MR. GROW IT

# FLOWERING TIPS

What happens week by week once you flip, and the handful of things that decide whether buds come out dense or airy.

Week by week • Dense buds • Defoliation and lollipopping • Finishing • Bud rot

### The short version

Flower is where the grow gets decided. Keep the room stable, drop the humidity as buds fatten, feed for flower not veg, open the canopy so light and air get through, and don’t chase one magic trick. Density comes from a lot of small things done right.

**The numbers, up front.**

| | Early flower (weeks 1–4) | Late flower (weeks 5 to finish) |
|---|---|---|
| **Lights on** | 78–82 °F (26–28 °C) | 75–78 °F (24–26 °C) to protect terpenes |
| **Lights off** | 62–70 °F (17–21 °C) | 62–70 °F (17–21 °C) |
| **Humidity** | 50–60% | 40–50%. Above 60% is bud-rot territory. |
| **Feeding** | Less nitrogen, more phosphorus and potassium. Roughly 1:3:2 | Roughly 0:2:3. Add calcium and magnesium through the peak weeks. |
| **Light** | Full spectrum, strong. Lower the fixture if the plant can take it. | Same. Measure at the canopy. |

SECTION 01

## Week by week

Photoperiod plants flower when you cut the light to 12 hours. Autoflowers go on their own clock. Here’s what to expect once it starts.

| Week | What’s happening | What to do |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | The stretch. Plants can grow inches a day. First white pistils and teardrop calyxes appear. | Hold 78–82 °F (26–28 °C) days, 50–60% humidity. Watch your height. |
| **2** | Pistils multiply at every bud site. Males show pollen sacs instead. Pull them. | Switch to flowering nutrients. Watch for deficiency or burn during the change. |
| **3** | Buds take shape. The smell jumps as trichomes start producing. | Feeding can go up. Last window for lollipopping and light defoliation. I stop at day 21. |
| **4** | Buds have real size and are sticky. | Humidity down toward 40–60%. Same temperatures. |
| **5–6** | Peak. Buds swell and densify fast. | Plants want more calcium now. Keep everything stable. Airflow through the canopy. |
| **7–8+** | Ripening. Pistils go orange-brown, trichomes go cloudy. | Lights-on down to about 78 °F (26 °C), humidity down. Check trichomes, not the calendar. |

*Genetics set the length. Eight weeks is typical, some run ten or twelve. Read the trichomes to know when yours is done; the Harvest Guide covers that.*

SECTION 02

## Dense buds

Airy buds are light, loose and low on resin. Dense buds are the goal. Seven things decide it.

| Lever | What to do |
|---|---|
| **1. Genetics** | Biggest factor on the list. Some plants will never make dense flower no matter what you do. Indica-leaning cuts usually run denser. |
| **2. Light** | Density takes energy and that energy is light. Enough intensity for the space, full spectrum, fixture 12–24 inches off the canopy depending on the light. Underpowered light is the most common cause of airy buds. |
| **3. Watering** | Consistent. Finger an inch or two into the medium: dry means water. Over and under both cost density. |
| **4. Environment** | Stable temperature and humidity in the ranges on page 1. Swings cost more than a slightly-off number. |
| **5. Nutrients** | Phosphorus and potassium in flower, pull back the nitrogen. More bottles is not more density. |
| **6. CO2** | Only if the room is sealed and the light is strong. Otherwise skip it. |
| **7. Canopy** | Light has to reach the bud sites. If half the plant is buried under leaves, those sites produce nothing. See the next page. |

SECTION 03

# Defoliation and lollipopping

Two ways to put more of the plant's energy into the buds you'll actually harvest.

### Defoliation

Removing some fan leaves so light and air get down into the canopy. It also makes pests easier to spot and takes moisture out of a crowded plant.

- **When:** right before the flip, or in the first two or three weeks of flower. Not late.
- **Which leaves:** the big fan leaves shading bud sites below them. Leave the ones feeding buds in open light. I leave lower fan leaves that aren't blocking anything; they're a nutrient bank and an early warning if something goes wrong.
- **How much:** start with five to ten leaves. Wait a few days. If the plant is fine, take more. Stripping it bare stalls it.
- **Tools:** clean, sharp scissors. Cut at the base of the stem.

### Lollipopping

Stripping the growth off the lower third of the plant: the small branches, leaves and bud sites at the bottom that never get real light. That growth ends up as larf. Take it off and the plant puts the energy into the buds up top.

- **When:** a few days before the flip, or during the stretch. I check the plant on days 7, 14 and 21 of flower. Day 21 is the last day I'll lollipop or defoliate. After that the plant gets left alone to build buds.
- **How much:** the lower third, or about a quarter of the way up. Some growers go higher than that. Start there and judge the plant.
- **What to cut:** the little branches that only reach halfway up the plant and anything at the bottom that would just be larf. Clean scissors, cut at the base.
- **Pair it with defoliation.** The lollipop clears the bottom, the defoliation opens up the middle. Light and air reach every bud site that's left.
- **Risk:** it's stress, like any pruning. Stripping too much too often could push a plant toward herming. Small passes, a few days apart.

SECTION 04

## Finishing strong

The last few weeks are about protecting what you built.

- **Temperature down a little.** Lights-on around 75–78 °F (24–26 °C) in the last two weeks keeps terpenes from cooking off.
- **Humidity down.** 40–50%. Buds are dense now and hold moisture; this is when rot shows up.
- **Feed for finishing.** Little or no nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium up. Calcium and magnesium through the peak.
- **Flushing.** I used to flush for the last one to two weeks. I don't anymore. The studies I've seen found no difference in the finished flower, and it's not what separates mids from top shelf. If you want to, it does no harm. What matters more is a proper dry and cure.
- **Darkness before harvest.** Debated. Doesn't hurt as long as the medium isn't bone dry. Try it or don't.
- **Harvest timing.** Mostly cloudy trichomes, a few amber. Waiting too long trades potency for a heavier effect.

### What actually moves the needle at the end

Not a bottle. Stable room, lower humidity, light reaching the buds, and then a slow dry and a patient cure. Those are where I've seen the biggest improvements over the years.

SECTION 05

# Bud rot

It starts inside the cola where you can’t see it. By the time it shows, it’s been there for days.

### The recipe

Humidity over 60%, air that isn’t moving, and temperatures over about 75 °F (24 °C). Give it all three and mold will form inside a dense cola overnight. That’s exactly what happened to me: one fan in the tent, it failed, and the plants sat in still, damp air until morning. Every big main cola was hit.

### Prevent it

- **Humidity under 60% in flower.** Lower in the last weeks.
- **Two oscillating fans, not one.** Above, below and through the canopy. If one fails you’re still covered.
- **Train the plant** so you have several medium colas instead of one giant one. The biggest, densest cola is where rot starts.
- **Prune and defoliate** so air moves through the plant, not around it.
- **Set alerts.** A monitor that pings your phone when humidity climbs is cheap insurance.
- **Watch the leaves coming out of the buds.** If they yellow starting from the petiole to the tips, open that cola up and look.

### If you find it

Cut out every affected bud and throw it away. Check the rest of the plant and the other plants. Keep checking through the dry and cure, mold can show up there too.

### Where to go next

- The light, environment and feeding numbers I run, in one place → mrgrowit.com/grow-pack
- The gear I actually use → mrgrowit.com/equipment
- The long versions on my site: flowering week by week · dense buds · bud rot