SkunkHouse Genetics - GT2 Setup Guide - Tricks, Tips & Hints

The setup and operation of the GT2 is quite simple as long as a few basic guidelines are followed. Assembly takes less than 20 minutes out of the box and can be accomplished by one person with ease, the instructions are concise and easy to follow. I recommend saving the box that the Towers are shipped in, for recycling as bedding in the compost column.

The first step in ensuring a successful and bountiful harvest, is selecting the proper soil:

- I recommend a light and airy potting soil that has sufficient drainage.

There are several ready-made soils available for purchase, such as Roots, Happy Frog, ProMix, Sunshine mix, or Wonder soil, which is a favorite of Garden Tower owners. I myself, prefer a basic blend of a few of the soils mentioned above, with a couple additional amendments.

The recipe we use in many of the Skunkhouse gardens, is as follows:

- 45% Roots Organic
- 30% ProMix HP or BX
- 10% Worm castings
  Wiggle Worm brand is our preference to start.
  Once the GT2 composting takes off you'll never have to buy off the shelf again!
- 15% Perlite (chunky or reg) to ensure proper drainage is achieved

The GT2 is also suitable and easily convertible for hydroponic use. We had great success filling the Tower with Perlite, rather than soil.

You may also prefer strictly organic methods, over bottled nutrients, in which case you would utilize organic amendments such as:

- Blood, Bone, Fish, and/or Kelp meals
- Galcial or Volcanic rock dusts
- humic and/or fulvic acids, etc.
  Which are then added to soil mix prior to filling the Towers

The GT2's ability to recapture and recycle the nutrients is a key to not only reclaiming and maintaining nutrient that otherwise would have been lost but also in generating a naturally occurring and perfectly pH balanced Actively Aerated Compost Tea (AACT)

The GT2 is truly a flexible and forgiving system, even for beginners.

The next step is to fill the tower with the soil you've prepared. The resources suggest filling and moistening the tower in sections, this is definitely the wisest option. After the Tower is filed to the desired level and the proper moisture is attained, you can begin placing your favorite strain in the slots.

Now the time has come to transplant into the Tower. I'll make a few suggestions that will ensure your experience goes smoothly:

- Start with healthy clones as opposed to cannabis seeds
  Unless you are familiar with the characteristics of Cannabis grown from seed
  This will ensure that the plants do not overgrow the system.

- Choose a variety that is Indica dominant
  Due to their compact growth patterns and length of growing times, as they are much more suitable for such a system

- Stick to a single strain. If you must grow several varieties, make certain that they share similar traits, such as growth rates, size, and flowering times.

Now that we got that out of the way it's time to start planting!

Begin by removing enough soil/medium from the pocket. Set the excess to the side to be returned to the pocket after the plant has been placed.

- Application of Mycorrhizae to the root system, prior to inserting the plant into the Tower is definitely recommended. I prefer Plant Success granular, but there are many options to choose from.
- After you transplanted your clones, replace the soil/media you removed earlier and move on to the next pocket
- Once all pockets have been filled (or as many as desired) you can move on to the next stage
- It's now time to water in the fresh transplants. I recommend using filtered or r/o (reverse osmosis) water, to eliminate any unwanted chemicals or pathogens that may be present
- Keeping your solution well aerated and between 50°- 65° F is also recommended to ensure a suitable PPM of D.O. (dissolved oxygen) is maintained
- Add your preferred nutrients, or components and mix well. After sufficient time has passed (15-30 min.), check the pH of the solution and adjust as needed
- My personal preference of bottled nutrient is the Pure Blend Pro line from Botanicare, but there are many options available
- Cannabis prefers a slightly acidic environment, and a pH of between 5.5-6.3 is recommended in most cases
- Adjustments are made using either an acid to lower pH (such as Nitric, Phosphoric, or Sulfuric), or a base to raise the pH (such as Potassium hydroxide). Allow ample time for the pH to stabilize (approx 20-30 min.)
- After the appropriate pH is achieved, water the Tower slowly starting with the top ring, working your way down until all rings have been thoroughly moistened. After 30 minutes or so have passed, remove the drawer and pour the contents back into the top of the tower (ensuring there is no loss of nutrients)
- The drawer will likely collect additional run off by the next day. This is a good opportunity to test pH of the runoff. Make a note of the pH, so that any necessary adjustments can be made the next time you water.

The most unique and interesting component of the GT2 system is the hollow column in the center of the tower. This is the (Vermi-) compost column, and it's a game changer! This feature adds a function to the tower that isn't found in any other system on the market. The ability to house composting worms in the system provides numerous benefits to both the garden and the grower.

Worms!!!?!!

The first thing you need to do is obtain a healthy "squirm" (colony, or herd) of composting worms. Red wigglers appear to be the most popular species for composting. You'll want approximately 500 or more per Tower to begin with. The populations increase rapidly, so keep

that in mind when placing your order. There are several places to purchase from, I was directed to Uncle Jim's worm farm and I was satisfied with my order.

- A very important part of keeping your worms happy is maintaining a healthy balance of carbon to nitrogen (browns & greens)
- I suggest shredding the cardboard your tower was shipped in, as well as brown paper bags to assist in maintaining this balance
- Before adding your worms to the (Vermi-) compost Column, place 4-6 inches of shredded paper/cardboard (Carbon) in the bottom of the Column, as well as a few handfuls of kitchen scraps (Nitrogen)
- I found that there is no need to pre-moisten, as the soil and greens will supply all the moisture required
- There is no shortage of information regarding preferred food sources for your worms, with a quick search on the internet. You should definitely familiarize yourself with this information, as there are some things you'll want to avoid (such as meat, citrus and dairy) Visit the Garden Tower Project at their **GardenTrainingProject** Facebook page for more information and to have your questions answered on worms
- You can now place your worms into the Column and they will get to work immediately
- Make sure to add a handful or two of browns, every time greens are put into the Column. As the roots expand throughout the tower in search of water and nutrients, they will eventually find their way into the compost Column. You'll likely notice a rapid increase in growth rates when this occurs.
- The flowers will really begin to swell and bulk up at around week 5-6 (depending on strain). I recommend increasing the nutrient strength to ensure the plants have everything they need for vigorous growth.
- Follow nutrient manufacturers instructions (when using bottled nutrients)
- Most have feeding charts available that break it down week by week
- It's generally recommended to flush the soil approximately 10 days to 2 weeks prior to harvest, using pH'd water to remove excess nutrient buildup.
- The soil flushing practice is much more important when using chemical fertilizers and/or growing hydroponically.
- If organic based nutrients have been used, this may or may not be necessary, depending on personal preference
- Flushing will typically cause the leaves of cannabis to fade, or yellow. Some strains may even change to red, purple or a variety of other fall hues or colors.
- Due to the nutrient rich vermicompost contained in the central column, the typical change in color may not occur in such drastic fashion

AND NOW…THE TIME WE'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR… HARVEST!!!!!!

- When sufficient time has passed (9-10 weeks), the majority of the pistols have died off and the trichomes have gone from clear to milky or amber in color, signaling that harvest time is near. I myself, preferred to allow the majority of trichomes to become fully mature and amber in color before harvesting, but some prefer to harvest a bit sooner

- This is a matter of personal taste ☺️

After harvest is complete, the Tower will still be filled with plant stalks and root systems. Given enough time (2-3 weeks), the roots will begin to decompose, and the worms will feast on the remains, leaving behind nutrient rich castings as well as aerating the soil. The stalks can then be removed without much effort.

- The compost column should be close to full by the time you harvest, and you'll want to remove the black gold for use in the next run. This is accomplished fairly easily
- First remove the plastic screen located above the drawer
- The contents may simply fall into the drawer, but it's more likely that you will need to push them out from above. I found a broom handle, or something similar to be the perfect tool for the job.

With a small amount of effort, removing the contents of the column is fairly simple.

After you empty the column, you will want to separate the castings from the worms, worm eggs, and undigested matter. There are several ways in which this can be accomplished.

I found the most effective way, was to construct two small frames with wire mesh attached. The first frame is used to separate larger worms and undigested food particles and should contain 1/4 inch mesh. The second is for smaller worms and worm eggs and should contain 1/8 inch mesh. Simply put the contents on top of the screen and shake gently, allowing the castings, eggs, and smaller worms to fall through into a tub, or tote.

The material and worms that remain on the screen can be placed either back into the garden tower, or into a separate bin for later use. After this step is complete, repeat the process with the material that fell through the larger screen, this time using the screen with the smaller mesh. Some eggs and/or newborn worms may be small enough to fall through, so you may want to pick them out later by hand.

You should now have several lbs. of fresh vermicompost, worm eggs and worms of all sizes, ready to go for the next run. Since you will probably end up with more than you need to re-enrich the Towers, You may want to use the extra in your house plants, garden or lawn!

When the time comes to begin the next crop, there is no need to purchase fresh soil or empty the Tower

- Simply repeat the steps from the point of transplanting
- Make sure to add some of your fresh castings to each pocket as you transplant.
  There you have it Farmers! A hands-on, step by step guide on the assembly and operation of Garden Tower 2 system. A truly unique vertical growing system, that will quite literally take your garden to the next level!

  I'm sure you'll enjoy your experience with the GT2, as much as I did.

  ~Jacky Nugs (AKA Farmer Jon) Founder and Executive Director of
  Skunkhouse Research & Genetics, signing off. - Keep it Skunky!