



Tips for growing hemp

Are you considering growing hemp? Use this starting guide to know before you grow hemp for fiber, seed or oil.

Hemp farming is unique in that farmers are faced with the additional responsibility of complying with all state and local government regulations. Looking ahead, 2020 will bring new Federal USDA-standardized regulations. As the hemp market is still emerging, growers must choose their desired end product — fiber, grain or cannabinoid production — so their crop will have maximum market impact and profitability. This dictates both variety selection and the method for how the crop will be grown and harvested.

Additionally, it is the responsibility of the grower to source seed. If the variety you intend to grow has not been locally tested by a qualified trial host and not certified by a qualified entity, you run the risk of growing a crop that exceeds the legal 0.3% THC definition for hemp, which results in complete crop destruction.

As you will be farming without herbicides, growers should pick relatively clean, weed-free fields with well-drained soils. Hemp needs adequate moisture for seed emergence, but it does not like to be in wet soil for prolonged periods of time, as crops will be stunted and yields reduced.

Growers should be prepared to have adequate labor on

hand to cover all necessary needs, as most growing techniques are labor-intensive. Hemp has been grown in several areas for a few years now; hemp pests are being identified, and populations levels will become an issue.

Good management practices are important, as premium prices exist for food-grade hemp grain. Growers for cannabinoid production should be working with an eye toward FDA regulations to produce clean, safe crop products.

Before you grow, you need to ask the right questions:

- > What's the intended use of the hemp I'm growing?
- > Does my state have guidelines on what seed is allowed?
- > Where will I purchase seed? Is the seed certified by an AOSCA or OECD member?
- > Am I prepared to grow by non-conventional means with limited pesticide availability?
- > Do I have a bona fide contract? If not, how do I intend to harvest and store the crop?
- > How will I market the harvested material?

Source: Bija Hemp, bijahemp.com

