



CASE STUDY

Cannabis Thriving under Illumitex LED Grow Lights at Sugarleaf Farm



Photos taken by Sugarleaf Farm's Mark Brinn show cannabis plants basking in the trademark pink light cast by Illumitex LED grow lights.

Mark Brinn had what many would consider an exciting and interesting job, working in the movie industry in Los Angeles. But he left it behind to launch Sugarleaf Farm, a recreational cannabis operation in Skagit County, Washington.

“I was working on the introduction to an aliens-destroy-the-Earth movie. In doing the research, I really started thinking about the problems we face, such as climate change and other environmental problems, and the political hurdles we face trying to make changes,” says Brinn. “I decided I wanted to be a part of the solution, and agriculture seemed to be a big part of the solution.”

Brinn discovered aquaponics and was intrigued. Despite hearing from numerous naysayers who said he couldn't grow cannabis with aquaponics, Brinn persisted, eventually developing a hybrid system. Felt pots filled with micronutrient-rich soil sit in wicking beds filled with pea gravel, with water running continuously through the gravel.

Brinn says he knew he wanted to use LED lighting in his farm. “The energy savings from using LEDs makes them an obvious choice,” he says. He checked out several manufacturers but eventually settled on Illumitex LED grow lights, citing the advanced science that went into the development of Illumitex's patented LEDs. “And I liked the fact that Illumitex is headquartered in the U.S.,” he adds.



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Significant HVAC savings



(We're in Austin, Texas.)

Sugarleaf Farm is currently running 18 NeoSol DS grow lights and 18 NeoSol NS grow lights. Brinn has 18 additional NeoSol NS lights ready to go online shortly. “We were able to get a huge discount via a grant from the energy company,” he says. Many local energy providers offer rebates for purchasing energy-saving systems.

Given that Sugarleaf’s crops are now cooled only by fans, Brinn and his team are also pleased at the significant HVAC savings the farm has seen. “I didn’t really realize how much I was going to save on my HVAC systems until it was already done. It’s a huge savings. It’s actually more than the actual energy savings from the lights,” he says. “Also, it’s less risk, not relying on HVAC to keep your plants alive. If your HVAC system goes down, you lose everything.”

Brinn also liked the easy of installation of the Illumitex grow lights. “They’re lightweight and easy to move around. They’re not bulky — they look nice in the room. With HID lights, you have so many cords,” he says. “It’s also convenient that Illumitex doesn’t have a (separate) ballast.”

The Sugarleaf team has come to appreciate the dimming features on the NeoSol DS. “When I first got the lights, I didn’t see much application for the dimming feature. But now I love it. I had it on 50% power on my Girl Scout Cookie strain for the first half of the flowering cycle. Insane power savings,” says Brinn.

Sugarleaf supplies four northwest Washington stores with product, and has plans to expand as more grow capacity is brought online.

“When I was growing for personal use, I used HIDs. I’ve sold all those lights,” says Brinn. “I’m all LED now.”

CASE STUDY JOB SPECIFICS

Customer: **Sugarleaf Farm**

Sector: **Horticulture**

Plant/crop: **Cannabis**

Location: **Skagit County, Washington**

Solution: **Illumitex NeoSol DS and NeoSol LS**

Results: **Reduced energy usage**