



## Guide to Topping your Hemp Plants

### What Is Topping

Topping is when you cut off the very top growing point of the hemp plant. This stops the plant from growing straight up and forces it to grow outward. The result is a shorter, stronger, bushier plant with more branches.

Farmers top plants when they want:

More side branches. More uniform height. A plant that handles wind better. Better light penetration through the canopy.

### Why you need to Top your Hemp Plants

Topping changes how the plant grows. Once the main tip is removed, two new branches start growing from the node below the cut. These branches become the new main stems.



### Topping is useful for:

- Biomass production, gives more plant volume
- Flower production (CBD varieties) creates more bud sites
- Indoor/greenhouse farming, helps control height
- Areas with strong wind, avoids tall, weak stems

### When to Start Topping your Hemp Plant

The timing depends on how fast the plant is growing, the variety, and your climate, but the general rule is:  
Top Between Week 3 and Week 5 After Planting

### **This is when:**

Plants are in strong vegetative growth, stems are thick enough to heal quickly, roots are established, Plants have 4 to 7 nodes (sets of leaves) If you top too early, the plant is too weak. If you top too late, the plant becomes tall and woody, and topping can stress the plant.

### **The Signs That Tell You It is Time to Top**

Farmers should look for these markers: The plant has at least 4 full nodes. The 5th or 6th node is the best place to top. The stem is thick enough to hold its shape. If the stem bends easily like a thin straw, it is still too early. The plant is showing fast, healthy growth. Bright green leaves, strong stems, and no pest or disease issues. Roots are well established. Plants in beds or pots that resist a gentle pull are ready. You are still in the vegetative stage. Never top after the plant starts forming pre-flower signs.

### **How to Top Your Hemp Plants (Step-by-Step)**

Step 1: Choose the right height. Most farmers top above the 4th to 6th node.

Step 2: Use a clean, sharp tool, small pruning scissors, razor blade, sharp clean knife, dirty tools can spread disease.

Step 3: Cut just above a node. Cut the main stem about 1 to 2 cm above the node you want to keep.

Step 4: Avoid tearing the stem. One clean cut is best. A messy tear slows healing.

Step 5: Allow recovery. After topping, reduce stress, avoid overwatering, give mild nutrients, let new branches form, plants usually recover within 3 to 6 days.

### **Follow-Up Topping (Optional)**

Some farmers top multiple times to create even more branches.

Second topping: Done 2 to 3 weeks after the first topping. When new branches have 3 to 4 nodes of their own. Third topping (only if needed) Used in indoor or high-value CBD crops. Creates a wide, bushy canopy. For outdoor farming, ***one topping is normally enough.***

### **When Not to Top your Hemp Plant**

Avoid topping if: The plant is stressed or yellow. The plant is flowering or close to flowering. You are growing fibre hemp for tall stalks (you want the plant to be as tall as possible). You have very short growing seasons (planted late in the season close to winter). Plants are under pest or disease pressure. Topping stressed plants can reduce overall yield.

### **Simple Week-by-Week Guide**

Week After Planting, Plant Stage, What to Look For, Action

Week 1 to 2, Seedling, 1 to 3 small nodes, Do NOT top yet.

Week 3, Early vegetative, 4 nodes forming, Start checking plant strength.

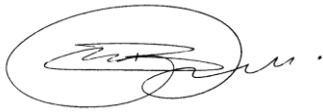
Week 4, Vegetative, 5 to 6 nodes, strong stem, Ideal time to top.

Week 5, Vegetative, Branching begins, Last chance for topping.

Week 6 to 7, Pre-flower, Stems thick, tall, Do NOT top. Too late.

Thank you

**Ben Sassman – Owner**

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a thin black oval border. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Ben Sassman'.

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