

## ASK THE EXPERTS: CONTAINERS



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## QUESTIONS WITH **DUSTIN LOCKS & TIM FERCHAU**

Containers serve as the foundation of a growing operation. Dustin Locks and Tim Ferchau of **Smart Pots**® explain why fabric containers can help growers cultivate cannabis more efficiently using less inputs while preventing pests and diseases and increasing yield.

### 1. What sets **Smart Pots**® apart from other fabric containers on the market?

**Dustin Locks:** Smart Pots® are made from a clean, porous, tough, non-degradable fabric that is safe for growing any edible or ingestible products. We back up that claim with a MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) certification that states exactly what is in our fabric. There are absolutely no contaminants nor chemical exchange between the fabric and the plant. It's as clean as a fabric plant-er as you can get.

### 2. With more cultivators growing in greenhouses and outdoors, how do fabric pots stand up to the elements like sun?

**Locks:** We have a one-year manufacturer's warranty, but longevity is an average of five years, even in full sun, and they

are recyclable. Smart Pots® can be used indoors or out. I met with a commercial grower who was using a competitive pot. Their complaint was as the season wore on, the pots disintegrated, resulting in a loss of media, nutrients and water and a disappointing yield. They said, "I'll never go cheap on a fabric pot; it's your foundation, and you need to start with the best if you plan on finishing strong."

### 3. Is it more challenging to grow in fabric containers than other options, say plastic?

**Tim Ferchau:** It's far less challenging, even for large-scale commercial growers as well as beginners, because it's just forgiving in positive ways, in terms of watering, feeding and various other things. Root development is also a key factor; constant air flow and light transfer allow for strong, healthy



roots, which result in a stronger, more productive plant and productivity results in revenue.

**Locks:** It's about the steerability of the crop—you have more control with a Smart Pot. And that goes into reducing pests, disease; it's going to dry out quicker, so you reduce the chance of getting fungus, gnats, as well as powdery mildew and root rot. It's porous, you get great drainage, you're getting oxygen down to the roots. Many growers are doing living soil pots and beds, so they want to keep that microbial colony healthy and thriving, and that needs oxygen. Smart Pots® unique fabric

makes that possible.

### 4. When transplanting to larger sizes, how can I ensure that process is successful?

**Locks:** Transplanting in a breathable Smart Pot® is much better than growing in a hard-sided container because your roots are spiraling downward versus in Smart Pots®, roots are already growing out laterally, so they anchor more quickly. And those feeder roots take up more water and nutrients. The plant is going to establish quicker in the next size and reduce the shock of transplanting. You're not going to have that transplant lag. If you're in an indoor facil-

ity, you must look at how to shave days off each grow cycle. I'm at three turns per year, how can I get in another half turn in per year? Many growers have realized using Smart Pots® allows you to grow a bigger plant in a smaller footprint, and your input costs go down.

### 5. I noticed you offer a lot of sizes, but what if I need a specific size you don't offer?

**Ferchau:** We manufacturer sizes from one gallon all the way up to 1,000 gallons, so we have all the sizes anyone could need. Since we manufacture in our own plant in Oklahoma City, we can offer custom sizes and custom beds. This allows flexibility for commercial growers. Custom projects are welcome, and we offer very quick service.