Terpenoid FAQ

How was my sample analysed?

Your sample was analysed using a method called gas chromatography – mass spectrometry, or *GC-MS* for short. This differs from liquid chromatography – mass spectrometry (LC-MS) which we used to analyse the phytocannabinoids in your sample. We used GC-MS because is better at identifying volatile compounds (which evaporate easily), like terpenoids.

What are all these different terpenoids?

Terpenoids, also known as isoprenoids, are a diverse class of naturally occurring chemical organic chemicals and are commonly found in all plants. Terpenoids are largely responsible for a plant's aromatic quality and flavour profile. There are upwards of 200 terpenoids identified across different cannabis genotypes.

Phytocannabinoids (e.g., THC/CBD) are a sub-type of terpenoids. They share a characteristic chemical structure and are unique to cannabis. However, terpenoids found in cannabis can also be found in other plants. For example, β-caryophyllene can be found in cloves, black pepper and rosemary, as well as cannabis.

Terpenoids have historically been used in traditional herbal medicine, and so there is an increasing research interest in cannabis terpenoids. Many people think that the terpenoids contribute to the 'entourage effect' in cannabis, the idea that whole cannabis possesses a greater therapeutic potential than its individual components. There is currently very little scientific evidence for this. However, there is ongoing research into the therapeutic potential of terpenoids alone, and in combination with phytocannabinoids.

What have you found so far in CAN-ACT?

So far, we haven't observed any consistent pattern in terpenoid content across the samples. This could be because the proportion of the other terpenoids in cannabis is dependent on many factors. These can include the variety of cannabis, part of the plant submitted, environmental/cultivation conditions and maturity of the plant.