KEEPING THE PLANTS HAPPY

Mechanical design considerations for plant cultivation spaces in Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) facilities

IMEG

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Introductions

Controlled Environment Agriculture - CEA

- Encompasses all types of crops grown within controlled environments (buildings or greenhouses)
- Why CEA (vs. outdoor)?
  - Reduce variables – sunlight/weather, contaminants, etc.
  - Grow year-round, in any climate
  - Consistent inputs = product quality
  - Reduce transportation requirements
  - Security
- Today's focus is on facilities producing medical and recreational cannabis inside a building
- Topics applicable to other types of plants and crops

- Cannabis grow cycle/plant stages
- Critical infrastructure
- Water and energy usage
- Lessons learned

Agenda

Inputs for plant health and growth:

- Light
- Water
- Food/nutrients
- Carbon dioxide
- Growing medium

Photosynthesis

- Use of light, carbon dioxide and water to create oxygen and energy

Evapotranspiration

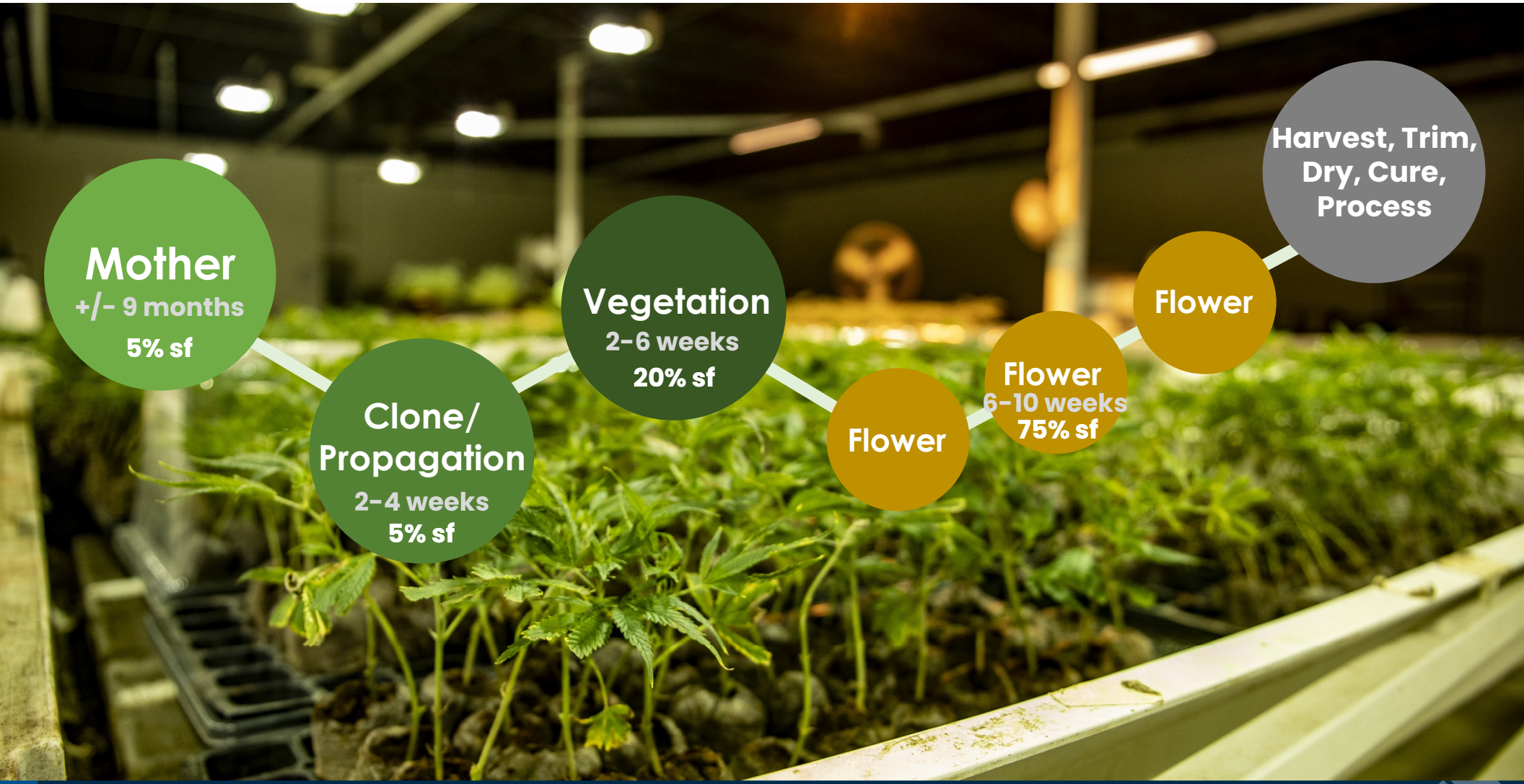
- Transfer of water from surfaces (evaporation) and plants (transpiration) to the atmosphere

Vapor Pressure Deficit - VPD

- Difference between vapor pressure in the air vs. plant
- Higher VPD = pull more water through plants
- Drives plant growth

Temp (°F) \ RH (%)	100	98	96	94	92	90	88	86	84	82	80	78	76	74	72	70	68	66	64	62	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	42	40	38	36	34	32	30	28	26	24	22	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	2	0
50	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3
52	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4
54	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5
55	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6
57	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7
59	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8
61	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9
63	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.1
64	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2
66	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3
68	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.5
70	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6
72	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.8
73	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0
75	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2
77	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.4
79	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.6
81	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.8
82	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.0
84	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2
86	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5
88	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.7
90	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.0
91	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.3
93	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6
95	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.8	5.9
97	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.8	5.9	6.0	6.1	6.3
99	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.9	6.0	6.1	6.2	6.4	6.5	6.6
100	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.8	5.9	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.7	6.8	7.0
102	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.8	6.0	6.1	6.2	6.4	6.5	6.7	6.8	6.9	7.1	7.2	7.4
104	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.7	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.9	6.0	6.1	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.7	6.9	7.0	7.2	7.3	7.5	7.6	7.8
106	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.7	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.8	4.9	5.1	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.9	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.8	6.9	7.1	7.2	7.4	7.6	7.7	7.9	8.0	8.2
108	0.5	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.9	5.0	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.7	6.8	7.0	7.1	7.3	7.5	7.6	7.8	8.0	8.1	8.3	8.4	8.6
109	0.5	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.3	5.5	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.7	6.8	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.5	7.7	7.9	8.0	8.2	8.4	8.6	8.7	8.9	9.1
111	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.8	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.7	4.9	5.0	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.8	5.9	6.1	6.3	6.5	6.7	6.8	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.6	7.7	7.9	8.1	8.3	8.5	8.6	8.8	9.0	9.2	9.4	9.5
113	0.6	0.7	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.7	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.5	5.7	5.9	6.1	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.6	7.8	8.0	8.1	8.3	8.5	8.7	8.9	9.1	9.3	9.5	9.7	9.9	10.0

Vapor Pressure Deficit



Grow Cycle / Plant Stages

Mother

- **“Breeding Stock”**
- **Large plants in pots**
- **Density: 4-5 sf canopy per plant**
- **6-8 months of use**
- **Health of plants is critical**
- **Hand watering**
  - ~0.5 gallon/plant/day
- **Lighting schedule: 18+ hours on**
- **Lighting density: 25-35 W/sf canopy**
- **Environment: 70-85°F, 40-55% RH**

Clone/Propagation

- “Child” stage
- Clippings from Mother plants
- 2-4 weeks
- Hand watering
- Higher light density than Mother
- Lighting schedule: 18-24 hours on
- Environment: 60-80°F, 50-70% RH
- VPD range: 0-0.2 (very humid)

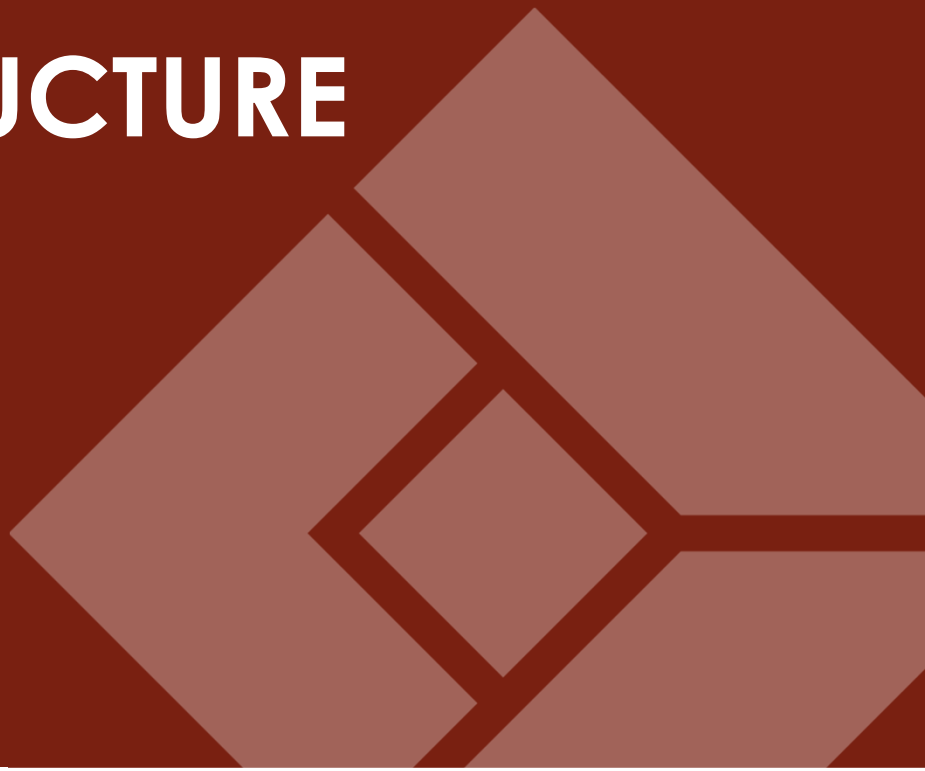
Vegetation

- **“Teenage” stage**
- **2-6 weeks**
- **Density: 0.5-1.0 sf per plant**
- **Hand or automated watering**
  - 0.15-0.30 gallons/day/plant
- **Light density: 20-30 W/sf canopy**
- **Lighting schedule: 18 hours on**
- **Environment: 70-85°F, 50-65% RH**
- **Specialized HVAC equipment**
- **Humidification for early Veg stage**
  - Less transpiration, equipment designed for dehumidification
- **Multiple tiers/levels of canopy**
- **VPD range: 0.8-1.1**

Flower Room

- **“Adult” production plants**
- **6-10 weeks**
- **Density: 2 sf canopy per plant**
- **Typically automated watering**
  - 0.2-0.50 gallons/day/plant
- **Light density: 60-80 W/sf canopy**
- **Lighting schedule: 12 hours on, 12 off**
- **Environment: 72-85°F, 45-60% RH**
- **Large latent load, heavy water use leads to large mechanical equipment/cost**
- **Large rooms = less $/SF**
- **CO2 enrichment (lights on): 3-4x higher than ambient levels**
- **VPD range: 1.0-1.5 (higher later in cycle)**

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE



- Large electrical usage compared to other building types
- Engage electrical utility early in planning phase
- Building space for electrical equipment, egress
- Grow rooms may require wet-rated electrical components

Electrical Service

- **Maintain CO2 concentration at 2-4x ambient levels in Flower rooms when lights on**
- **Control of concentration levels for various stages of plant life**
- **Space planning for large bulk tanks, or point-of-use containers**
- **Sensor monitoring and purge exhaust system required to meet OSHA regulations and fire code**
  - May need to filter exhaust for odors

Carbon Dioxide Enrichment

Irrigation/Fertigation

- **System types:**
  - Direct-inject
  - Batch mixing
- **Physical space for water purification equipment, holding tanks, pumps, bulk nutrient drums/totes**
  - Access to room for installation and/or replacement of holding tanks, delivery of nutrients
- **Trench drains to deal with run-off**
  - Separation of trench drains to avoid cross contamination between rooms
- **Reclaim fertigation leachate and HVAC condensate – additional infrastructure**

- **“Purpose-Built” HVAC equipment**
- **Recirculated air – CO2, contaminants**
- **Distribution/circulation important to prevent micro-climates**
- **Environmental controls are critical**
  - Temp/RH/VPD/soil moisture
  - Integrate with lighting and fertigation controls

HVAC Systems and Air Distribution

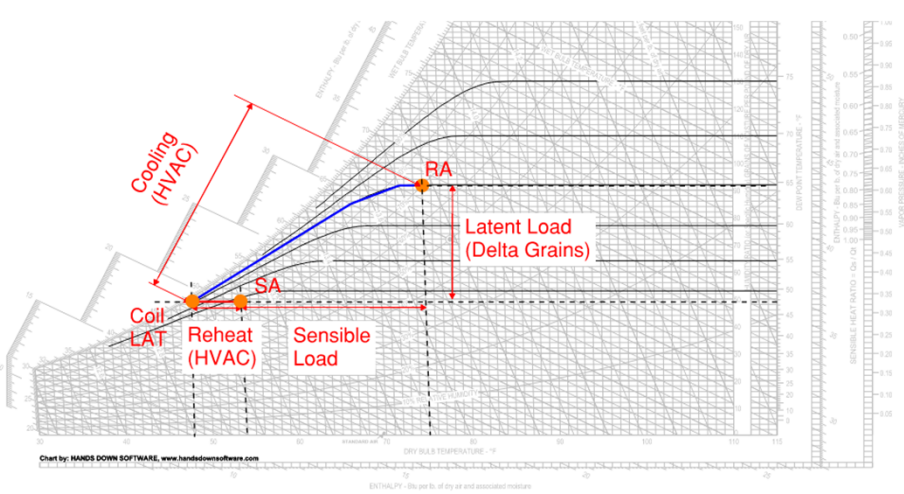
HVAC Determining Factors

- Cost
- Building Construction (New/Existing)
- Total Building Capacity

HVAC Types

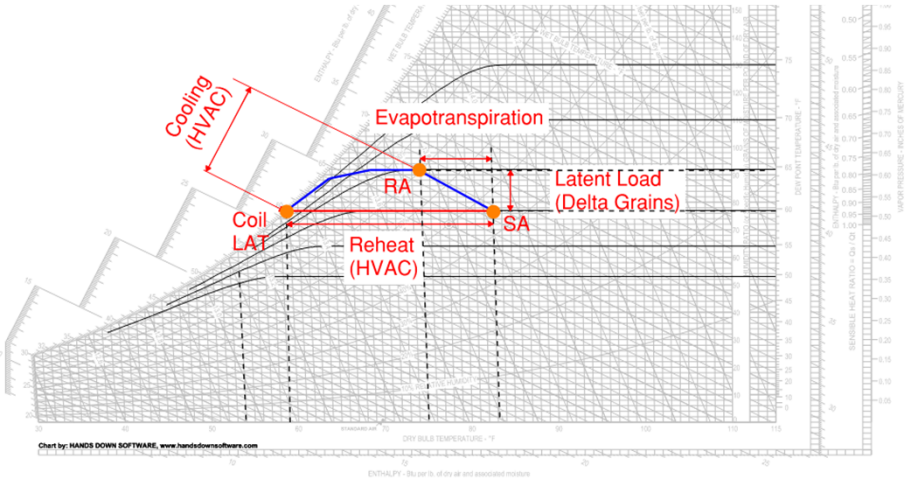
- Split system/Standalone DH
  - Low Cost
  - Lack of Control
- DX RTUs
  - Medium Cost
  - Better Controls
- Hydronic Systems
  - Consolidating Load
  - Diversity
- Redundancy

Lights On



- Typically Latent Driven Load
- Large Sensible Load
- Reheat may be required to not over cool the space

Lights Off



- Latent Driven Load
- Typically no sensible cooling required
- Substantial reheat required

- Grow rooms are generally a "room within a room"
- Well-insulated with substantial vapor barrier
- Surfaces: Non-porous, light-colored, washable
- Ceiling height for plant racks, lights, and HVAC
- Separation of spaces – reduce potential for cross-contamination

Room/Envelope Construction

Emergency Power

- **Emergency power**
  - Plan in place for loss of power
  - Utility reliability
  - Permanent or rental?
- **What to back up?**
  - Life-safety systems
  - Security systems
  - Some grow lights?
  - How much HVAC?
- **Early planning to determine physical space, infrastructure and budget**

WATER AND ENERGY USE

Energy comparison – other building types (kBTU/sf)

- Indoor grow: 900
- Greenhouse: 300
- Laboratory: 300
- Hospital: 250
- College/university: 150
- Office building: 80

Water use comparison – grow facility types (gal/sf/yr)

- Indoor: 200
- Greenhouse: 80
- Outdoor: 10

LESSONS LEARNED

- Ask lots of questions
- Speed to market / phased construction
- Flexibility for future changes / expansion
- Engage design and construction teams early
- Engage electrical utility early in planning phase
- Renovations of existing buildings
- HVAC system choices
- Know the local building codes

QUESTIONS

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Thank you!