

2024 Cannabis Harvest Sees Big Improvement, Say Oregon Growers

Oregon's Sun-Grown Cannabis Farmers Enjoy a Bumper Harvest

Oregon's sun-grown cannabis cultivators are experiencing one of the best harvests they've seen in recent years, thanks to ideal weather conditions. A hot, sunny summer has allowed cannabis flowers to reach their full potential, with outdoor growers encountering minimal mold, a common issue during wetter seasons.

A Season Marked by Favorable Conditions

In previous years, growers had to contend with significant rainfall, which increased the risk of mold and reduced the quality of the harvest. This year, however, Oregon has seen continued warm days and limited rain, creating near-perfect conditions for outdoor cannabis cultivation.

In 2023, nearly 5.4 million pounds of sun-grown marijuana were harvested in the state, slightly up from 2022 but down from the 6.4 million pounds harvested in 2021, according to data from the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission (OLCC). Although full data for 2024 is not yet available, growers have already produced 2.3 million pounds, and many farmers are still in the midst of harvesting.

Strategic Harvesting and Strain Selection

Many Oregon farmers stage their crops to finish throughout the month to accommodate limited drying space. By diversifying their cannabis strains, farmers aim to not only create varied flavor profiles but also ensure their crops can withstand Oregon's diverse weather conditions.

Some farmers, like those at Millerville Farms, have expanded their drying capacity to handle larger harvests. The farm doubled its drying space in 2018 to 4,000 square feet, a necessity for handling the volume of their crop. Despite the focus on weather-resistant strains, growers sometimes opt for more sensitive varieties, such as Purple Wreck, that may be fragile but yield desirable results when the climate cooperates.

Wildfire Relief and Market Volatility

In addition to favorable weather, cannabis farmers in Oregon benefited from a less severe wildfire season. In previous years, wildfire smoke and ash tainted crops, causing significant losses. This year's relative calm allowed for a higher-quality harvest without smoke damage.

However, the outdoor cannabis market remains volatile, with prices fluctuating based on the volume of the harvest statewide. Farmers like those at Millerville Farms prepare for prices as low as \$200 per pound but aim for \$400 or higher to make the most of their crops.

Hemp Challenges and Industry Consolidation

Oregon is also a leader in hemp production, particularly for floral hemp used in CBD extraction. Hemp farmers faced their own set of challenges this year, including extremely dry conditions and high winds during the critical transplanting phase. Despite these difficulties, many farmers are optimistic about their yields, especially after running out of stock from last year's early and rain-affected harvest.

The hemp industry has seen consolidation, with fewer farmers cultivating roughly the same amount of land, around 2,000 acres. However, improvements in harvesting techniques, such as rack drying and freeze-drying for CBD extraction, have helped mitigate labor costs and streamline production.

Oregon's 2024 cannabis harvest is shaping up to be a standout season, with favorable weather, less wildfire impact, and growers adapting to market demands. As the industry continues to evolve, both cannabis and hemp farmers in the state are finding new ways to maximize their yields and profitability in an increasingly competitive market.

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