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Cannabis trellising is becoming a popular practice for growers looking to increase their yields

While a garden trellis can add beauty and charm to any outdoor space, there is an intended function and purpose which has been used for centuries. It offers support for flowering vines like roses and vegetables plants such as cucumbers or gourds and is ideal for small spaces with limited growing potential for sprawling vegetation.

With cannabis growers cultivating as many plants as allowably possible at their facilities, trellising is becoming a popular planting method to help achieve maximum results in the same operational footprint when combined with utilizing plastic [growing containers](#).

While trellising might be a new cultivation application for cannabis growers, it has a long, productive history which dates back to the 14th and 15th centuries.

According to Mary H. Dyer of GardeningKnowHow.com, "Nobody knows for sure who invented the first trellis, but we know they were used by ancient civilizations to support [grapevines](#) and [climbing roses](#), and that decorative, carved trellises were a distinctive feature of gardens as early as the 14th and 15th centuries. Some historians think trellises were probably used in the Garden of Eden, but of course, we have no way of knowing that for certain. However, thanks to early Roman and Greek wall paintings, we know for sure they were a feature in [Mediterranean gardens](#)."



Yes, the raw materials used to construct trellises have certainly evolved over time and designs still range from highly ornate to incredibly functional. But the [principles for utilizing trellises](#) in growing operations for a healthier, more profitable harvest is nothing new.

Simply put, a trellis refers to a framed screen or netting which is configured in a lattice pattern comprised of symmetrical squares. These squares provide the necessary support needed to manipulate how the plants grows for a variety of harvesting results.



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For the cannabis grower, structural support is one critical and functional reason for using trellising. When plants are bred to produce massive yields, they're often extremely top heavy which means they could easily topple over – breaking valuable stalks from the main branch which is ultimately rendered unsellable. Trellising provides the necessary support to such plants without interfering with growth.

But predominantly, cannabis growers use trellising to get the most yield out of their carefully cultivated plants. By weaving cannabis shoots throughout the latticed pattern, growers see dramatic increases in overall health and yield by introducing better light distribution and airflow into the growing process.

By using a trellis, cannabis growers can more evenly spread out the canopy of the cannabis plant, creating more space for the light penetration necessary for healthy plants. Additionally, airflow is critical for indoor cannabis growers. Growing on a trellis (as mentioned above) opens up the plant's canopy (which is often packed tightly together with other plants) allowing adequate airflow to circulate in and around the plant without any obstructions or stagnant pockets of air.

Another benefit of trellising for cannabis growers is the ability to manipulate how the plants grow based on the spacing available.

From FineGardening.com, "The trellis also maximizes the use of space, a concern for gardeners who have no room to spare. And because the growth of the plant is directed skyward, the fruit and leaves get the maximum amount of light. In addition, the trellis makes it easier to spot pesky critters and damage from viruses and diseases."

The trellis can be positioned both vertically or horizontally to maximize every square inch for cultivation (depending on your overall footprint).

Vertical trellising is most common outdoors, where "[living walls](#)" can be created in a vine-like growth pattern without limitations. Commercial growers often use this method to create hundreds of plants tiered along outer walls – maximizing their space and increasing their yield.



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Indoor growers often favor horizontal trellising (referred to as SCROG – screen of green). From RoyalQueenSeeds.com, “Left to their own devices, cannabis plants grow taller than they do wide. The screen of green technique aims to bring the lower branches up and the upper branches down, stretching them across an evenly distributed plane.” This method increases yield at harvest time, often with fewer plants, by allowing undeveloped branches with barely any buds to become healthy, hearty producers.

Cannabis trellising does require a bit more skill, time and attention in your growing operation. There are a variety of pruning and training techniques which growers will need to understand before implementing such growing practices to achieve maximum effectiveness. A few of the more popular ones are explained below.

Topping

Cannabis typically grows in a Christmas tree like shape – one main central cola and multiple side branches. This high stress training technique (HST), which can be applied both indoors and outdoors, encourages the development of two new main colas and promotes growth of the lower, secondary branches by removing the terminal bud.

[Topping](#) helps to almost invert the Christmas tree like structure and allows more light to penetrate the entire plant for greater yields.



Defoliation

While controversial among some growers, [defoliation](#) helps trim away excess branches and leaves to free up some additional energy from the plant by reducing the amount of foliage it needs to support. It also helps to make better use of light and improves the airflow around each plant (reducing temperature and humidity issues). While in nature, cannabis plants use excess foliage to store nutrients and water when stressful growing conditions arise. This is all but eliminated when growing indoors where managing the environmental conditions is more consistent.

Low Stress Training (LST)

This technique involves gently bending the cannabis branches and stems and tying them to the trellis. [Low stress training](#) does two things. One, it helps to break the tendency for the plant to



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grow in a Christmas tree like shape – flattening out the canopy to grow at the same height. Second, it allows for better light distribution by evening out the growing plain.

Cannabis trellising builds on a growing method which has been utilized for centuries to obtain the best yields while supporting the healthiest plants. While it might not be for every [cannabis grower](#), it may be worth considering at your operation for an increase in overall return.

Beyond our [full line of cannabis growing containers](#) – including [sustainable](#) – The HC Companies also offers [plastic netting](#) which is ideal for cannabis trellising. Contact us today to discuss custom sizes.

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