

HOW TO PIMP OUT YOUR GROW ROOM

Key investments can make your harvest bud big-time

BY DANTE ZUÑIGA-WEST

While not all grow rooms are created equal — size does matter — there are a few aspects you don't want to skimp on, no matter what. Sure, a great deal of your setup is dependent upon both what you are growing and on how much of it you intend to grow, but some factors remain universal to producing a

good crop inside the house. Let's take a quick look at what you can do to really pimp out your grow room this season.

Regulating temperature and humidity makes all the difference on what is going to happen in your space, and environmental controllers are the brains of the operation. These units are priced from moderate to very expensive. But with the right environmental controller, you won't even need to go into your grow room for a few days.

"The more spendy units can manage humidity, temperature, light timing, CO2; they are a great way to do up your grow room and definitely worth the investment," says Jessica Tutt, indoor garden expert at Aqua Serene. "From a consumer perspective it is far more worth it to go for one of the larger environmental controllers so you aren't always having to build onto a smaller one later."

Tutt recommends the Sentinel CHHC4; it's a total environmental controller, and you can use it with a regulated tank or a CO2 burner. "When you drop that little bit of extra bling for a nice environmental controller, you are getting so much more quality, and in this particular situation it really does make all the difference in the world." Basically, with one of these units, your indoor grow room functions as if it were a utopian outdoor growing situation.

Another way to get that extra edge out of whatever it is you're growing, be it tomatoes, peppers or relatively legal medicinal herbs, is to invest in a solid pH meter.

"A lot of gardeners have trouble with spending a

hundred dollars on a good pH meter, when in reality it can increase your yields like crazy," says another Aqua Serene employee who helps people build efficient grow rooms. "Feeding your plants at the correct pH is crucial."

Luckily in Lane County we are fortunate and blessed with really clean water, but in any city the pH is going to change pretty regularly. So knowing where you are at before you add your nutrients is really important, and once you add them you definitely want to know where your pH level registers. There is a very specific pH range at which your plants are going to take in that nutrition.

Tutt says Bluelab pH pens are a solid bet for monitoring your pimped-out grow room. It's a basic meter that is compact and geared to the needs of the average gardener, from a company that is known for reliable products.

Pest control is something that all Oregon gardeners are familiar with. Fungus gnats, mites, mildew — our little humid valley is home to all sorts of things that can ruin your crop. Keeping your grow room free of these pesky critters is a must. And it's best to do so without polluting your consumables. Here's a tip — try mixing a bit of the broad-spectrum botanical product Azatrol with some peppermint Dr. Bronner's castile liquid soap as a tag-team preventative to spray on during the vegetative state of your grow. It can keep the vermin at bay and ensure a safe, healthy harvest. **EW**

For more info on hooking up your grow room, check out www.aquaserene.com




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