

ASK THE EXPERTS: SHADE CURTAINS



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QUESTIONS WITH MIKE VAN ZALEN

Shade curtains provide multiple uses—from reducing light pollution for your neighbors, as well as significant horticultural benefits for your cannabis crop. **VRE Systems'** Mike Van Zalen describes those advantages, as well as how to properly select shade curtain systems.

1 How can curtains be an ideal option for retrofitted structures?

Curtain systems for shade or light deprivation can be added to any retrofit structure, as long as there is adequate space for curtains to travel. This is different for each retrofit. Systems going flat, peak, peak-flat-peak or Quonset (ground to ground) are determined by the structure type. In most cases, the space needed for the curtain-travel envelope is about 12 inches for the sliding type and 16 inches for the suspended type. This space includes the drive shaft to move the system.

2 How should cultivators be utilizing curtains?

For most cannabis grow-



Truss to Truss Sliding System

ers, curtains are used for light deprivation, but it also is important for shade cooling and rebound light reflection, which enhances lighting and heat retention, and reduces light pollution (keeping your neighbors happy).

3 Can you share more about the makeup of the fabric that works best for curtain systems?

For curtain makeup, the more aluminum in the curtain, the better. This helps the reduction of temperature in the house, relieving stress on the plants and people working in the house. The semi-porous fabric helps condensation purge, allowing the house to ventilate. For shade curtains without aluminum, they can be used to diffuse the direct sunlight; this

allows the plants to absorb more light. And this also decreases the light stress on juvenile growth.

4 Why is it important to focus on complete closure when implementing a shade curtain?

Closure in all systems is important. First, for heat retention; this will give you control of the cool air above the curtains,

which wants to come through like water and will find its way in if not closed.

For light deprivation, make sure you have a positive seal at the leading edge of each curtain, closing into a rubber seal. Also ensure closure of the short ends of curtains, using a boot closure, which, again, restricts rebound light coming through.

5 Why is it important to have shorter spans between drive cable runs?

Having shorter spaces between drive cables will give you the required strength to close two-layer or three-layer blackout curtains. It also takes the stress off the drive, guaranteeing a positive seal.