Syson: So, we're going to show lots of different pictures through this module because it is winter here, so we don't have any harvestable plants available for you to see, but just to get us started, as we're moving towards harvest time, are there some things to consider when we're setting up our dry space?

Nate: Sure.

Stephanie Syson: Of -- what does that space need to have so that we can make sure that all this work we've put into this plant, we won't ruin it at the end?

Nate: Sure. Well, you want a lot of air moving.

Stephanie Syson: Okay.

Nate: These plants, they were once living. Once you harvest them, they contain a lot of moisture and so it needs to dry, but if there's not enough air moving, especially if you have really dense material, mold can start to form inside the buds which would really --

Stephanie Syson: Be really sad.

Nate: -- it'd be really sad. My favorite thing to do is hang the buds vertically upside down.

Stephanie Syson: Like in the corner of a room --

Nate: Sure.

Stephanie Syson: -- or in a garage?

Nate: Yeah, any -- really kind of wherever you can. You want to avoid any direct contact with ultraviolet light. Darkness is ideal. Climate control is also ideal. Here in Colorado it's pretty dry, so stacking a lot of material in once space, while it might seem counterintuitive, it increases your humidity. As long as you have air moving, so --

Stephanie Syson: If we were to put a fan or --

Nate: Yeah.

Stephanie Syson: -- a window that has a breeze, that --

Nate: Yeah.

Stephanie Syson: -- would be handy to have around?

Nate: You really want to have a fan. Like an oscillating fan works really well to get different directions of air current and they're not hard to come by.

Stephanie Syson: Okay. So, our room needs to be dark, it needs to have good air flow and hopefully be temperature stable. Would you say those are the --

Nate: At least temperature stable, yeah. It's not hot --

Stephanie Syson: And not freezing.

Nate: Yeah. Yeah and if you have to lean towards one or the other, colder is better. It'll slow the process down and that's okay.

Stephanie Syson: Okay.

Nate: But really, the longer it takes for your plant to dry, as long as you can keep it from getting moldy or anything like that, the better.

Stephanie Syson: Okay and when we're -- go ahead.

Nate: I was just gonna say the faster it happens; you can really degrade your material pretty rapidly if it dries too fast.

Stephanie Syson: Okay. When we're looking at our plants in the field, and again we'll show photos of this, but how do we know we're getting close to when these plants are ready to be harvested?

Nate: Sure. Well, so as your plants begin to mature, they'll develop these little resin crystals and they look almost like upside down mushrooms. I highly recommend anybody get what's called a loop or a tiny little -- or just a magnifying glass, something where you can get a more zoomed in -- like a 30 times or a 50 times loop is really a good thing to do. They have them at any grow shop, anywhere. I know we have a lot of those around here. Not everybody does. You can get them on the internet, but essentially you wanna start looking at the Trichomes which are these little resin crystals. They'll start out clear as the plants growing, as it's producing them and then they'll start to get milky white.

Stephanie Syson: Okay.

Nate: Not quite opaque, but like translucent. That's when you're getting closer and then they'll turn amber. So ideally, and you know, there's some discussion of this in the industry, but ideally around 50-75, when 50-75% of the Trichomes have gone amber, it's time to harvest like right now.

Stephanie Syson: Okay and so, we take it out of the field and cut the whole plant down, bring it into our dry room that is dark and dry, has good airflow, has a stable temperature. And then about how long is it hanging in that room?

Nate: Ideally at least like a week and a half, two weeks. It can happen faster than that, it can take way longer than that and like I said, that's okay. You really don't want to be faster than a week. That's really kind of like -- that's fast.

Stephanie Syson: Okay.

Nate: About two to three weeks is pretty ideal and some people harvest in stages and there's something to be said about that. Like you can take your tops, your colas as they're called, the most well-matured and best-looking buds. You take all those off of every plant, hang those and now the plant has all the energy it's producing, it can put towards the smaller stuff that didn't -- you know, that was kind of getting short-changed when there was all these different sites where the energy was going. And if you have the time and the space and the patience and

all those things, I think that's worth it. And like you're not being threatened by frost or something; like that's another consideration is when the frost is gonna come because not all cannabis plants are frost hardy.

Stephanie Syson: What do you think about those hanging dry racks that have the different levels?

Nate: They work great.

Stephanie Syson: Do you like using those?

Nate: I like them because they're a good use of -- they're a pretty efficient use of space and you can also build racks, you know we built racks that looked like shelves with a kind of net as the shelf. You just don't want it sitting on anything flat. As long as there's the ability --

Stephanie Syson: Good air flow?

Nate: Yeah, good air flow. I think using your space efficiently makes a lot of sense.

Stephanie Syson: Okay and what's the difference between drying and curing? Are those two different processes?

Nate: Absolutely. You don't start curing until you're already fully dry. Essentially the curing process, you wanna now take -- you've had all this air moving. You wanna take the air away. People use jars very commonly, they use plastic bins; anything where there's not like active air moving, you can cure in. That's the process of the excess moisture that was living in the stem now comes out and it helps to hydrate the resin a little bit in a way and that's one of bud finishes.

Stephanie Syson: Okay and now does it move out of curing into storage or does all of that happen at the same time?

Nate: It's kind of at the same time, but once you get to a certain point of cure, you really wanna like seal it up and --

Stephanie Syson: Stop it?

Nate: Stop it, yeah. Completely airtight, sealed until you're ready to use it.

Stephanie Syson: Thanks for watching module seven; only one module left in this course. Next up making value-added products with your cannabis harvest.