

Crop Steering Chart: Vegetative vs Generative

One page with the levers growers use to push cannabis toward leaf and stem growth (vegetative) or toward flower development (generative). Use it as a starting point, then adjust to what your own plants and root zone show you.

Irrigation

Typical starting ranges for coco coir and stone wool in drip-irrigated rooms

Lever	Vegetative	Generative
First irrigation after lights-on	0 to 1 h	1 to 3 h (up to 4 h)
Last irrigation before lights-off	0 to 2 h	2 to 4 h
Shot size (% of substrate volume)	1 to 3%	3 to 6%
Irrigation frequency	Frequent, small shots	Fewer, larger shots
Dry-back between daytime shots	1 to 3 VWC points	3 to 8 VWC points
Overnight dry-back	10 to 15% of peak VWC	20 to 30% of peak VWC
Runoff	Regular runoff most days	Little or none; flush when EC climbs too high
Root-zone water content	Held near field capacity	Held below field capacity

Root zone

Lever	Vegetative	Generative
Substrate EC (bulk or pore-water)	2 to 5 mS/cm	4 to 10 mS/cm
Root-zone temperature	18 to 24 °C (64 to 75 °F) for both	

Climate

Lever	Vegetative	Generative
Day air temperature	25 to 29 °C (77 to 84 °F)	21 to 26 °C (70 to 78 °F)
Day/night temperature difference	Small (0 to 3 °C)	Larger (3 to 6 °C)
Relative humidity	65 to 80%	45 to 65%
VPD	0.8 to 1.1 kPa	1.1 to 1.5 kPa
Light intensity	Moderate	Higher, if irrigation and CO2 can keep up

When each direction is used

Stage	Common direction	Why
Propagation and early veg	Vegetative	Build roots and a uniform canopy without stress
Late veg	Vegetative, a few generative days before flip	Harden plants before the switch
Flower weeks 1 to 3 (stretch)	Generative	Limit stretch and push flower sites
Flower weeks 4 to 6 (bulk)	Back toward vegetative	Biomass demand is highest; do not starve the plant
Final 2 to 3 weeks (finish)	Mixed; no settled consensus	Larger dry-backs are common; high EC late is disputed

Read this before using any number above.

These are ranges published across commercial grower guides, not targets proven for your cultivar. Dry-back is written as a percentage of peak VWC; if your guide uses VWC points or field capacity, [convert first](#). Change one lever at a time and watch how the plants respond for several days before changing the next.

Free crop steering guide: intergalactic-xyz.com/crop-steering. Starting ranges only; adjust to your cultivar, substrate and room.