

# Part 2: Industrial Equipment Manufacturers are Helping Cannabis Cultivators and Labs Stay Compliant

By Alissa Marrapodi

**A**s the cannabis industry burgeons, the intricate topic of cannabis waste disposal becomes more important. Because cannabis is a Schedule 1 drug under federal law, it may be determined hazardous waste, which means it must be disposed of properly in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations. If it's determined to be non-hazardous, 13 states currently have their own laws and regulations that require cannabis waste to be shredded—California, Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and Washington.

There are variations state to state, but in general, cannabis waste must meet three disposal requirements:

- Must be rendered unusable and unrecognizable.
- Must be incorporated with non-cannabis waste—the leftover mixture must be at least 50% non-marijuana waste.
- Must be disposed of as non-compostable waste (in a landfill), compostable waste, incinerated, or anaerobic digestion.

“One of the challenges with processing cannabis plants is the wide range of plant sizes, growing mediums, and containers,” said Joseph Boyk, technical lead at High Yield Solutions Corp. “Not only are processors shredding the plant waste, they are often shredding all the materials associated with the growing process. Large plastic pots, rockwool, coconut, pallets, cardboard, netting, and tubing are just a few of the items that shredders need to be able to handle.”

## Industrial Grinders and Shredders

Industrial destruction equipment designed to shred and grind cannabis waste enables labs and growers to render it unusable and unrecognizable. Customizable systems such as High Yield's Plant Muncher™ shred cannabis plant waste, both wet and dry, stems and stalks, root balls, rockwool, failed clones, harvest waste, pots, and containers with miscellaneous materials such as cardboard and biodegradables.



High Yield's Plant Muncher™

“High Yield offers both standard and custom design solutions for our customers,” Boyk explained. “We work to understand each customer’s destruction needs in order to provide the proper equipment that will not only handle all the materials their operation needs to destroy waste, but also ensure they are reduced to a size that is compliant with the regulations their state has published.”

The Plant Muncher shreds everything into a 50/50 mixture down to 5/16 tread width or 1-inch tread width. Whether the waste is going directly into a dumpster or a compost pile, the correct conveyer belt is assigned. Further, customers are able to designate whether their unit is for one or two dumpsters; they can also select a hand or conveyer feed, in addition to custom shapes (L-shape, for example), colors, voltages, and heights.

One key feature of the Plant Muncher is auto reversing—if a foreign object, such as a metal piece, is shoved into the feeder, the shredder senses it and goes back and forth three times to push the item through. If after three tries the object doesn’t pass through, the shredder will shut down to prevent any damage.

In the event a customer is unsure about the credibility of these machines, they can send product to High Yield, who then shreds it, video records it, measures it, generates an exact throughput, and sends it back to the customer to verify the features and strength of the equipment.

Another plus, these instruments are made locally. “Our machines are made here in Alpena, Michigan,” Boyk said. “Other than the motor, gearbox, and bearings, every piece of steel is cut, heat treated and assembled right here in Michigan. Because of that, we offer great customer service. If a customer needs a new part, I can drive 2 miles down the road, pick up the part, and ship it to a customer that same day. Everything is very hands-on. We don’t ship your machine and it disappears—we know exactly where your machine is every step of the way.”

Beyond parts, High Yield has a quick-ship program for customers who need equipment expedited for compliance purposes. Typically, quick-ship requests are satisfied within 48 – 72 hours. Stock shredders with custom features, such as custom paint and/or voltage, ship within two to three weeks, and custom-built machines ship within four to six weeks.

Navigating federal and state regulations for cannabis waste disposal can be tricky. But companies such as High Yield are making the destruction process easier with custom, robust shredders that help growers and labs stay compliant.

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