


What are cannabis terpenes and what do they do?

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There's something about the aroma of cannabis that soothes the mind and body. Whether it's the sweet fruity taste of Pineapple Trainwreck or that skunky smell that bursts from a cracked bud of Sour Diesel, we know there's something going on under their complex and flavorful bouquets.

Terpenes are what you smell, and knowing what they are will deepen your appreciation of cannabis.

What are cannabis terpenes?

Secreted in the same glands that produce cannabinoids like THC and CBD, terpenes are aromatic oils that color cannabis varieties with distinctive flavors like citrus, berry, mint, and pine.

Terpenes may play a key role in differentiating the effects of various cannabis strains. Some terpenes might promote relaxation and stress-relief, while others potentially promote focus and acuity.

Not unlike other strong-smelling plants and flowers, the development of terpenes in cannabis began for adaptive purposes: to repel predators and lure pollinators. There are many factors that influence a plant's development of terpenes, including climate, weather, age and maturation, fertilizers, soil type, and even the time of day.

Over 100 different terpenes have been identified in the cannabis plant, and every strain tends toward a unique terpene type and composition. In other words, a strain like Cheese and its descendants will likely have a discernible cheese-like smell, and Blueberry offspring often inherit the smell of berries.

Terpenes may also play a key role in differentiating the effects of various cannabis strains, but more studies are needed to understand how and to what extent.

Some terpenes might promote relaxation and stress-relief, while others potentially promote focus and acuity. Myrcene, for example, is found in many relaxing cannabis strains like Blue Dream and Granddaddy Purple. Terpinolene is commonly found in uplifting, active strains like Jack Herer and Ghost Train Haze.

The effect profile of any given terpene may change in the presence of other compounds in a phenomenon known as the entourage effect. More research is needed to understand each terpene's effect when used in harmony with others.

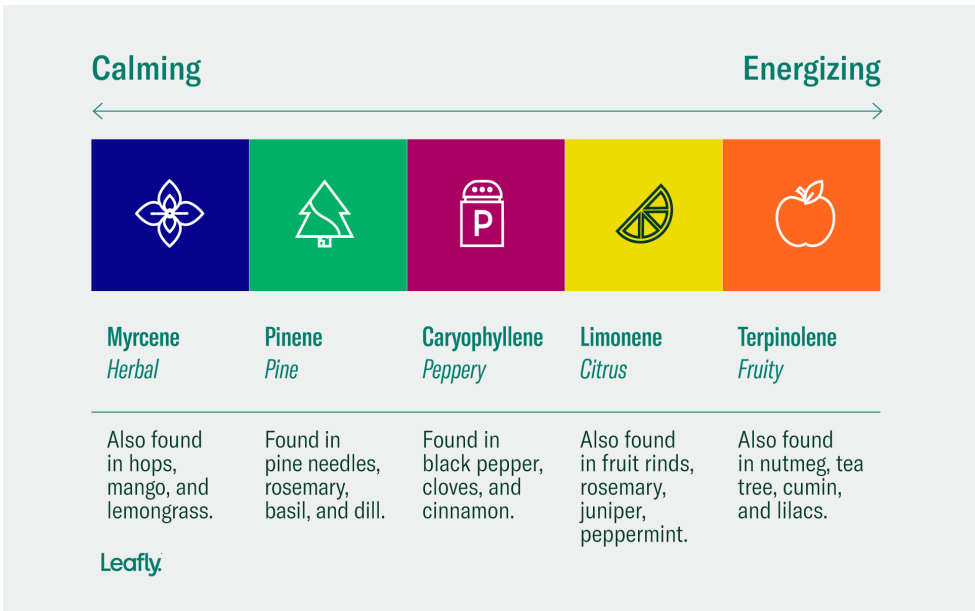
Their differences can be subtle, but terpenes can add great depth to the horticultural art and connoisseurship of cannabis. They may also add therapeutic value to cannabis, based on their unique medicinal properties.

Many cannabis analysis labs now test terpene content, so you may have a better idea of what effects a strain might produce. With their unlimited combinations of potential synergistic effects, terpenes will certainly open up new scientific and medical terrains for cannabis research.

Exploring cannabis terpenes on Leafly

Leafly’s Cannabis Guide provides a visual system for understanding terpenes in the context of each strain. Using data from lab partners, Leafly can help you determine the average terpene profile of many popular cannabis strains—and our list is ever-growing.

Common cannabis terpenes are represented by different colors, which you can explore in this guide. Some terpenes are more common than others, and some tend to appear in higher abundance on average. For example, most commercial cannabis strains are *myrcene dominant*, meaning the most abundant terpene in their chemical profile is myrcene. You may also find strains that are dominant in caryophyllene, limonene, terpinolene, and—in rare instances—pinene.



The five most common terpenes in the Cannabis Guide, their flavors, and other fruits and herbs they are found in; calm-energizing data is aggregated from Leafly reviews.

When browsing strains on Leafly, pay close attention to the colors of strains you like and don’t like. If you prefer myrcene-dominant strains because they tend to help you relax, look for strains that contain the blue color. And let’s say you’ve had negative experiences with caryophyllene-dominant strains like Original Glue and GSC; you’d want to avoid strains with the color fuchsia.

Most common cannabis terpenes

Myrcene

Mc



Myrcene

(MUR-seen)

The most common terpene in modern commercial cannabis. Believed to promote calming effects.

Also found in

Thyme
Mango
Lemongrass



Blue Dream

Other strains with myrcene

Granddaddy
Purple
OG Kush
Cherry Pie

Leafly color: Blue

Aroma: Cardamom, cloves, musky, earthy, herbal

Vaporizes at: 332°F (167°C)

Potential effects: Sedating, relaxing

Potential therapeutic value: Antioxidant; treatment of insomnia, pain, and inflammation

Also found in: Mango, lemongrass, thyme, hops

Limonene

TERPENE

Leafly.

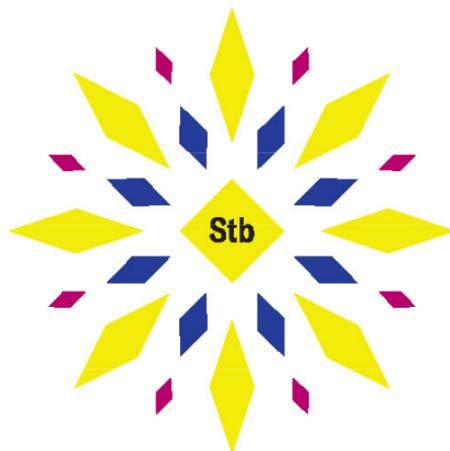
Lm

Limonene
(LIM-o-need)

Believed to
provide anxiety
and stress relief.

**Also
found in**

Lemon rind
Orange rind
Juniper



Strawberry Banana

**Other strains
with
limonene**

White Fire OG
Do-Si-Dos
Wedding Cake

(Leafly)

Leafly color: Yellow

Aroma: Citrus

Vaporizes at: 348°F (176°C)

Potential effects: Elevated mood, stress relief

Potential therapeutic value: Treatment of anxiety, depression, inflammation, pain, and cancer

Also found in: Fruit rinds, rosemary, juniper, peppermint

Caryophyllene

Cr



Caryophyllene

(carry-OFF-uh-leen)

The only terpene known to also act as a cannabinoid: it can activate our endocannabinoid system to provide anti-inflammatory effects.

Also found in

Black pepper
Cloves
Cinnamon

Other strains with caryophyllene

Original Glue
Purple Punch



GSC

Leafly color: Fuchsia

Aroma: Pepper, spicy, woody, cloves

Vaporizes at: 266°F (130°C)

Potential effects: Stress relief

Potential therapeutic value: Treatment of pain, anxiety/depression, ulcers

Also found in: Black pepper, cloves, cinnamon

Terpinolene

Te



Terpinolene

(ter-PIN-uh-leen)

About one in ten strains is terpinolene-dominant. Believed to have uplifting effects.

Also found in

Lilacs
Nutmeg
Cumin



XJ-13

Other strains with terpinolene

Ghost Train
Haze
Chernobyl
Jack Herer

Leafly color: Orange

Aroma: Piney, floral, and herbal

Vaporizes at: 366°F (186°C)

Potential effects: Uplifting

Potential therapeutic value: Antioxidant, antibacterial, anti-fungal, anti-cancer

Also found in: Nutmeg, tea tree, conifers, apples, cumin, and lilacs

Pinene

Pn



Pinene

(PIE-need)

Most common terpene in the natural world. It may be useful for pain, inflammation, or anxiety.

Also found in

Pine needles
Rosemary
Basil



Big Smooth

Other strains with pinene

Snoop's Dream
Critical Mass

Leafly color: Green

Aroma: Pine

Vaporizes at: 311°F (155°C)

Potential effects: Alertness, memory retention, counteracts some THC effects

Potential therapeutic value: Treatment of asthma, pain, inflammation, ulcers, anxiety, cancer

Also found in: Pine needles, rosemary, basil, parsley, dill

Humulene

Hu

**Humulene***(HYOO-myū-leen)*

Herbal aroma. May provide anti-inflammatory benefits.

Also found in

Hops
Wood

**Gelato****Other strains with humulene**

Sherbert
GSC

Explore more terpenes on Leafly

Leafly color: Light green

Aroma: Hops, woody, earthy

Vaporizes at: 222°F (106°C)

Potential therapeutic value: Anti-inflammatory

Also found in: Hops, coriander, cloves, basil

Ocimene

On



OCIMENE

(OH-sih-meen)

A beautiful, sweet, earthy, citrusy aroma frequently used in perfume.

Also found in

Mint
Parsley
Orchids



Clementine

Other strains with ocimene

Dutch Treat
Amnesia

Explore more terpenes on Leafly

Leafly color: Bright red

Aroma: Sweet, herbal, and woody

Vaporizes at: 122°F (50°C)

Potential therapeutic value: Antiviral, anti-fungal, antiseptic, decongestant, antibacterial

Also found in: Mint, parsley, pepper, basil, mangoes, orchids, and kumquats

Linalool

Ln

**Linalool**
(LINN-uh-lool)

Floral aroma. Believed to promote relaxation and calming effects.

Also found in

Lavender
Birch bark

**Zkittlez****Other strains with linalool**

Do-Si-Dos
Kosher Kush

Leafly color: Purple

Aroma: Floral

Vaporizes at: 388°F (198°C)

Potential effects: Mood enhancement, sedation

Potential therapeutic value: Treatment of anxiety, depression, insomnia, pain, inflammation, and neurodegenerative disease

Also found in: Lavender