Harvest & Curing Checklist

Trim cleaner, dry slower, store better. Print this, tick it off, and stop guessing.

> **The single most common mistake is jarring too early. Everything else on this list is recoverable. That one is not.**

Most of the quality you lose after harvest is lost in the first three weeks, and almost all of it comes down to moisture moving too fast or not at all. The steps below are the ones that actually change the outcome. Work through them in order.

1. Three days before harvest

- [ ] Clear and wipe down the surface you will be working on.
- [ ] Sharpen or replace dull blades. A dull blade crushes stems instead of cutting them.
- [ ] Check that spring-loaded shears still snap back cleanly, and that safety locks work.
- [ ] Set up the drying space: dark, **60–65°F**, **55–60% relative humidity**.
- [ ] Position a fan to move air **around** the room, never pointed straight at the material.
- [ ] Gather what you will need at the end: wide-mouth airtight jars, a small hygrometer, two-way humidity packs, labels, and a pen.

2. Harvest day

- [ ] Harvest when the plant is ready, not when the calendar says so.
- [ ] Work in sections. Do not cut more than you can process in one sitting.
- [ ] Cut branches into lengths that will hang comfortably in your drying space.
- [ ] Keep a tray underneath your work so clippings stay contained and the bench stays clear.
- [ ] Handle everything by the stem. Fingers on the material cost you quality.

3. Wet trim or dry trim?

Both work. What matters is picking one and staying consistent, because they dry at different speeds.

	Wet trim (trim right after cutting)	Dry trim (hang first, trim later)
Speed	Faster and tidier. Leaves are easier to cut while turgid.	Slower. Dried leaves are brittle and fiddly.
Drying time	Shorter, because there is less plant matter holding water.	Longer. The extra leaf slows moisture loss.

	Wet trim (trim right after cutting)	Dry trim (hang first, trim later)
Best for	Humid climates, where a fast dry prevents mold.	Dry climates, where slowing the dry protects aroma.
Trade-off	Slightly more aroma lost to the air.	More effort, and more mess at the trimming stage.

4. Trimming technique

- [ ] Use microtip shears for stems and the larger leaves.
- [ ] Switch to detail scissors for close work and final shaping.
- [ ] Wipe blades every 20–30 minutes. Sticky blades tear instead of cut.
- [ ] Work over a tray so nothing ends up on the floor.
- [ ] Rotate hands and take breaks. Fatigue is what makes late-session cuts sloppy.

5. Drying: the 10 to 14 day window

- [ ] Hang branches or lay material on a rack, in the dark.
- [ ] Hold **60–65°F** and **55–60% RH** for the whole dry.
- [ ] Keep air moving gently and indirectly.
- [ ] Aim for **10 to 14 days**. Do not add heat to speed it up.
- [ ] Check once a day. Look for even drying and any sign of damp spots.

> **A dry that finishes in three days will smell like hay for months, and no amount of curing fixes it. Slow is the whole point.**

6. The snap test

This is how you know drying is finished. Take a small stem and bend it.

What happens	What it means	What to do
It snaps, audibly	Interior moisture is low enough.	Move to jars.
It bends and folds	There is still water in the stem.	Give it two more days, then test again.

7. Jarring and curing

- [ ] Use wide-mouth airtight glass jars. Plastic holds odour and static.
- [ ] Fill each jar to about **70%**. The headroom is where moisture equalises.
- [ ] Drop in a small hygrometer if you have one. It turns guesswork into a number.

- [ ] Target **58–62% RH** inside the jar.
- [ ] Keep jars somewhere cool, dark, and temperature-stable.
- [ ] Label every jar with the date it was filled.

8. Burping schedule

Burping means opening the jar to swap humid air for dry air. Do it on this schedule, not on instinct.

When	How often	How long
Days 1–14	Once or twice a day	10–15 minutes with the lid off
Once RH stops spiking	Stop daily burping	Reseal and monitor
Weeks 3–4	Every few days	A few minutes
Month 2 onward	About once a week	A quick open and reseal

If humidity climbs back above 65% after you reseal, the material was not dry enough. Take it out and return it to the rack. Do not wait to see if it settles.

9. Long-term storage

- [ ] Airtight containers, kept in the dark. Light degrades quality faster than age does.
- [ ] Cool and stable. Repeated temperature swings are worse than a slightly warm shelf.
- [ ] Two-way humidity packs rated **58–62%** hold the level without you thinking about it.
- [ ] Check jars monthly for the first three months, then occasionally after that.
- [ ] Do not stack jars somewhere you cannot see them. Out of sight is how problems grow.

10. Troubleshooting

Symptom	Likely cause	What to do
Smells like hay or fresh lawn clippings	Dried too fast, or not cured long enough.	Keep curing and stay on the burping schedule. It often improves by week four.
Crumbles to dust when handled	Over-dried.	Add a 62% humidity pack, reseal, and check again in 24 hours.
Damp, or a sharp ammonia smell	Too wet. Moisture is trapped and it is going anaerobic.	Open the jar now and return the material to the drying rack.
Visible fuzz, webbing, or grey powder	Mold.	Discard the affected material. Do not try to rescue it, and check every other jar from the same batch.

Symptom	Likely cause	What to do
Humidity keeps climbing after every reseal	It was jarred before it was dry.	Back to the rack for two to three more days.

11. After the harvest: tool care

- ☐ Wipe blades down with isopropyl alcohol while residue is still soft.
- ☐ Dry the tool completely before it goes away. Trapped moisture is how blades pit.
- ☐ Engage the safety lock before storing.
- ☐ Store somewhere dry. A damp shed will cost you a season.

Quick reference: the numbers that matter

Everything above, condensed. Print this page and pin it where you dry.

Stage	Target	Watch for
Drying room	60–65°F, 55–60% RH, dark, indirect airflow	Damp spots, uneven drying
Drying time	10–14 days	Anything under a week is too fast
Ready to jar	Small stems snap audibly	Bending stems mean wait
Jar fill	About 70% full	Packed jars cannot equalise
Jar humidity	58–62% RH	Above 65% means it is not dry
Burping, days 1–14	1–2× daily, 10–15 min	RH spiking after reseal
Burping, weeks 3–4	Every few days	Steady RH means you are on track
Storage	Airtight, dark, cool, 58–62% packs	Temperature swings, light

Yieldcropper builds trimming and harvest tools for indoor, outdoor, hydroponic and coco growers. Find the shears and scissors used throughout this guide at yieldcropper.com/products