

# What are cannabis terpenes and what do they do?

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 [leafly.com/news/cannabis-101/terpenes-the-flavors-of-cannabis-aromatherapy](https://www.leafly.com/news/cannabis-101/terpenes-the-flavors-of-cannabis-aromatherapy)

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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?

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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.



## Most common cannabis terpenes

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### **Myrcene**

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# Mc



## Myrcene

*(MUR-seen)*

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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**

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TERPENE

Leafly

Lm

**Limonene**  
(LIM-o-need)

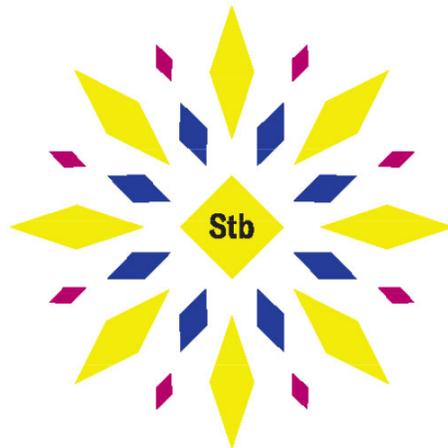
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Believed to  
provide anxiety  
and stress relief.

**Also  
found in**

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Lemon rind  
Orange rind  
Juniper



**Strawberry Banana**

**Other strains  
with  
limonene**

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White Fire OG  
Do-Si-Dos  
Wedding Cake

**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**

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## 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

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## 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

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# 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

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## Humulene

(HYOO-myū-leen)

Herbal aroma. May provide anti-inflammatory benefits.

### Also found in

Hops  
Wood



Gelato

### Other strains with humulene

Sherbert  
GSC

**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

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# 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

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**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**

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# 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