



**1. SEEDS**

**2. SEEDLING**



**3. VEGETATIVE**

**4. FLOWERING**



**5. HARVEST**



## **Marijuana Cultivation Explained**

The short answer is between three and five months, but if you include drying and curing time, that range could extend all the way up to eight months. That is a huge range of time—it's because a wide variety of factors can impact the exact amount of time it takes to get your crop from seed to harvest.

These factors include whether you are growing indoors or out, the strain you are growing, your light setup, nutrition practices... the list goes on and on.

### **The Marijuana Life Cycle**

Like all plants, cannabis plants start off as seeds. Once germinated, they grow into seedlings, then enter the vegetative stage of their life cycle. The vegetative stage is when the plant does the bulk of its growth in preparation to produce buds. Once the plants have reached maturity in the vegetative stage, they transition into the flowering stage, and this is when buds start to form. After the buds have reached maturity (ripened) they are ready for harvest.

Let's look at those stages in detail.

#### **SEEDLINGS:**

0 – 5 DAYS

Brimming with potential, cannabis seeds are the beginning of any crop. Alternatively, many growers opt to use clones instead of seeds. Cloning accelerates the growing process and allows growers to maintain a higher level of control over the final characteristics of their plants.

Seeds can sprout in as little as a single day, but the germination period is often closer to five days.

#### **VEGETATIVE STAGE:**

2 – 8+ WEEKS

As plants grow throughout the vegetative stage, it is up to the preference of the grower how long they should remain growing before transitioning to the flowering stage. In a controlled growth environment, growers transition to the flowering stage by changing the amount of light the plants receive. This change triggers the transition within the plant, and the flowering stage is when bud production begins.

The bigger the plant, the bigger the yield—more time in the vegetative stage means more time spent maturing and gaining leaves that will later be used to gather energy for bud production. This means that growers interested in high yields will benefit from some patience in keeping their crop in the vegetative stage.

Most strains will be mature enough to enter the flowering stage within two to three weeks; even auto-flowering strains will wait this long before maturing enough to begin bud production. Of course, there is a limit. A plant that is left too long in the vegetative stage before transitioning to the flowering stage can have complications that impact yield.

#### **FLOWERING STAGE:**

6 WEEKS – 4 MONTHS

Once your plants have been switched to a flowering light schedule, they will begin the production of buds. Time spent in the flowering phase depends heavily on the strain you are growing.

For the first few weeks the plants will make the transition to the flowering stage. Then budlets will form over the course of a week or so. These budlets will begin to fatten for another two weeks or so, followed by a ripening period of roughly another two weeks.

These numbers are highly dependent on the strain being grown. They reflect the flowering patterns of strains that are considered to have a fairly short flowering period.

**WEEKS 1 – 3**

Transition to the flowering stage

**WEEKS 4 – 6**

Buds begin fattening

**WEEKS 3 – 4**

Budlets begin to form

**WEEKS 6 – 8**

Buds begin ripening

**POST-HARVEST**

3 – 10 DAYS (DRYING)

2 – 4+ WEEKS (CURING)

After being harvested, buds will not be ready for use right away. They will still need to be dried and cured. Effective drying can take as little as three days; however, the process is usually carried out in the course of seven to ten days. Drying is an essential step that reduces the chance of mold formation during the curing process.

The curing process eliminates much of the harshness associated with freshly dried buds. It smooths out the effects of the final product, as well as developing the taste and smell profile. The minimum curing time is two weeks; however, many growers cure for at least a month for an optimal final product.

**TOTAL TIME FROM SEED TO SMOKE: 8 WEEKS TO 7+ MONTHS**

This includes growth time through the vegetative and flowering stages as well as the necessary post-harvest activities of drying and curing.