

## Selecting a Cannabis Flower

It's important to remember that marijuana is a plant that provides multiple drugs, each with different therapeutic benefits and side effects. In order to select an appropriate flower, one must first start with identifying one's therapeutic goals..

Most people use marijuana for medical purposes when their therapeutic goals are to reduce pain or anxiety, enhance sleep or just to relax. Toward those goals, most people find that some marijuana flower strains are more effective than others. For those who need help selecting a flower to meet their needs (but remember, vaping flower is preferred to smoking flower), here a few pointers.

Some people, however don't find much difference from one flower strain to another, and don't feel the need to be particularly selective in which flower strain they want.

### The Basics

There are only 2 categories of compounds found in marijuana that provide significant therapeutic benefits:

1. Cannabinoids: THC and CBD (other cannabinoids such as CBN etc., may offer uncertain benefits)
2. Terpenes

### THC & CBD

THC is the backbone for most benefits, especially for pain, sleep and relaxation, but It may relieve or worsen depending on the dose and a person's sensitivity. When one doesn't identify any significant difference in benefit from one strain to another, they are likely simply leaning almost entirely, if not entirely, on the therapeutic benefits of THC only. For these people, the selection of a marijuana flower should be based on the THC content (THC%), the price and their preferred flavor. But always buy the **lowest** percent THC (see below).

THC is THC, no matter what the flower and therefore offers the same benefits (and side effects) based on dosage. Always purchase the flower with the lowest THC content - this will avoid unnecessary buildup of tolerance to THC and avoid unnecessary side effects. You can always take a second puff if needed - and you don't need to buy double the amount since most flower burns up in waste. If you do take a second puff, you get a second dose of terpenes that will enhance your benefits compared to the one puff of high dose THC with only a single dose of terpenes. Also, flowers with lower THC content often cost less.

Remember, the most common side effects from marijuana (anxiety, sedation, impairment) are THC dose related. The THC content of a marijuana flower at local dispensaries usually ranges from 20% to 30%, strains with <20% THC are less common and it's highly unlikely to find a flower with <15% THC. Even low dose gummies are more scarce. They do this to pander to people who just want to get high rather than service those with medical needs.

Remember, if they drive you to use higher THC content products (and they *absolutely* do), you will develop higher tolerance to THC, so you will need more and more product and you will develop more severe withdrawal symptoms that will occur faster, so you will come back sooner to purchase *more* THC products. Most people **do not need** high content THC products but they are driven to them because of lack of choices. Don't be naive, there is purpose to their lack of product continuity and poor product selection - it is marketing driven, **not medically driven**. Look at how they promote their products - when is the last time you were offered sale prices on flavored opioid candies? Do not fall prey to them.

### Enhance your marijuana experience

- **Consider adding oral CBD** to your marijuana regimen. CBD offers proven therapeutic benefits, including enhancing the benefits of THC and reducing THC side effects; it also reduces anxiety and improves sleep.
- **Consider adding terpene vapors** to your marijuana regimen. Vaporize essential oils with an inexpensive ultrasonic room diffusers while using marijuana - it will not only make your environment smell better, one can select essential oils that share the same terpenes as those in marijuana that provide the therapeutic effects one seeks. It is very inexpensive, readily available, and is an effective means of enhancing marijuana's benefits. For example, lavender oil smells great, its very inexpensive and it has a high content of the terpene, **linalool**, described below as the best terpene in marijuana for anxiety. There is good clinical evidence for its stand-alone benefit as an aromatherapy. See [www.accurateclinic.com](http://www.accurateclinic.com) for more information about aromatherapy.

## Terpenes

For the most part, it is the terpene content of a marijuana flower which distinguishes one strain from another, relative to its therapeutic benefits and side effects. So, in order to select the best flower strain for an individual's therapeutic goals, one should look at the flower's **individual** terpene content as well as the terpene ratio profile.

Information regarding the THC and terpene content of each marijuana flower should be made available to one **prior** to purchasing - ALWAYS insist on reviewing the THC and terpene profile before purchasing. They should be listed on a label adhered to the flower container/package. In some cases, the dispensary may provide this information on their website, but *beware* - it may not represent the current batch and may be grossly inaccurate and misleading. Sometimes there is a QR code on the label that will take you to a page displaying THC and terpene content, but again confirm that the batch identification matches the product you will be purchasing.

Be sure to look at not just the THC% content, but also the terpene profile of the individual percentages of each terpene. Become familiar with what represents high or low percentages and pay attention to your previous purchase profile experience to learn what profiles work best for your needs. Ultimately, you are the best authority and what works for you, but you have to pay attention to learn that is, the tripping guidelines before have the best science behind them with your experience that matters. The science only helps you narrow down your trial and error. Ignore "Indica" and "Sativa," focus on terpenes only.

Be aware that a particular marijuana strain may not be consistent in its terpene profile or THC content from one batch to another, so do not assume that your previous experience will predict a future experience with the same strain. Although the dominant 3 terpenes may be the same in a strain, they have demonstrated significantly different total and individual terpene profile ratios and THC content.

It will take some time and trial experiences until you know which profile(s) work best for you, so keep your content labels for your records along with notes, describing your experience and benefits. Only when one knows what THC and terpene contents works best for themselves will one be able to predict the therapeutic benefits of future purchases of the same or different strains. Having this knowledge will prevent future disappointment and save money. Do not let dispensary staff intimidate you or dodge your efforts to get the pertinent information you deserve before making a purchase.

*Opinions of others, including sales personnel, regarding a flower's benefits are biased and unreliable. The **best** way to predict an unknown flower's benefits **must** be based on one's knowledge and experience.*

That being said, based on what little research is available, the best three terpenes for obtaining pain, anxiety or sleep benefits (any or all), are: **Beta Caryophyllene (BCP)**, **Linalool** and **Myrcene** (see below). It is recommended that for any or all of these three therapeutic goals to limit the choice of terpenes in a strain to all three of these individual terpenes. If pain relief is the most important, select the one with the highest BCP content or if anxiety is the most important, select the one with the highest linalool content etc.

***The following is a list of common terpenes and their possible therapeutic benefits:***

1. **Beta Caryophyllene (BCP) - the best terpene for pain**, its also a powerful anti-inflammatory and good for anxiety and sleep. It's a dominant terpene in cinnamon and clove essential oils
2. **Linalool - the best terpene for anxiety**: its also good for sleep and pain, with compelling evidence for benefit with oral, topical and inhalation use. It's a dominant terpene in Rosewood and Lavender essential oils.
3. **Myrcene - the best terpene for sleep**: its also good for anxiety, pain and inflammation. It's a dominant terpene in Lemon Grass and Chamomile essential oils.

*Low concentrations (<0.5%) helps pain, anxiety, spasm but won't be too sedating*

*High concentrations (>.5%) helps sleep but can cause sluggish, "couch-lock" experience*

See [www.accurateclinic.com](http://www.accurateclinic.com) for how to vape flower with Myrcene content by adjusting the pipe's vape temperature to include *or avoid* Myrcene's sedating effects, depending on the time of da.y

- **Limonene** - may offer some pain benefit and reduce anxiety and may be substituted for Myrcene if there are concerns for sedation. It is also an antioxidant and may help oxidative stress.
- **Humulene** - may offer some pain and anti-inflammatory benefit
- **Pinene** - may have pain, anxiety and anti-inflammatory benefits, along with sedation. It may reduce the short-term memory impairment induced by THC
- **Terpinolene** - is purported to be sedating and calming.
- **trans-Nerolidol** - may be useful for insomnia.

