



Harvesting Industrial Hemp by Hand

Training Guide for Small Farmers

1. Introduction

Industrial Hemp is a strong and useful crop that can be grown for fibre, seed, and other products. Many small farmers do not have expensive machines, so the crop must be harvested by hand.

Harvesting Hemp the correct way is very important. If the plants are cut too early, the seeds may not be mature. If the plants are left too long in the field, the quality of the fibre and seed can be reduced.

This guide explains the basic method of harvesting Hemp **by hand using simple tools**.

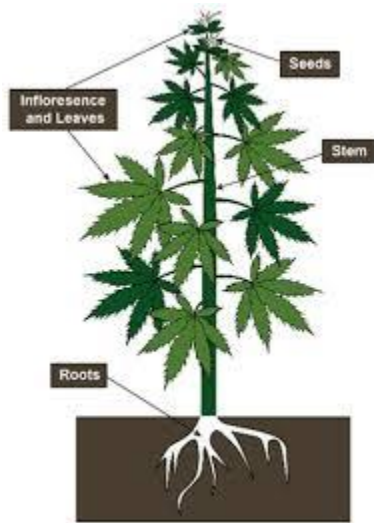
2. When Hemp Is Ready to Harvest

Most Hemp varieties are ready to harvest **90 to 120 days after planting**, depending on the variety and climate.

Farmers must look for these signs.

- The lower leaves begin turning **yellow**
- Seeds become **hard and brown**
- The plant stalks are strong and fully grown
- Some leaves begin to fall off the plant

Illustration - Mature Hemp Plant



3. Tools Needed for Hand Harvesting

Farmers only need a few simple tools.

- Sharp sickle or cane knife
- Pruning shears or garden cutters
- Strong gloves
- Rope or twine
- Large tarp or ground sheet
- Buckets or bags for collecting seed

Illustration - Cutting Tool



Keep all tools **sharp and clean** to make the work easier.

4. Preparing the Field Before Harvest

Before harvesting begins.

- Check that the plants are dry
- Do not harvest when plants are wet from rain or dew
- Clear a space where bundles can be stacked on the ground
- Prepare tarps where seeds can be collected

Working in **teams of 3 to 5 people** helps the job move faster.

5. Cutting the Hemp Plants

The first step is cutting the plants close to the ground.

1. Hold the plant stalk firmly.
2. Use the sickle or knife to cut **near the base of the stalk**.
3. Lay the cut plants in the same direction in rows.

Illustration - Cutting the Stalk



Cutting low helps farmers collect the **full fibre length**.

6. Making Bundles

After cutting several plants, they should be tied into bundles.

1. Gather **10 to 20 stalks** together.
2. Tie them loosely with rope or twine.
3. Stand the bundles upright or lay them in rows.

Illustration - Hemp Bundle



Bundles make the plants **easier to carry and dry**.

7. Drying the Hemp

Drying is very important to prevent mould.

Bundles can be dried by.

- Standing them upright in small stacks
- Hanging them in a shed
- Laying them on wooden pallets

Air must move through the plants.

Illustration - Drying Bundles



Drying normally takes **5 to 10 days**, depending on weather.

8. Removing the Seeds

If the crop is grown for seed, the seeds must be separated from the plant.

Simple hand method:

1. Place a **tarp on the ground**.
2. Hold the dry plant.
3. Beat the seed head against the tarp.
4. Seeds will fall onto the tarp.

9. Cleaning the Seeds

After harvesting.

- Remove leaves and plant pieces
- Use a simple **screen or sieve**
- Dry the seeds for a few days in the sun or indoors

Seeds must be **fully dry before storage**.

10. Storing the Harvest

Good storage protects the farmer's crop.

Seeds

- Store in clean bags or containers
- Keep in a cool dry place
- Protect from insects and moisture

Stalks

- Store in dry stacks
- Keep off the soil using wooden pallets

11. Safety Tips

Always follow basic safety rules.

- Wear gloves when cutting plants
- Use sharp tools carefully
- Drink water during field work
- Work in teams

12. Common Mistakes New Farmers Make

New farmers sometimes.

- Harvest the crop **too early**
- Leave plants on **wet soil**
- Do not dry the plants properly
- Store seeds before they are dry

Avoiding these mistakes will protect the quality of the Hemp harvest.

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