

Soft Secrets®

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FREE

UK Girl Dealer

Tells all

Ozzie grower

reveals his secrets

General Hydroponics

Interview with the founding father

Durga Mata

Skunk X

Weckels' tips

Stephen Hawking's



Universe



Readers photos

Red Baron



Laissez fumer

Although we're a tabloid-format, a lively read and have a weakness for pictures of topless ladies, Soft Secrets UK likes to think that the similarities with our red top cousins from Fleet Street ends there. We obviously don't see eye to eye on the cannabis issue.

However, I'd like to take another leaf out of the gutter press handbook if I may and indulge in a little bit of EU-bashing.

The problem is consistency; not only do the member states have to combine radically divergent views on the safety or otherwise of cannabis, from the near-US levels of antagonism in Scandinavia, to the more *laissez fumer* approach of Holland; countries' dope policies are vulnerable to domestic political change.

All the more need for a coherent, and if common sense and the apparent will of the people have any say in the matter, progressive EU-wide set of policies.

So it's tentatively good news that in November 2003, Justice and Home Affairs ministers agreed on a Framework Decision aimed at harmonizing the national laws against drug trafficking. France and Sweden, concerned about their nationals travelling to the Netherlands to buy and consume drugs, have also pushed for action against 'drug tourism'.

The trouble is, the left hand of the EU itself as an institution seems rarely to know what the right hand is doing – at least when it comes to drugs issues.

Here's a recent example. The effective strength of cannabis consumed in Britain has remained stable for the past 30 years, according to a European Union study – the first ever - published in June.

"There has been much speculation on the strength of cannabis available today, but little in the way of hard evidence," said Georges Estievenart, director of the European monitoring centre for drugs and drug addiction, the report's commissioners.

The results are based on analysis of cannabis seized by the police between 1995 and 2002. The study acknowledges that there has been an unknown increase in home-grown cannabis, but that the strength of the THC in nearly all EU countries, including Britain, has remained unchanged at about 6%. The only exception was the Netherlands, where the average cannabis consumed had reached 16%.

Cannabis is by far the most commonly used drug in the EU. Indeed, the number of people using cannabis has risen sharply over the last decade. While acknowledging the need to conduct further research on the health impact of cannabis, EU foreign affairs ministers during their Council meeting in July nevertheless adopted a resolution on cannabis for a raft of actions to be implemented to arrest this trend.

These included setting up Joint Investigative Teams between Europol and Member States to dismantle criminal networks involved in large scale trafficking and distribution of cannabis; making the fight against cannabis an element of national politics and EU external relations; and introducing sanctions against Internet sites providing information on the cultivation or promoting the use of cannabis.

It will now be presented to the European Council for approval as the EU works toward completing its continental drug strategy. Of course, they cited "the high potency of some marijuana", possible ill health effects, and the role of organized crime in the cannabis trade as reasons for their resolution.

Local and national authorities are well aware that allowing consumers to cultivate cannabis is not leading to massive health problems. On the contrary, if you persecute them, conditions for obtaining cannabis become harder, and all kinds of problems start to arise which had disappeared with depenalization.

Fortunately, the EU resolution is a non-binding and is effectively a symbolic measure, with which the national and supranational policymakers hope to push the discussion towards the more repressive trends in recent European drug policies. Major discussions on a new EU Drug Strategy that starts in September.

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Page 3 Girl

SILVER HAZE

Although the cerebral high of the Sativa is preferred by many, indoor growers aren't too fond of this type; Sativas get very tall, take a long time to finish off and produce skimpy yields. Sensi Seeds has spent years searching for a superb Indica/Sativa hybrid suited for indoor growing. By crossing the Haze, the most powerful Sativa in the world, to a non-dominant Indica they managed to get the height and flowering time of the plant down to an acceptable level and still retain the unique Sativa qualities of the high. The result: Silver Haze, winner of the High Times Harvest Festival. Rather than top yields, expect top quality that will excite the true connoisseur.

Flowering: 65-75 days

Height: 150-180 cm.

Yield: up to 100 gr.



Photo: www.sensiseeds.com

PoBox 17250, 1001 JG, Amsterdam, Holland or E-mail softsecretsUK@hotmail.com

Dear Soft Secrets

Dear Soft Secrets,

I picked up one of your mags about four months ago and I'm glad I did - as an (almost) direct result of your mag I have just harvested two AK-47's and have one more and a bagseed waiting for the chop. These ladies were flowered under a 400W HPS, grown in soil using BioBizz nutes. Your mag has everything a great grow mag should - keep up the good work and so will we! Overgrow the world, **Bru, Devon**
Fucking A, Bru



Dear Soft Secrets,

This is something for the readers not to do! I had a slight touch of spidermite half way through flowering, sprayed spidermite killer on it not realising untill after that you're not supposed to use it while they are flowering and almost ruined my crop, and had to wait weeks for the smell to come back. **Danny, Essex**
Well Danny, thanks for sharing your misfortune with us.

Dear Soft Secrets,

Excelent paper, and free to us 'no bling' stoners. Four unknown seedlings in a home-made NFT system under a 600w HPS for 4-5 weeks. The plants weren't vegged at all. The lamp is suspended from a home-made light turner, and the plants have been spread to keep height down and density up. Unfortunately a female reversed sex and fertilised some of the bud!

Paul, Sheffield



They look quite scrawny, Paul, and that's because you dind't give them enough veg time. The result will be a total disaster; that we can assure you. Two weeks is the least veg time you should give your plants... Your mom dind't expect you to walk on the day you were born, did she?



Dear Soft Secrets,

Just a quick note to say 'Top Read'! Really enjoyed it. Unfortunately the last issue I read was issue 8 -2003. This little girl was a Bubblegum and Skunk #1. Only my second grow! Impressed? No?! Oh well, with them beautiful seeds you're gonna send me the prospects are mouth watering.

Paul, Staffordshire

Hey Paul, you may want to give your babies a shorter veg time next time around. What's up with the beard?

Hi

I just thought I'd send you some pics of my Blueberry, she's looking and smelling great after 9 weeks of flowering, just can't wait to smoke some now.
Mark, Ipswich

Lovely babe, Mark, she sure looks like a big yielder.



Hi Soft Secrets,

Here's a picture of all my lovely ladies, the plants are three C99 growing scrog style under a 400 watt metal halide, three weeks into flower, all from clones. Before I had to look everywhere for your paper and just two days ago my local shop got them in, nice one! Keep up the good work.
Aidan, Surrey

Aidan, we strongly believe this lovely scene is worthy of being drawn by a present-day Rembrandt or van Gogh. 'Two Brit babes (1 pierced) holding a bong and proudly showing of Soft Secrets in the master's grow room'.... How's that for a title for a true Dutch Master?

Hello Soft Secrets,

Very dissapointed!! My ladies posed for this photo 4 months ago - the plants are mainly White Widow (nearly all smoked now :)) and the next crop is nearly ready for harvest ummm Jack Herer this time seeds courtesy of SS !! So why my dissatisfaction I hear you all ask whilst scratching your heads. Well, it took me ages to persuade my special lady to show herself for your paper and you havent printed it!! Bloody gutted we are!! So come on SS allow me this oportunity to show the world my lovely ladies! Please dont send anymore seeds, I'm not trying to blag another freebie! All the best and keep up the great work with the paper!

Neil, England



Neil, you're dead right, we should have published this fine pic of the lovely lady with the sturdy girls a long time ago... To make up for things, we gave the pic a special treatment, how's that?

Attention Guerilla Growers!

Fancy a FREE packet of High Quality Seeds? Feeling up to growing Master Kush, Holland's Hope, White Widow, Oké 47, BlueBerries, Sensi Star, Jack Herer or Neville's Haze? Yes? Then send us a picture of your garden, and we'll send you the seeds. And should your garden pic contain a visible copy of Soft Secrets, we'll send you 2 HQS packs of choice. Wait, there's more! If your garden should happen to feature your topless girlfriend or wife, you even get 3 packs, of prime Black Label stock! (They don't have to show their faces.) Don't have a wife or girlfriend? Your dog is fine too (no cats!), but that's 3 HQS packs, not Black Label. Send all entries to Soft Secrets, PO Box 17250, 1001 JG, Amsterdam, Holland, or e-mail them to softsecretsUK@hotmail.com

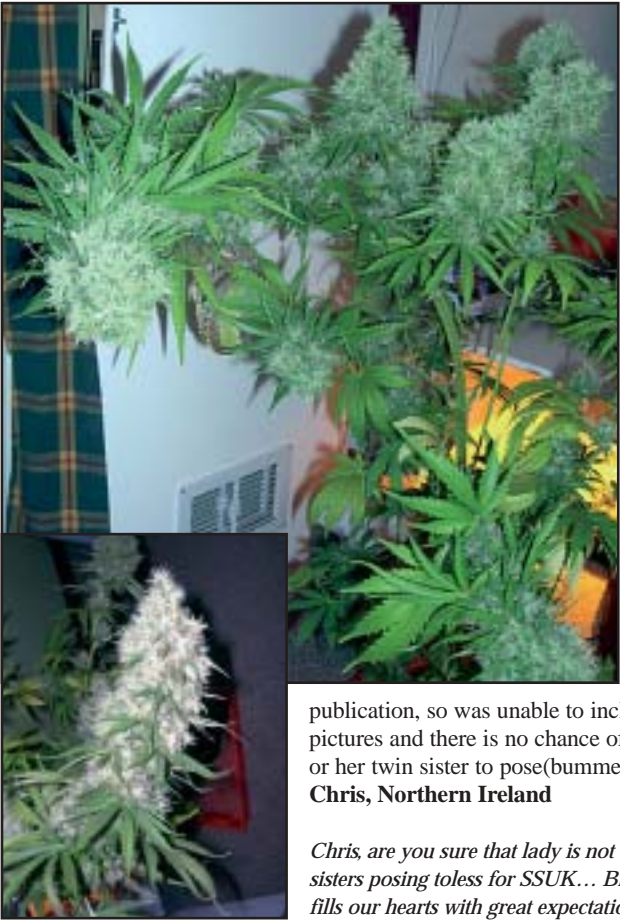
NOTE: only readers from outside Holland need apply! Naturally, all entries are handled with the utmost discretion. Names, letters and addresses will be destroyed as soon as seeds are sent.





Dear Soft Secrets,
Here's a few pics of my own grass Thai-Tanic, grown in sunny Scotland using hydroponics. Got a great yield (7.5oz) off of my first plant. Here's hoping for many succesful harvests.
Yours hopefully, D & M, Aberdeen

Lovely, lovely, lovely, but we have the impression that you guys haven't grown your babies to their fullest potential - yet. Keep trying and keep reading SSUK. Whassup with the futuristic bush hat?



Hi Soft Secrets
Here are a couple of pics of my first garden attempt, I started 10 seeds(Fourway and California Indica) planted in a soil mix of potting compost perlite and vermiculite, handwatered under a 400W HPS for the whole grow. It worked pretty well with no problems and produced 235gms from 4 females of pretty tasty bud! Unfortunately I had already harvested when I got my hands on your excellent publication, so was unable to include a copy in the pictures and there is no chance of getting my lovely lady or her twin sister to pose(bummer!)Happy Growing!
Chris, Northern Ireland

Chris, are you sure that lady is not a Hawaiian Indica? Twin sisters posing toless for SSUK... Brrrrr... The thought of it fills our hearts with great expectation... Need more clues?



Dear Soft Secrets,
'Thanks for such a great Mag' and it's free just like my buds. Here are pics of my first crop ever, not bad eh! What do you think? It's Pot of Gold, 3 plants in oxypots 7-8oz, 2 x 400hps lamps.
Phil, Wegan
We think they're pretty well manicured Phil..



Dearest Soft Secrets,
A statue should out-shine it's pedestal but in this case it doesn't! Your paper is the only thing that hides the shame I feel for these terrible buds. Please (seeing as the evil dr. Spidermite awarded Pussy's Galore lair, fellow growers look out for these villains!) send me some seeds to fertilize my bare grow room into a flourishing hot bed of young, nubile females.
Lis, Cambridge

You got a lot of fertilizing to do over there, Lis



Hi Soft Secrets,
Just a quick letter and picture from my first crop of AK47, about 3 to 4 weeks to go. Thank you for all the good tips, seems to be working.
Big Al, London

Yes, it would seem so, mr. Big. Wait a few more days and your buds get burned if you don't hang that lamp higher.

High,
Here is my first attempt at indoor growing, 3 Northern Lights x Haze grown under a 600w HPS using hydro method . Seems better than relying on the English weather like my previous grows have had to... They still have a week to go but are looking and smelling great. Well done on a great mag and the step by step tutorials have got me this far. Live long and prosper,
Bob, Manchester
Will do, Bob.



Hello there,
Thanks for a really good magazine. Enclosed are some pictures of my g-room + lady too. The big girl at the back is a Northern Lights - vegged for 8 weeks - she gave me 9oz dry, and her stem was a thick as your wrist - grown from High Quality Seeds too. The tank she is in is a huge bubble-pot that I designed. What a great hobby.
Ganjazzag, England

What whoppers! You do High Quality Seeds proud, mate, that we're sure of.



First grow, 400 HPS, DP White Widow, 57 day flower, harvested 8.3 oz. Can you tell me, is 5 months too long to cure? Respect to all of the Soft Secrets Crew. I love you.
The Widow maker, Essex

Buds need at least 3 to 4 weeks curing (drying) to really give the best taste and high. Curing even longer is better when done right. The buds need to be stored in a dark and cool place and completely airtight. Some strains need to be cured over a longer period of time, like the Blueberry. The Blueberry really gets a better taste when cured for months. So to answer your question; no, it's not too long. Buds can even be stored and cured for at least a year when stored in the proper manner.



Hi Soft Secrets,
Fabulous magazine, well done to all of you. This is my babe and I love her to bits. She took these plants from seed to blossom, incredible talent. This is our grow room and the plants are Big Bud. Trust me, with this you can go to heaven and back and the plants are amazing as well. Please don't ever stop doing what you do.
AT, Dorset
Well done, folks... But at least you could have had the decency to tell your lady to light up...



Dear all at Soft Secrets,
We really enjoy the read, keep it coming. Here's our Durban Poison plants, we are using 3 x 400w HPS in soil. Had serious problems with spidermite but my bird scared them away.
Cheers, M & R, Peterborough
Well, that IS quite surpising, she sure as hell wouldn't have scared US away.. Anyways, you better put some mylar or white plastic on the walls there, it'll guarantee a higher yield next time around.

Dear Soft Secrets,
My husband and I love your publication and like to get every issue. Here are my plants which are Sensi Skunk in organic soil using BioBizz. We've visited Amsterdam 6 times and we love your city and the culture. Everybody should visit at least once!
Bev, Gloucestershire
Yes, but you forgot to mention our world famous tattoo-shops: Buy 3, get 1 for free...



In the picture you can see my best yield of 5 oz of dynamite weed. I used a 400w sodium vapour lamp. This is my second attempt at cultivation.
Andy, North-East England



First attempt only used fluorescents. Think I need to try again. Old hippies now got proper light.
Graham, Aberdeen
It took you some time then, ey? What happended? Did you finally see the light?



Dear Soft Secrets,
Hope you like my ladies which were grown from Black Label seeds Jack Herer. Unfortunately they grew a bit too high...
Mr H., Cumbria
Are you sure Jack Herer likes Russian?



A big hi to all at Soft Secrets,
I think your paper is top-read and great for information. I gained a lot of knowledge from reading it and have been growing for about a year and a half. This is my last crop, it was a top smoke, all the boys loved it. New crop on the way, can't seem to get the knack of cuttings though, keep dying on me so am in need of some seeds.
Paul, Accrington
Paul, you may want to invest in a strong motherplant, she will give you all the cuttings you need, no matter how many times you fuck up





Hi there
We are dummie growers, and we have a crop of seeds that have gone MAD!
They are over 10ft tall, we have read your mag Soft Secrets, and they say you can cut of [or pinch out] the tops of the plants, to make them more bushy. We have done that, but they keep on growing taller and taller. We need some help!
Sabrina and Spike, England

Folks, you should top your plants when they are still young to keep them small. Still, when growing outdoors you will need to top them more then once. You can top the plants as much as you want, no harm is done by that. If you remove the headshoot of the plant at 60cm., normally this would make the plant branchy so it stays relatively small. For you guys, it's much too late for that. All you can do now is bend the branches. Attach a wire to the branches that reach the ceiling and simply pull them down. If you feel the branch will break, wait and pull it down more the next day. You will notice that you can bend a lot more. In this way you can lead the branches to the places you want them at. This will greatly increase your harvest because you can spread out all branches nicely, so they all get the maximum amount of light. Bending the branches has the same effect as topping. All lower branches will start to grow better as they'll try to reach the same height as the bended branches.



Hi Soft Secrets,
Recently picked up a copy of your paper at my local hydroponic shop in Dorset, and was blown away! Never realised how population herbing growing was! Here's a pic of my bird and plants. Citral with a few more weeks to go, grown under 250w HPS in a closet. Thanks for a great read.
Cyberpang_1 in Poole, Dorset

You're quite late Cyberpang, SSUK exists for over 2 years now, having educated almost a generation of new growers in the UK – for free. Welcome on board anyway, mate! But do spread the word that SSUK is here to stay!

Dear Soft Secrets,
This is the end result of 4 months High Qualiy seeds Jack Herrer and my first ever grow. I used Atami B'cuzz soil and nutrients, 2 400w sodium, Soft Secrets, and vegged for 7 to 8 weeks. Plants were 5 _ feet tall, true bushes. Excellent smoke, yielded 30oz, my mates and girlfriend were well impressed with my gardening skills.
M, Kent

And we're impressed too, what a nice SOG room this is...



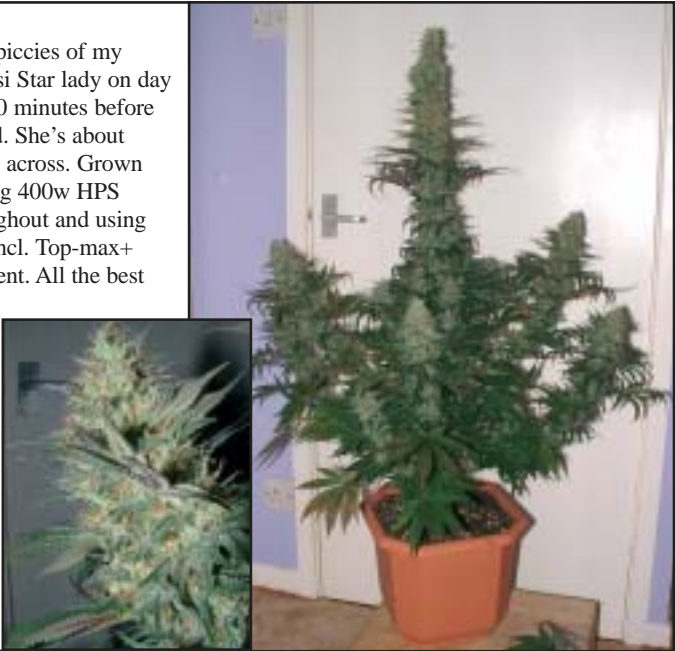
Dear Soft Secrets,
Find enclosed pictures of our organic garden, 250w + 400w HPS lamps.
Chills, London



Hi guys,
Thought you may want to see my aunt 'flo'. As you can see she's got a decent pair of... buds and by gum they smoke nice. From 4 little beauties (2 didn't make the grade) we got over 10 ounces. Not great but first grow and a lot to learn, but the quality is knock-out!.
Did, Suffolk
Did, you did what you had to do.

High there!
Here are e few piccies of my sensational Sensi Star lady on day 56, and about 20 minutes before she got chopped. She's about 31" tall and 30" across. Grown organically using 400w HPS Solarmax throughout and using BioBizz nutes incl. Top-max+ CO2 enhancement. All the best on a top read
Al, N. Wales

Fuck Al, if it weren't for that bloody doorknob we would have made your baby a Page 3 Girl!



Greetings from Tuscany to your great magazine!!
Here are some nice pics;the 2 green beauties beside my girlfriend are descendants of pure landrace Jamaican lamsbreed that I carried from the island back in 1986,real electric stuff!! On the other picture a couple of Sensi Stars,grown indoor under 3 400 HPS,total yield 1050gr. dry! Great strain too.I don't need to add comments about my girlfriend,do I?
IRIE,IRIE,IRIE. JAHMAN and GANJAGIRL, Italy

Well, you could tell us here mobile phone number...





Dear Soft Secrets,
Our first crop. One G13 grown in a custom made cupboard under a 250w bulb using NFT with Advanced Hydroponics of Holland 3 part formula. As you can probably see we let it get a bit out of control and we quickly ran out

of grow space (a few weeks less in veg next time). Still yielded 7oz of dried, very potent bud. Love the paper, keep up the good work! **Dek, Hill & Big D, Aberdeen**

It's hard to focus with those bastard digital camera's, isn't it? Or were you just plain stoned?



Hi Soft Secrets,
I'm so impressed with your paper, I went out and purchased a light and gave it a bash. The info was so helpful a mere novice like myself managed to grow a plant. Much to my surprise I ended up with 92 grams of fairly good K2.
Thanks for all, james, Manchester

You did well, James, congratulations with your first yielding girl!



Dear Soft Secrets,
Thanks for a brilliant and free magazine. Hope you like my plant but not sure what kind they are. Did you notice my Bradley Smoking machine? Great for slowly drying buds with good results.**Frankie, Cumbria**

Skinny bitches Frankie.. Come on, you can do much better than that, mate.



Hope you like my fine ladies in my growroom... This is my first proper grow (hehe), there are 4 Skunk Special and one AK/48 they are 29 day's into flowering all under a 600w HPS.. Love the paper, you's do a brilliant job, nice one people keep up the good work!
ajustanotherstoner, @uk420



Hello,
This is a picture of 2 of my Chronic ladies. I'm a first time grower so I'm pretty pleased with the results. Happy smoking to all my fellow cannabisurs in Europe. Peace from Sweden!
Jens, Sweden

Jens is a tough cookie, growing in the North-Korea of Europe. Respect, mate!



High,
We love Soft Secrets, it gets better every issue, that's enough arse licking, no seriously, we love it! I have run out of quality seedstock, so enclosed are some pics of your j.h.I grew hydroponically using the NFT method,which find the most productive. Also a pic of my no.1 Lady showing her assets, your seeds, my effort and experience.. Thanks and keep the faith.
PS These ladies were grown on a small NFT. It was hard work, after the 3 week flowering, they were drinking 8-10 lts of nutrient a day, the NFT reservoir only holds 20 lts.Then multiply by 3. It's my passion.The clones in the picture dried at 683 gms of quality. **Steve & Jan, London**

That's a fairly good result folks... Did you know that elite growers harvest 1 gram per watt? Now that's something to aim for, ey?



Hello,
This is my first time growing, they are about two weeks old. Don't know what they are but am happy with the results.
D & C, England

Well, WE know what they are: a pair of lovely tits!



Dear Soft Secrets,
Here's a picture of two of my missus showing off her and my babies. They were grown in 10ltr pots of coco, hand watered and had a full-blown attack of spider mites during flowering. I plan to try a system of drips in rockwool slabs. Can you give me any advice on number of feeds, amount etc.? Rather than actually drip feeding, I plan to flood. Same system as a drip, but instead of the drip ends, having nothing i.e. 6mm hose just running for a set time? Will this system be effective?
Mike, Doncaster

Mike, next time you might want to spray your plants with neem-oil, that'll kill the reproductive system of spider mites. Then finish them off with some natural predators if you can get any at your local grow-shop. Re. your question: the number of feeds isn't exact science, it changes in every room. What you can do is let your system run for a minute and put a dripper in a measuring cup. Then you will know the amount you give when you let the pump run for a minute. Then try to give 800ml-1l per plant in a day (not in night hours!). Also quit feeding two hours before the lights go out. The drippers help to get the moist to the roots down below. You will just let the water come out and maybe the plants will stay too dry. Just try it and see what your plants do.

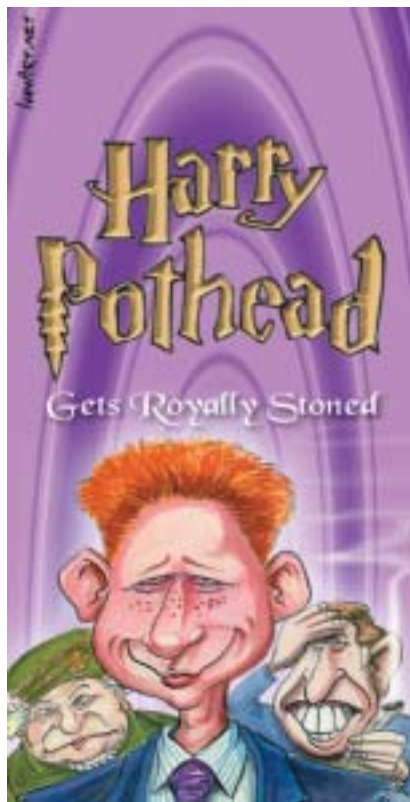


Dear Soft Secrets,
Congratulations on a great paper, you guys and girls are doing a great job. I'm sending in a picture of my little Super Skunk babies, that your paper helped deliver.
From a guerilla grower, Kent

Nice ones, guy. But maybe next time veg them for a shorter period so they won't become so lank but get bushier.

By Chris Marchand

softsecretsUK@hotmail.com



Spliff skins

For the smoker who already has it all, www.spliff.nl offers a humorous and unique alternative to boring white paper joint filters. Note to Americans: don't be afraid of these; they keep all the bits from being sucked into your mouth, and give you a guide around which to roll the joint more easily. Frequent faves are Bart Simpson, Dollar bills and Euro notes, the obligatory naked boob pics, and even Che Guevara for the more political potheads. When viewing this site, one can't help but think about aging stoners rocking out to the Grateful Dead while puffing from some porcelain breast/skull water pipe. Spliff.nl features loads of typical toker paraphernalia including glass, bamboo, and porcelain bong, blown glass pipes, grinders papers, and of course the aforementioned filter tips. Commercially, the filters are a cheerful way to devote specific menu varieties in pre-rolls, and add a touch of personality to spliffs shared with friends. Save yourself from coffeeshop (or basement) boredom by dressing up your accessories, which double as conversation starters. Stuff a towel under the door, jump on the 'net, and skin up!

View the catalogue in PDF or order online at www.spliff.nl.



Plasmapockets from Plasmaponix

In the world of growing, space is at a premium. It's rare that a grow-room is ever big enough to satisfy the grower's ambition and for many it is the smallest of rooms, (i.e. the closet,) that is the only place to house the precious plant(s). Normally you would size up a room by looking at the floor-space and working out how many plants you can fit in; but all that could change with this unusual invention from Plasmaponix. The Plasmapockets transform horizontal growing space into vertical space maximising the amount of plants you can fit in a room. The pockets are hung in rows and connected to the pocket above and below through the feed and drain tubes at the top and bottom. Irrigation tubing from the reservoir feeds the top pocket, which in turn drains into the one below feeding the next one in the connected column and so on until it drains away through the bottom pocket's drain tube. All that is required is a pump on a timer in the reservoir and that's it, gravity takes care of the rest. It's basically a vertical Sea of Green. Any medium can be used including clay pebbles, perlite, rockwool and peat moss. Plasmaponix recommend using 1" mesh pots or rockwool blocks to hold the plant so that easy access to the root system is maintained. In terms of maintenance all you need do is to check the clear tubes between pockets at feeding time and ensure there are no blockages and away you go. Once finished the pockets can either be washed and re-used or simply thrown away and cheaply replaced. Where this system really comes into it's own is in those areas of the grow-room that were previously impossible to grow in but still bathed in light, such as up the wall or in between existing plants. Imagine a regular grow-room with a Wall of Green all around or a closet with fifty little pocket plants. Plasmaponix claim to have the Worlds First Plasmacologist on staff so feel free to email any queries or questions and test their knowledge.

For more info see www.plasmaponix.com



The Unbreakable Tank Heater from AquarLine

Letting your nutrient tank get cold can have devastating effects on your plants performance at any stage of growth which is why it is a good idea to invest in a tank heater to maintain the perfect temperature at all times. Nutrient tanks are usually kept close to the floor in grow rooms, and as we know heat rises, it is possible for the temperature of the solution in these tanks to drop dangerously low even when the ambient room temperature is perfect, especially in the dark period. As with many products in the hydroponic industry the tank heaters we use originate the world of tropical aquarium keeping. This is no surprise as both hydroponic plant growing and successful fish keeping share common ground in terms of creating and perfecting environments to give the subject, fish or plant, the ideal conditions in which to thrive.

However, aquariums and nutrient tanks behave differently and sometimes these products are not ideal. Traditionally tank heaters are made of glass with a built-in thermostat on the top. This is perfect for fish tanks where the water level remains relatively constant and the thermostat is easy to access. However this is not always ideal for your nutrient tanks as the water level will drop and access can be tricky. Many a tank heater has cracked due to a forgetful grower not switching it off before emptying the tank.

This new heater from Aquarline does away with any of these problems. They come in three sizes, 200w, 300w and 500w to suit tanks up to 50, 100 or 200 gallons with an external thermostatic controller accurate to +/- 0.5°C and made of super strong stainless steel. They also feature a separate water and temperature-sensing probe that automatically shuts off the heater if the water level gets too low.

It may be more of an investment than the traditional heaters but how many do you want to break before you crack and go for the unbreakable?

Available from GroWell Hydroponics & Plant Lighting Ltd, Birmingham 01675 443950 and all Grow Systems Stores: (Norwich, Cambridge, Ipswich and Peterborough). 01603 662655



Hygrozyme

Enzyme treatments may not be new to the growing world but with Hygrozyme the approach is a little different. Up until now virtually all available enzyme formulas have contained living bacteria along with amino acids and enzymes.

Traditionally, enzyme products help perform natural processes such as breaking down dead root material and converting waste into useable nutrients. In many ways they attempt to recreate some of what is missing in a hydroponic system that would be found in the ideal natural environment. In order to do this the vast majority of products contain living bacteria and therefore negate the possibility of a sterile growing environment. Any living bacteria in a solution, however beneficial, are "dying" from the moment they are bottled giving the solution a limited shelf life. This means you, the grower, may be paying for a product that is working at only a fraction of its potential capabilities. Hygrozyme Hygrozyme doesn't have this problem as it is developed using a proprietary bio-fermentation process, made from all natural ingredients that produce a supply of bacteria-free enzymes and complex chains of amino acids. The solution is highly refined so you won't find any sludge in the bottle and it will not decrease in efficiency over time. Also, another benefit of Hygrozyme is that, as there are no live bacteria, you can go on using hydrogen peroxide (H2O2) without adversely affecting the enzyme formula. (With other enzyme products this is not possible, as the hydrogen peroxide will effectively kill any living bacteria in the tank rendering the product useless.) What's more Hygrozyme is OMRI certified making it an all-natural organic solution safe for any system and in conjunction with any nutrient regime. With Hygrozyme you get all the benefits of other enzyme treatments without risking crop vulnerability from raw, unrefined live formulas.

Hygrozyme is available from Greenstream Hydroponics, Birmingham Tel. 0121 426 2675 - and all good Grow-Shops.



Easy

A world first: The Easy's! This clever futuristic streamlined container holds a packet of large rolling papers and a book of filter tips. You just hang it around your neck and you never have to look for them again. Not only does it look cool, but it is so practical too. You will never have to empty all your pockets again searching for those elusive papers, only to start all over again just to find the tips. Now you can have all the means for making a large joint to hand. Easy's does it!

Info: +31 630 240 264 or E-mail postmaster@easydoesit.com





4 parts Screen grinder



Be prepared for a grinding experience that has never been there before. This specially created grinder with its four extraordinary ergonomic parts is able to grind, clean and filter at the same twist. The grinder is coated using an electrical procedure which applies a hard, toxin free layer above the surface of the grinder. The cap grinder works in a mixnball-typical manner, the propeller formed blades and the alligator grip structure make grinding as comfortable as it gets.

Little holes in the bottom part of the grinder allow the ground good to enter the main

cylinder where the stainless metal screen separates and filters out the pollen. The bottom part of the cylinder can be unscrewed very easily. This highly sophisticated grinder was especially designed to fit all your needs and even a bit more, it proves once again that the mixnball grinder family offers grinding at its best. The Screen grinder is the only coated screen pollen-extractor grinder in the market.

Available from all good grow-shops.

For info: www.mixnball.com Email info@mixnball.com

Container/pot AC 13.5 Litre

The draining capacity of this new pot from Atami is very important. Atami has succeeded to develop a pot with the perfect bottom. Thanks to the proportional horizontal and vertical drainage holes, the roots will have an optimal of oxygen supply and there won't be any substrate loss. This pot is extremely suitable for soil, Coco and Mapito. This AC 13.5 litre pot is quite large and is destined to become an instant classic in the growers world!

For info: Atami, +31 (0)73 522 3256 or fax +31(0)73 521 3259 or visit www.atami.com E-mail info@atami.com



Canna Terra Professional and Professional Plus

The demand for high quality organic grow products has increase so dramatically in recent years that it should come as no surprise that the big manufacturers are getting in on the act. As more information is spread throughout the growing world people are beginning to learn the benefits of organic cultivation, namely that when done properly, organic weed will far outlive its hydroponic counterparts in taste, flavour and quality of high. As more and more people turn to growing their own as a hobby and for personal, not monetary gain, the demand for the highest yield decreases and the desire for top quality becomes paramount. Nutrient manufacturing giants Canna have produced two new soils for this expanding market: Terra Professional and Terra Professional Plus. Both soils meet the rigorous standards set for RHP Certification (the Dutch version of the Soil Association Organic Certification), which means they are made up of only high quality parent materials and free of pathogenic organisms. Terra Professional contains a peat/soil/perlite mix to give an easy to use organic soil for the beginner and experienced grower alike while the Professional Plus holds a few added benefits that the more advanced grower will appreciate. Professional Plus is a remarkably light medium that does not require perlite as its structure and drainage properties already produce the perfect airy mix ideal for cannabis. Canna have paid special attention to sourcing the best ingredients; for example using a more expensive white peat from deeper down rather than the standard top layer. When exploiting peat the cheaper, more standard method is to shave the top layer of finer material. In order to extract the coarser white peat from further down it must be cut vertically and then hand turned to dry making the process more expensive and labour intensive. In addition to this, specially composted tree bark has been added containing bio-active agents to give a better resistance to infections and diseases. Naturally, for best results Canna suggest using their range of liquid soil nutrients, but as these are salt-based you may wish to use a liquid organic feed. Lets hope it's not too long before Canna bring out their range of organic feeds to perfectly complement their soils.

Available from all good grow-shops including:

Starlite Systems, Plymouth 01752 551233
Beaver Hydro, Dartford 01322 273 444
Grow Systems, East Anglia 01603 665622
GreenGrass, Nottingham 01623 755055



The HomeBox and DryBox from Ikon International



Not every property has a suitable place to grow in it, and not everyone is prepared to drill holes in walls or vents in the ceilings, which is why these self contained units have been emerging in recent times, whether they be simple frames and tents or disguised as a wood cabinet. The new Home Box is a high quality and remarkably versatile grow room that can go anywhere in next to no time. The frame is constructed from light aluminium poles and connecting pieces to form the box. The tent is made from a single, robust and tear proof piece of light and air impermeable material and is simply pulled over the frame and the zips closed to create your lightproof controllable environment. Flaps of material to prevent any light leakage by overlapping the zips whilst the inside of the tent is coated with highly reflective plastic foil. A particularly nice feature is the support in the top of the tent for a 100mm Carbon Filter and Fan, which connect to create a chimney that leaks no light but eliminates all smell. Air holes at the bottom of the tent allow fresh air to be

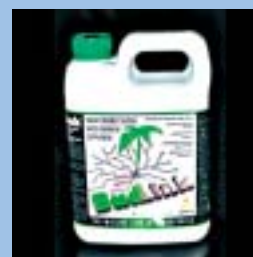
drawn in. The chambers have a floor space of 1.2m_ so a 400w HID light will happily cover the area while the reflective surfaces inside catch every lumen of light possible making these chambers particularly efficient. At 2m the box is tall enough to hold a reasonably sized plant in a hydrotop without it getting too close to the light. It's worth remembering that the light penetration of an HID is around one meter so in order to get good light coverage all over the plant a medium sized plant is perfect. Alternatively several smaller plants can be packed in if that's the method you prefer.

These Homeboxes are the perfect solution for the beginner grower who doesn't have a lot of space (or suitable cupboard) to grow in but wants a controlled environment that is easy to use and (just as importantly) easy to dismantle. Alternatively these chambers can be used inside an existing grow-room as a Grow or even Propagation chamber. For example, say you wanted to flower four plants at a time in your grow room. By placing a Homebox in there you can have your next four plants Growing on 18 hours light ready to be moved into the 12/12 flower room as soon as the current tenants are out. Also available is the DryBox, basically a slightly smaller version of the HomeBox made of the same durable materials, including the same attachments for filters and fans but made up of "shelves" of netted material to dry the crop on. This allows you to dry your crop discretely and effectively in the grow-room without fear of light, temperature or humidity affecting it, as it has its own balanced environment inside.

Available from Ikon International 01925 822503 and all good grow-shops.

Budlink from Hydroponic Generations

Budlink is a highly soluble silica based nutrient supplement with many beneficial properties your plants are sure to appreciate. When added to nutrient solutions silica will strengthen the cell walls of plants, increase resistance to disease and, in doing so, will ultimately increase yields due to the plants stronger structure that can support more weight from increased nutrient uptake and reduce moisture loss. However, silica has properties that are not always conducive to the regular hydroponic set up. This is where Budlink is special. The main problem with other silica additives is that they can cause huge fluctuations in pH levels, (indeed some growers use silica as a pH UP solution to raise pH levels in the system). For silica to remain at high concentrations in a solution requires high alkaline conditions (i.e. pH greater than 7). For this reason silica cannot be included in the composition of two-part nutrient solutions as precipitation reactions with other nutrient elements would occur, which is why a separate solution must be used. Budlink is not simply a potassium silicate (like most silica based additives) but rather a combination of different silica salts which makes it much more friendly to use. By having the silica in a separate formulation it is possible to use at just the desired rate without fear of causing imbalances in your nutrient solution. Research has shown that there is competitive uptake between silica and other element such as manganese and iron at the root zone of growing plants. This competition prevents toxic build-up of manganese and may actually increase the plants tolerance to high manganese levels or imbalances in phosphorous and zinc supply, further protecting the plant. Budlink can also be applied as a foliar spray and when used in this way will significantly reduce bacterial attacks from the dreaded pythium or powdery mildew by accumulating around the point of infection and promoting anti-infection compounds thus protecting the plant. Improved cell integrity from the deposition of silica also provides a barrier against insect attack. Organic Growers groups approve the use of silica for disease and pest control. Whereas, previously, silica has been known for its benefits to plant structure and integrity, it has never before come in such an easy to use solution as Budlink. Now even the beginner grower can reap the rewards of silica.



Available from: Greenstream Hydroponics, Birmingham 01322 273444
New Age Hydroponics, Lancashire 01254 661177 (#327)

Attention Manufacturers, Wholesalers and Retailers! If you would like to see your latest products featured on these pages then drop us a line at:
softsecretsUK@hotmail.com
and we'll be sure to take a look.

Growing for Dummies Part 5

Germination

By Bart B.

Now that we have finally got our growing space ship-shape, we're ready for the real work. Last time we went through the most important issues. After much research into the various varieties of cannabis, you have finally settled on one that suits you. Your space is made fire-safe and light-proof, and now only awaits its payload of green plants.

paper it is pretty easy to make sure that the seeds receive a continuous supply of moisture. If the kitchen paper is too dry you just have to add a drop more to make it moist once again almost immediately. It is important to keep the seeds moist but not wet. When you keep the seeds wet, then the rootlet will not go off in search of more water, and so grow more slowly, since it has all the water it needs right where it is, thanks. By keeping it

because it causes a minimum of stress to the seeds and the rootlet can dive straight into the medium and begin developing. Fairly clumsy growers can damage the rootlet during its planting when they are using the kitchen paper method. The best way of planting the germinated seed is to poke a small hole with your finger. Make this wet. Quickly lay your seed into the hole. Because the soil is nice and wet it is safe to press the seed gently into the soil without any problem. Cover with a fine layer of soil and add again a very small amount of water (10 ml). So that the seed can anchor itself, don't give too heavy a slurp of water; if you do, you risk washing the seed too deep and again exposing it to the risk of rotting.

a lid, one that's also called a dome. Such a tray or dome makes sure that the air moisture content remains high – so there's no reason to add more water until the seedlings emerge. I put the tray of course in the tropically heated cupboard at the right temperature, which being controlled by the automatic heating needs little-to-nothing more doing for a successful germination. You will see within one-two days, the seeds will germinate. After four days you'll have seedlings of several centimetres in height.

Light

What's important now is to make sure the seedlings get enough light. But it is pitch dark in the cupboard, since the seedlings germinate best in a dark environment, I hear you say. Well, once they have sprung up we need to make sure they get as much light as possible so that they develop as rapidly as possible in cannabis bushes. So remove the seedlings when they get to 4-5 centimetres high from their smaller sister seedlings and plant them in your medium of choice. If you have sown them in stone wool blocks you will find this transplanting easy, and the tender root will remain protected throughout the operation. The stone wool blocks with sprouted seedlings in them can now be placed one by one into your start-up growing space.

A good start is solid gold!

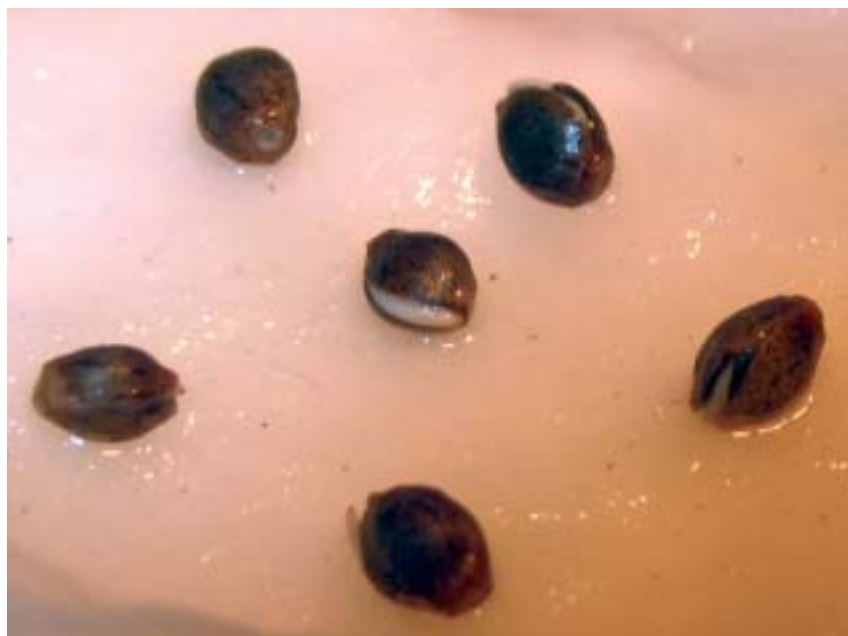
We are now a few days to a week further down the line and thanks to one of the above methods, we have successfully raised a few seedlings. Do not expect a 100% germination of all seeds; they are still living things and sometimes there can well be a few seeds that are duds. Always start with the assumption that this will be so and sow a few extra than you anticipate using. If they all come out, so much the better! The small seedlings will now be trying to develop into gorgeous green ladies as fast as they can. By putting them under HPS lamp(s) they will get all the light they need, and therefore the energy with which to grow speedily. The first week it will seem as if little is happening, since the plants still have very few leaves and an undeveloped root system. With the passage of time the plants will grow more leaves and in each case start growing faster and faster. The process is comparable to an old-fashioned diesel train that slowly starts rolling but eventually hits full speed. The leaves of the plant function as solar panels and the more solar panels it has the more energy it can produce and the faster it can increase its growth rate. Such is its efficiency you can almost see a change from day to day, with visible growth. It is very important in this beginning phase to make sure there is sufficient light, warmth and moisture. By keeping the moisture level high the plants



Stone wool blocks

Don't forget that with the methods used above the temperature plays a very important role in the germination success. An ideal temperature is for it to remain constantly between 20-25 degrees. Try to find a way to keep your seeds constantly above 20 degrees then. You can do this by using a warming mat, which is a small mat that you plug into the mains and which keeps itself at a constant 20-22 degrees. This is a cheap and effective way of keeping your seeds at the right temperature. I prefer to use a warmer such as the Bionair placed in a small cupboard. This warmer can be programmed for example to stay at 25 degrees, and because we have placed it inside a cupboard it has to do a lot less work to keep your seeds at that temperature. Inside your cupboard you will create a mini-tropical climate. Another method I still use because it so effective and easy, is the stone wool block method. We put the seeds in to stone wool blocks and soak them once with water laced with root stimulator added. We now stick the wet stone wool blocks with seeds in them in a plastic tray with

The art of growing consists mostly of the time you spend giving attention to your plants, and thus involves spending time with them.



Time then to whip out our packages of seeds and get to work. But how do you best set to work, to get these tiny, fragile seeds to grow without problems into small plants? That there are many different methods you already know, as you also know that everyone has their own favourite particular method. What do seeds need to germinate successfully? The three keywords are warmth, moisture and darkness. When we give moisture to the seed then the tiny root that is curled up inside the seed start growing and sets off in search of more moisture. Because this root rapidly increases in size, the case or hull of the seed soon breaks open. The first to appear is the fragile little root which may be small but has a strong ambition to grow as fast as possible into a fine cannabis tree. The growing power of a cannabis seed cannot be underestimated. Seeds have the ability to develop very rapidly; within just 12-36 hours of moisture being given to the seed the root will have popped out.

Kitchen paper method

One of the most common methods of germinating seeds is the wet kitchen paper method and its variations. In this, we lay the seeds on a damp, absorbent piece of paper or cotton wool. Thanks to the moisture absorbency of the kitchen

too dry you run the risk of killing the root. Getting it just right is difficult to achieve with this method since the kitchen paper is always either too wet or too dry. But it does work outstandingly well, though some beginners do manage to kill a few seeds in the process.

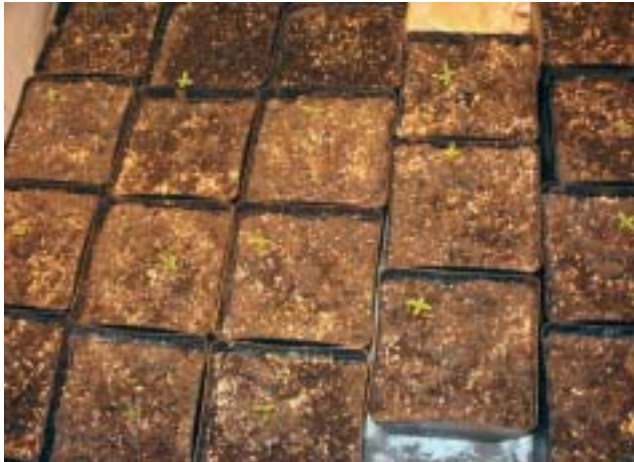
Direct in medium

A second method of germinating is to get the seed straight into growing in its intended medium, having first soaked it in water laced with root stimulator for a few hours. After this soaking, pop the seed straight into its soil, coco or whatever. We plant the seed 5-10 millimetres deep in the medium. By not planting the seed too deep it can quickly emerge into the light, and so begin to grow. Another good reason why we don't plant the seed deeper is that any deeper and it risks remaining wet for too long and the seed may start to rot. The upper surface of the medium dries out the quickest and so we need to take care to keep it moist. 'Moist' here means that we wait until the upper layer is drying out, and once this is happening, give it more water (and if using it, root stimulator). In other words, don't give the medium more water if it is still wet. If you do, you will keep the medium wet rather than moist and give your seeds a good chance of rotting. Some people choose this method

can more easily develop leaf cover. We can raise the air moisture level by letting the air extractor pump a little slower, or even leave it off in the first weeks, or we can use an air humidifier. As the plants grow in size they use more and more water and so their need for watering becomes greater. The used water evaporates out of their leaves and straight into the grow space, so this automatically keeps the air humidity high. In contrast to growing with clones, we do not need to hang the lamps too high over the plants, as seed-grown plants can handle the intensity of light better than a freshly-cut clone of a female cannabis plant. A seed plant would receive in nature the full strength of the sun on it, and has adapted to find this just lovely. You have probably read all over the place about having to keep your lamps hanging at least 60 centimetres above your plants when they are starting out, but then they were talking about clones and not seed-grown plants.

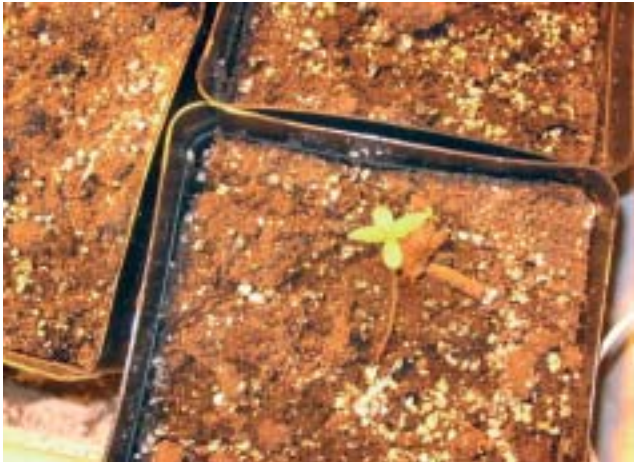
Feeding

So when do we need to start feeding them? This depends on the medium in which you are growing them. But certainly not in the first few days, whatever the medium. If you're growing in soil, this will have sufficient nutrients in it for at least two weeks. Coco by its very nature contains no nutrients and so after about a week you will need to start giving your plants food. It is very easy to see at what point your plants need food as they will ask for it themselves. After a short period the green leaves will turn a lighter shade of green, which is their way of saying that there is less nutrient left in the medium and now could they have some more please? As a beginner you will probably not notice this subtle hint, and if you wait too long then you will see the plants start to turn yellow. This really is not serious and nothing to get worked up about. The plant is making it very clear that she has a shortage of nutrients. Most probably a shortage of nitrogen, one of the most important building blocks for a good



growth development of the plant. By giving food to the plant you will see the yellowing leaves rapidly return to a healthy green. The shortage has been removed and the plant has replenished her leaves with all the necessary building materials. Depending on how serious a deficit, the return to normal can take a whole day, or just a few hours.

In order that you do not make things any harder for yourself than they need to be, it is best to start your first ever harvest in soil so that you get to know the plant better. Doing so means you do not have to start immediately feeding in the first few weeks, and you have less chance of screwing things up too quickly as a result. The grow period in which the



plant now finds itself requires that we have the lamps on for 18 hours with a six hours night sleep. This time schema matches the longest day of the year and normally the sunniest, the 21 June. We allow the plants to think that every day is the longest, sunniest day of the year.

Enjoy your plants

During the first weeks, when your plants are happily developing in their pots or tubs full of earth-mix, there's not a lot to do except enjoy the view. While in the first week you will marvel at how little progress seems to be made, from the second week on you will asking yourself how they can grow so damn quickly. The art of growing consists mostly of the time you spend giving attention to your plants, and thus involves spending time with them. Follow the development of them with care – especially the first time, you do not want to miss how that teeny-tiny little sprout so quickly transforms into a flourishing cannabis bush with the best quality dope you've ever wrapped your lungs around! Home grown Rocks!

Next time we will take a closer look into the vegging period.

It is important to keep the seeds moist but not wet. When you keep the seeds wet, then the rootlet will not go off in search of more water



 This series was made in co-operation with Plagron; visit them at www.plagron.nl



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By Weckels, the grow specialist from Atami

Skunk X

Thanks to popular demand, this time around I will be looking at a plant that guarantees success even for the beginner level grower: Skunk, the coffee shop classic with the incomparably sweet high. As a grower you have to make a right royal mess of things in order to avoid scoring a decent yield with a variety like the Skunk X.

For most growers just starting out, it is often the skunk varieties they first come into contact with, thanks to the fact that they do not place as high demands on the grower as the other, often much harder to grow, 'true' white varieties. Skunk X is a plant that can stand up to the most frequently made beginners' mistakes. Giving too much or too cold feed water, for example, is one of the beginners' mistakes that skunk can usually shrug off. But for even the most experienced indoor grower the Skunk X can deliver a good result, certainly when the size of your harvest serves to sharpen your growers' instinct. However, it's true that most indoor growers over the course of their careers move on to more demanding varieties (such as the Cytral plant that was discussed here in last December's issue), in order to broaden and extend their experience.

This takes nothing away from the fact that skunk still for a huge number of growers remains one of their favourites, and thanks partly to that it will be under the spotlight in this issue.

Bushes

Plants like the Skunk X are excellent for growing in soil; they grow fast, develop quickly and often bloom like a – well, like a very well blooming thing. Beginner-level growers generally plant their first couple of crops in soil as a way of getting the general arts of the grower into their fingers, so to speak. However, I will point out immediately here that growing on coco substrate can also yield excellent results when you're using a top-yielder like Skunk X, and if you feel like there might be a bit of a coco grower inside you, then it is certainly worth the effort to give this plant a whirl sometime.

For growing in earth we start with a pot of 25 litres or so. Precisely because these pots have so much room, the Skunk X plants can then develop into real bushes, and that translates into fewer clones needed and so lower costs. Why bother ourselves with a whole growing space full of small Skunk X plants and run unnecessary risks, when with half that number we can match and even beat the yield? The often small and therefore greater number of plants that growers frequently raise indoors in the hope of getting large harvests frequently means in reality high expenses. Thanks to this, this way

of growing has not for a long time been as lucrative as many people assume. The big disadvantage of raising many plants in a small space is also that the plants can end up competing with each other for the limited available light and nutrients. There is, after all, only a limited amount of space for each plant, and in the skunk varieties in particular, which love to develop wide and tall, there is nothing so frustrating as not having the room they want.

The fact that the well-known skunk sorts such as the Skunk X have managed to establish themselves as big yielders is thanks to the fact that these green ladies have an amazingly fat stem and develop heavy side branches, provided they are given the chance to do so. Whenever we as growers are in a position to give the Skunk X the chance (i.e. the space), then we have already conquered the first beginner's mistake

Feed

As for filling the pots with earth mix, I recommend going for lightly fertilised soil, so that we can remain in control of giving the plant sufficient nutrient mixed in with its feed water. You might say that a plant like the Skunk X, one that's almost bursting with its desire to develop to its huge size potential, is not going to turn its nose up at a bit of nutrition in its soil. But in fact a lightly fertilised soil will be plenty rich enough for its first two to three weeks, or pretty much the whole growth period in other words.

That this growth period lies a little on the long side is down to the fact that we will have left the skunk variety to get rather large, and so have given it a little more time in (pre-) growth. Do make sure that you make allowance for the fact that a plant such as Skunk X will continue to grow considerably more in height even once it has gone into bloom. If you are working in a low-ceiling space then it is worth stimulating lateral growth by simply snipping off the top of the plant (obviously, before it has developed buds of its own). In this way all the nutrients are diverted via the sap stream in the main stem of the plant to the side branches, which will in turn reward the attention by increasing considerably in side, which will later (during the bloom phase) translate into a much heavier weight of buds being able to be carried.



Even on the under-most branches you will find beautifully developed buds. We really need therefore to make sure that the plants are getting a generous dose of light.

Should you decide to 'top' your plants, do make sure that you do actually give the plants the chance to develop in width by making sure they have enough space on either side. Furthermore, we have to make sure to top the plants

at the moment that the top shoot has reached the height we want it to have. This may all sound quite logical, but there are still plenty of growers who quite happily clip the wings of their plants a half metre short in the hope that



The Skunk X often develops strong side branches, especially when we let her enjoy a longer (pre)growth. In this way the branches will be able to support a nice weight in buds.

The Skunk X has an enormous thirst for phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) during its bloom period

they will still reach the desired height. This often occurs when the grower has allowed the plants to keep growing in height a little too long, which makes a drastic pruning a necessity. Alas for the plant, in reality this trimming back of its height by a half meter now represents a severe wound, one which it will find difficult to heal. Excessive sap loss and a subsequent greater chance of mould infection in this critical, constantly moist spot (the wound) is the end result. So be sensible, and make sure that you only have to remove only the very top-most section of the main shoot. In doing so, the plant has sufficient resources with which to heal the wound and they will begin to produce scar tissue, which will keep sap loss to a minimum.

Light

To come back once more to the subject of earth mixes. During the growth period we give the plants only a booster, as a little extra nutritional support. We do this by simply mixing the booster with the water we give the plants. Although the Skunk X will not immediately hit the roof with small swings in the amount of booster of liquid feed added to its water (which we add at a later stage of its life), it is still advisable to use a small syringe from the chemist to determine the exact amount added. After a week or two or even three we pull the daily number of light hours we are giving the plants back to 12 and the plants will begin to bloom. During the bloom period it's a good idea to remove as many as possible of the large leaves. Skunk plants are well-known for the volume of leaves they produce, and that can act as a further drawback should they lead to any lovely buds being left in their shadow (where they will not be directly in the light from our lamps). Thanks partly to this, when I'm raising one



Here we can see once more the top of the Skunk X from close up. The weed smells not only nice and strong (the typical skunk odour), but the high is also superb.

of the better known skunk varieties I also tend to let them grow and blossom under relatively high intensities of light. A lamp of 600 watts is pretty much the minimum with which we should get down to business with, given the fact that their many leaves will serve to shield much of the light. Nonetheless, we cannot remove all the leaves (that would have disastrous consequences for the light uptake), and because we have given the plants a very generous period of pre-growth, it will not be long before the buds on the lowest side branches can also get enough light.

Enzymes

Moving on to the liquid nutrients we will be giving the plants during their bloom phase, it's best to go for the well-known bloom feed, and also add every two weeks some enzymes to the feed water to keep the salt accumulation down. As regards the bloom feed, we need a nutrient with an NPK level (as we call it in Holland) of 7:30:20. This golden formula is not well known to all growers, but the Skunk X in particular has an enormous thirst for phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) during its bloom period. When we as growers make sure our Skunk X plants have the above mentioned dose of bloom feed (mixed with water), then we will be spared yellow leaves and instead can look forward to a massive harvest. This also happens to be one of the biggest secrets surrounding the prize-winning Skunk X harvests, considering that all other dosages in which the quantities of phosphorus and potassium are lower almost always lead to disappointment!

Skunk X is a plant that can stand up to many of the most frequently made beginners' mistakes

COLUMN

Still more busts...

Joe Kane

At the risk of sounding like a stuck record, I'm going to talk about getting busted once again.

A friend of mine, it's not his real name, but let's call him Bob, lives in a high rise block of flats. He deals out of the house, grows a good amount of weed there, and also handles pretty big amounts of resin. He's no big fish by any means, but you know how these things go, readers. One day you've got two plants then before you know it the fucking things are taking over.

And so it was with Bob. Personally, I try to avoid letting the work thing overlap with where I live. Not keeping all the eggs in the one basket, you might say.

So anyhow, there's a domestic disturbance on the floor below where our friend lives, as some bonehead beats the shit out of his partner. Lots of screaming and crashing around, and the police are called. By the time they actually arrive of course, the party's over and everyone from the offending apartment has fucked off rather than have to deal with the old bill. The dibble, with thoroughness a

lot of people might find pretty fucking amazing, decide to do the rounds of the neighbours. When they get up to the next floor, there's old Bob sweeping the landing with a joint hanging out his mouth (this is a really fucking clever move for someone who lives in an apartment full of plants, resin cut into blocks, scales etc). So he gets nicked.

I've mixed feelings about this. When you live in a country like the UK where we've stupid fucking drug laws, you either try to not draw any undue attention to yourself, or you act like a tit as in this case. If you act like a tit, then you've got to take what's coming to you if you get busted.

But to get back to the story, the uniforms call in the drug squad and Bob's day just goes from bad to fucking worse. Bob reckoned he had, like, a kilo of weed, around ten ounces of resin (all cut up into various sizes of deals, just to make the job of the police a bit easier) and about 4,000UKP in cash lying about the place. Adding it all up, this lot is probably worth 15 years inside (did I mention that this wasn't his first offence? It just gets better, doesn't it?).

However, between Bob getting busted and being officially charged, a Key of grass has become 250 grams, the ten ounces of resin have become two

ounces (cut into quarters and eighths), and the 4K in cash has mysteriously shrunk to around 1K. Now when you add it all up, he's *still* looking at 15 fucking years. So we're talking about prison *and* being ripped off by the drug squad, which is a major fucking bummer for Bob.

Readers, I don't know what you think about this kind of behaviour on the part of the dibble, but I think it fucking sucks. Sure, Bob has broken the law (and whether you agree with the law or not is neither here nor fucking there), got caught, and is probably going to do some time. But what sucks is that the pigs can take the most of Bob's stock (750 grams of weed, 8oz of resin and 3,000UKP) presumably for personal use, and still put him away for the same amount of time as if it had all been there.

It's fucking immoral. Either bust him for the lot or 'confiscate' the lot and let him go. As it is, the fuckers get it all their own way: an easy pinch for the statistics and a nice bit of gear to sell on.

To paraphrase Raymond Chandler, in an ideal world, the police would be men of honour and integrity; in the real world, they have to take who they can get.

Later, JK

horribly_stoned_boy@hotmail.com

General Hydroponics

Soft Secrets talks to GH's founder, Lawrence Brooke

Interview by Charlie Stone, transcribed and edited by Kristie Szalanski

General Hydroponics was created in the mid 1970's by a group of American scientists, engineers, and technicians. Their goal was "to advance agricultural technology by a quantum leap." Over 20 years later, General Hydroponics is one of the most popular nutrient and systems manufacturers in the hydro world, and has factories in Europe as well as North America. The home facility in Sebastopol, California, supplies the NASA International Space Station, various labs and universities for research and teaching, and of course farmers and home-growers at a commercial and personal level. Soft Secrets had the chance to chat with Lawrence Brooke, the founding father of GH the family, at the recent Indoor Hydroponics Fair in Vancouver.

SSUK: Lawrence, first of all, can you give me your impression of this particular fair?

LB: This fair's a wonderful fair. We're here every year, and every year we're in a dominant position in the Canadian marketplace. It is very clear that our nutrients sell at #1 in Canada and in the U.S., and by a very large margin. Uh, it's a good fair this year, despite the fact that there's been a bit of a slowdown in this market in Canada.

And why is that?

I'm not really sure. Maybe too many people are entering the business, and a lot of people that don't really have competent products or experience are diluting the market for others. There are some who, like me, have been in the business for 26 years now, and others who are just beginning. Some who have very good products, some who are just trying to sell the same old thing as everybody else. Everything's logical.

Did you launch a new product this time around?

Yes, I have a couple of very good products. My new fertilizer, FloraNova, is a one-part growth formula and a one-part bloom formula. It's extremely concentrated: the use is 1-2ml per litre. The weight of this product is about 1.7kg per litre. It's a purified mineral-based nutrient with an organic humic and fulvic acid additive; it makes a very high quality crop with a good flavour. The growth rate is excellent and it's extremely easy to use because you need only to add one part to the water for each space that's above the line.

Ok, tell me a little bit about your business. Where did you start? How long have you been around?

Well, I started General Hydroponics in 1976 when I lived in Berkeley, CA. The company was incorporated in 1978 and my first product was the AquaFarm, which today is a big seller with my European associates at General Hydroponics in Europe.

Is it a nutrient?

No, it's a hydro system, a very simple system but very reliable with a tremendous track record. Our sales in North America are about 60,000 units a year of just the AquaFarm, plus there are all of our other products. But, I like to call it the "stone axe" of hydro systems: it's very simple, very primitive, and very

effective. The module that we make in Europe and France is very beautiful, it's very elegant. The one we make in America is more practical. It's more of an industrial system.

So how did you get into this business?

I was working for a government research laboratory in Berkeley: the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory...

Were you some sort of biologist or something?

No, I was actually a technician in mechanical engineering. And the distinction of our laboratory is: with 3,000 employees, we held 15 Nobel Prizes. Which is the most Nobel Prizes in the world for a single organization. I was the small guy in the mechanical engineering department, but consequently I was very well educated. We developed a series of alternate energy engines, using solar and geothermal energy, and I felt that one of the first applications should be for irrigation systems for crops. And so, I diversified, and found hydroponics, and I've never turned back. I'm fanatical. I love it. I live for hydroponics, and so do the plants that I grow.

And where did your interest stem from? I mean, were you a smoker?

Oh yeah! Of course! Back in those days I was on a government salary so I had to grow my own cannabis on the back porch as it was more practical.

And back then it wasn't the problem it is today? Was it more liberal?

You know, it's interesting; it changed with time. There are times that are liberal, and times that are not liberal. In the late '70s in Berkeley, of course, everything's illegal, but you know, it's a stupid law. These laws have no basis in reason. I didn't respect it then, and I don't respect it now. What can I say? I first started smoking cannabis in 1959 when I lived in Lebanon as a child, a long time ago, when I found my brother's "Arabic cigarettes." And then I started smoking more regularly in 1968, leading up to now.

Can you remember the very first crop that you were proud of?

Oh yes. In fact, my first crop I grew in soil on my back porch in Berkeley. And one of my engineer friends came over and said, "Well that's nice, but why are you growing in soil like that? Haven't

you ever heard of hydroponics?" So he described [the process] to me and I realized that I could understand it and it was simple. And so I made my first unit, which is the AquaFarm, where the water is driven by an air pump (using air pressure.) It is probably the most copied system in the world; you see people in every country making imitations of this. It gave me a wonderful crop that made me very happy. And then I saw that the real science is in the nutrients. First I had a NASA scientist develop for me a nutrient formulation after I had explained what I was looking for. Which were essentially a very powerful growth formula and a very powerful bloom formula. One of the keys to great success is to make a nutrient in the bloom phase [that] challenges the plant. And when the plant realizes its life will be short, as annual plants do, there's the need to reproduce and the plant grows very vigorously at the reproductive growth phase. Today we have our three-part liquid nutrients: FloraGro, FloraBloom, and FloraMicro. This has been a dominant product in all the world's markets. Which is to say every continent on Earth. We supply the U.S. Antarctic research station in Antarctica, so we truly are on every continent.

You started out by growing, you had technical experience, but did you have any knowledge of the whole marketing side?

It was very difficult in the first days. Hydroponics was an eccentric technology that people in science knew about, but the basic marketplace didn't really exist. And so in fact, we were not very successful. We worked hard; we tried. A small group of people existed that understood the value of this, and eventually I just decided: OK, I need an adventure. So I closed the doors and I went to Brazil for a scientific expedition in the Amazon, and I met a beautiful woman and fell in love and I came back married. After I returned from Brazil, it was really the beginning of hydroponics stores and business in North America. That would've been about 1984.

At what time in history or at least in your life did the home growing really take off in the U.S.?

Well, it took off about then- about 1985.

Isn't that a bit late? Not in the 60's or 70's?

Oh, yes, I was there in the 70's...

And at that time you could get outdoor crops from Mexico, or...

Well, weed from Mexico at that time was traditional. But then of course we found the Pacific Northwest. The growers in Oregon and Washington had developed wonderful varieties that lent themselves well to indoor growing. But also consider the advent of high-intensity lighting. High-pressure sodium and metal halide became commonly available, and with this it was possible to grow a very good crop indoors. And also it was necessary to use a more advanced method of hydroponics, which is to say the hydro systems that we make and which are copied by so many people.



Lawrence Brooke with his lovely wife at the Hydroponics Fair, Vancouver

When did you realize for the first time that you held something successful in your hands?

I had several realisations of success, and some of them were rather surprising. The first time I built my first hydroponics unit and saw the quality of the crop I was growing, I got really excited because I had never had such a good quality crop. I started actually growing varieties of my own. I was creating hybrids; a student from Nigeria at the University of California gave me some seeds from Africa, and I came across some seeds from Afghanistan and put the two together and developed a little plant that I called "Bushy." It was a beautiful little plant: very short, very productive. Oh, it was wonderful. It was very sad when that genetic passed away. And it did, and I miss it, and I wish I could have it back. But it was gone, and that would have been about 1978.

How did you get into experimenting with the nutrient ingredients? Were you trying this at your workplace, or doing it at home?

What happened was that I knew that I needed the help of a truly talented chemist. And I found Dr. Cal Herman. He received his Master's Degree for Chemistry from the University of Chicago in 1957. He later received his Doctorate of Science at the University of Paris in 1974. He worked for NASA for six years developing PhDs in electro-chemistry, and then he worked for 15 years at the University of California at Berkeley at the Water Technology Centre. He's one of the fathers of the reverse osmosis technology. And their project was to make reverse osmosis filtration for whole cities, to offer purified water to entire cities. This project of course was eliminated when Reagan was elected President, because Reagan wanted weapons instead of pure water for people, and so the better scientists said, "The hell with that" and then left. Dr. Herman was looking for something fun to do, we got together; I showed him my work in hydroponics, and my needs for a better nutrient solution, and he said, "Well, this is relatively easy."

At this time were you working professionally or as a hobby?

Oh, no, I was 100% dedicated. General Hydroponics from 1985 on has been

my job day and night, every day of my life, and Dr. Herman has been with me through this time.

When did you switch from being a technical engineer to a developer of plant nutrients?

That would’ve really been about the mid 1980’s, [around] 1984, ’85, when I put myself 100% into General Hydroponics USA.

What was in the back of your mind? Were you thinking, “I’d like to do this for the rest of my life,” or “I want to create a great nutrient,” or “I want to start a company?” What was the idea behind it all?

I knew that I had a technology that grew incredibly good plants, and I thought that was a really good thing. I know that people love really good plants and so I was 100% and then some focused on only that. And I have not changed since then; this is what I do. My company is dominant in the marketplaces that it serves now, certainly in North America. We are the #1 brand and our sales out there are much better than anyone else’s, certainly in nutrients.... In Europe, we got General Hydroponics Europe going in about 1994 and at first it was difficult because we came into a very mature market place against very difficult competition, and it took a while for the European market to recognize that we have a very good product to offer. Now our company is one of the star companies in Europe offering hydroponics techniques for cannabis growers and also for food growers.

Can you tell me a little bit about the evolution of your first nutrients compared to what you’re doing nowadays? The names obviously were different...

This is an area of constant evolution. In fact, we are always learning more and more. I give significant amounts of money

to the top agricultural universities in America, in exchange for which I get the help of great scientists and PhD students and some greenhouse space for our work, although none of the work is about cannabis. This is about food production for the world... which I honour highly, too. This is all very important, but a plant is essentially a plant. The difference is... there are great differences even within a single variety of plant. But I’m always active in science- to me, marketing and sales is always second to product development. We’ve had some very big breakthroughs. My partner William, who runs the General Hydroponics Europe, was busted for growing cannabis in California and deported. And my motto is “Revenge Through Success.” And I think the American government is stupid, and has been for a long time, and now the whole world knows how stupid it is. So William, when he arrived in France, I said, “We’ll make a General Hydroponics Europe!” And he developed a line of products based upon our work in America, and adapted it to the European need. In fact, I don’t recognise different nations, or governments, or borders; I recognize people on a tiny planet. We have different languages, different cultures, and different customs. We share in common that many of us like to smoke cannabis.

For people who aren’t in that field, do you think that the nutrients are following the improving genetics, or is it the other way around? Genetics are improving with the nutrients?

These are two parallel tracks that are completely unrelated.

Really?

Yeah. Look, the evolution of plant genetics goes back to the beginning of time. Plants evolve naturally on the planet. The evolution was accelerated by great horticulturists such as Luther Burbank who crossbred many varieties of plants and created may modern varieties.

Whether it’s the Burbank Potato, or the Shasta Daisy, or the Santa Rosa Plum, he was a great horticulturist 100 years ago, and scientists from around the world came to see him. He was one of the first people that recognized out of India a great spiritual tradition. And I have high respect for Luther Burbank, who is one of the great plant breeders. Now, today of course, we have genetic engineering, where we’ve unraveled the DNA and scientists play with life itself. And this can be frightening to some people; it’s a powerful tool to others. I think that in the beginning of a new and very radical technology the applications were very bad and very traumatic and very harmful. We saw that, for example, with nuclear technology. The first thing we did was make a bomb out of it. This is insane, but today we use nuclear science and it can be beneficial. If you’re dying, nuclear chemistry can help you survive. This application has some value. So, too, with genetic engineering I think we have walked into some very dangerous waters. Waters that I don’t think man has either the responsibility or the competence to be playing with. But in fact we have now unraveled the tool, and we have become more dangerous than before. Now, the development of nutrients is a different issue. Yes, we can adapt plants to a specific nutrient formula; we can adapt a specific nutrient formula to a plant. Certainly there is a symbiotic relationship, but I see these as different matters. I wish to follow nature. My experience has it that the closer to nature a system comes, the more appropriate it is. And so I respect and I honour the bio growers, the organic growers; but I also know that as a powerful tool my hydroponic nutrients often do not make those regulations. Keep in mind that regulations are made by *people*, and they change form place to place. In America, the regulations are very strict and they’re very exact, and one thing that’s not permitted is to purify the ingredients. And so now we find that the regulations require that all fertilizers are tested for the heavy metals content; heavy metals are very unhealthy, they’re very

bad: cadmium, lead, mercury; these are pure poisons. There is no quantity that is safe or appropriate, and we find that many of the organic or bio nutrients are high in heavy metals because they are taken from the earth in their natural form, and they’re not purified. ...If they clean and purify that nutrient, it is no longer organic. My nutrients are cleaned and purified. I know that the plant spends its entire life living in my nutrient formulas, and I do not want any impurities. So, [regarding] the definitions of “natural” or “biological” or “organic...” plants know what grows them well, or not so well.

Yeah, but you can’t deny that plants are being harmed by humans all the time- genetics are changed all the time.

Without a question. Look at the original corn that came from the Mayans and the Aztecs. The corn *was* a tiny grain, and now it’s gigantic.

Right, but that means that you have to react through action.

Exactly. You’re selectively breeding looking for one characteristic. If parents want children with blue eyes, they have sex with someone who has blue eyes. It’s a simple way of saying it, but this is the essence of plant breeding.

The question is: do the plants of today need the same treatment as those of, say, the 70’s?

No, I wouldn’t say so. I’d say we’ve learned a great deal since then. I think that the varieties we have today are absolutely fantastic. But I tell you something; the indoor varieties are typically derived from the indica strains. However, the plant wants to grow 20 feet tall, and that’s kind of difficult in a grow room. Consequently, I like tropical varieties [such as] those grown in Hawaii. **Well thanks very much, and I’m sure we’ll see a lot more from you in the future!**

COLUMN

Parental Attitudes *Dr. Dee*

As most regular readers of Soft Secrets will doubtless be aware, there is a considerable amount of nonsense written about drugs and those who use them. I’m still amazed (or maybe appalled is a better word) at the number of supposedly educated people who still buy into this myth that the merest tug on a grass joint will result in an inevitable slide into addiction and chaos.

On the part of a lot of these people, this comes entirely down to ignorance. Not that it’s any defence, but an argument could be made that they just don’t know any better. They’ve never used an illegal drug in their lives and don’t intend to start because they know (usually from what they’ve read in the newspapers) where that kind of thing leads. The problem is that they can’t or won’t differentiate between ‘recreational’ and ‘problematic’ drug use. There-fore all

illicit drug use becomes problematic.

This is why, when their kids get suspended from school for smoking a joint on the playing fields, it seems like the end of the world. Something minor, indeed something a lot of people would regard as a totally normal rite of passage, becomes a hideous crime dripping with stigma, on a par (in the minds of the parents) with incest or murder.

We’ve all been there, and I can’t imagine the monologue is any different than it was fifty or even a hundred years ago:

“You’ve really let us down, how could you do it? What will the neighbours say? We’ll need to move”.

One alarming recent development is the phenomenon of the Boot Camp for dope smoking delinquents. Anxious parents pay silly money to have their kids taken off their hands and – basically – reprogrammed to be better citizens. Unsurprisingly, this is an American import.

Parents need to know that – in most cases – smoking a bit of dope is as far as the relationship with drugs will go. Sure, they’ll try this and that along the way, but the chances are that dope is the only one that will remain a constant throughout the lives of their kids.

In fact, there’s evidence that a lot of dope smokers will not only quit (or ‘grow out’ of it) after a period of time, but will in some cases deny ever having used it in the first place. The rite of passage becomes a guilty secret, and something to be shut away in a dark room and never referred to again. We aren’t sure how prevalent this denial of a drug using past is, but in our experience it tends to be the youthful slacker who has become the thirty something business tycoon.

The irony here of course is that the former cannabis addled slacker has turned into the ‘concerned’ parent: precisely the person they despised when they were 16 themselves. One would have thought that, of all people, former recreational drug users would know the score and take a less

hysterical view towards their own kids smoking a bit of weed. It’s bullshit and hypocrisy, of course, and kids have a tendency to see right through it. And parents of this sort should be warned that the past has a habit of coming back and biting you in the butt when you least expect it.

It’s our experience however, that parents who currently use themselves (or more correctly, who never stopped) have a healthier attitude towards this. But of course, you can never generalise, and it really depends on the parent. I’d have to say though, that the more balanced and responsible young drug users come in the main (but again, you can’t generalise) from families where one or both parents are balanced and responsible users themselves.

And of course, such parents can produce kids who rarely, if ever, touch the stuff. Or is that only in Holland? Now there’s a real irony!

Any comments? Contact me at dimethyltryptamine777@hotmail.com

Beating the heat

Managing heat and water stress

Heat and water stress and pests can slow your grow show to a crawl in hot weather. Every year even the best growers forget about the long hot days of summer. Often symptoms of heat stress are subtle and less experienced growers will not notice the damage caused until it is too late. Understanding what happens inside plants will help you solve many heat-related problems before they slow garden growth. Couple this information with an knowledge of microclimates and you will be able to keep your garden, both indoors and outdoors, a few degrees cooler. In many cases, just a few degrees will increase harvests substantially.

Hot weather changes the processes inside plants. When the temperature outside is 20 degrees C., the temperature inside leaves is about 5 degree warmer. The temperature can climb inside leaf surfaces to more than 10 degrees warmer than leaf surfaces. When temperatures raise plants use a lot more water to stay cool. The increase in water consumption puts stress on all plant systems. When this stress is left unchecked, growth slows substantially, causing plants to become susceptible to disease and pest attacks.

Cannabis plants draw water up through roots into the foliage. The water serves to cool plant tissue and move substances inside the plant. Tiny pores on leaf undersides called stomata open and close to regulate the flow of moisture that is released in the form of water vapor. This transpiration of water keeps plants cool, similar to the way humans cool themselves when sweating. Plants use the same amount of fertilizer as they did before hot weather, but they use more water. Often water consumption can double when growing in containers outdoors or in a hot indoor room. This change in water consumption can cause severe growth problems both indoors and outdoors.

Add a little bit of wind and water consumption via transpiration increases rapidly. Rooftop balcony and patio gardens are the most susceptible to moisture loss caused by wind. Often the indoor growers increase air circulation and ventilation to help cool plants. The added ventilation and air circulation help plants stay cool on hot days. It also causes them to use more water.

Air also holds more moisture when the temperature climbs, which causes relative humidity to decrease. Lower relative humidity also causes plants to transpire more moisture and use more water.

Containers and growing mediums also tend to stay warmer during hot

weather. Chemical processes occur faster in warm growing mediums and more water is used. Once soil temperature climbs above 25-30 degrees, growth slows rapidly. Outdoors or indoors under HID lights, container temperatures can easily climb beyond 30 degrees. A container on a hot patio can easily climb to 40 degrees or more in less than an hour of full sun. Temperatures this hot actually cook roots. Once cooked, roots cannot absorb water and nutrients, even though water is available in the growing medium. Dead roots start to rot immediately and invite pests and diseases. Once cooked, roots take several weeks to grow back providing conditions are perfect.

When water consumption increases, fertilizer consumption stays about the same. Lowering the fertilizer concentration is very important now to keep nutrient salts from building up in the soil. When nutrient salts build up in the soil, the ability of the roots to draw in water via osmosis decreases. In fact, the ability of roots to extract water from the soil decreases proportionately to the buildup of toxic salts. The more over-fertilized the soil or hydroponic medium, the less water plants can draw in.

Ensure against toxic nutrient buildup in soil by diluting fertilizer concentration according to manufactures specifications. Also allow at least 20 percent water to flow out the bottom of the container for each watering. Twenty percent is a lot of water, but applying enough to allow adequate drainage from containers will really save you a lot of problems later. Take a look at the list of problems above and you can see that under-watering can be caused by several things at once. When all of them are compounded, they have a synergistic effect on retarding plant growth.

What are the symptoms of heat stress? If you said plants wilt, good! But, by the time plants wilt, the damage is well underway. Subtle differences will appear first. The first symptom – limited fluid movement from water stress – will occur within the plant and you will not see it. The first outward sign of dehydration in plant tissue manifests by leaf edges turning slightly upwards. Leaf edges turn up slightly because they dissipate moisture there the fastest. When leaves do not have enough moisture to transpire, the edges turn up trying to shed as much water as possible. However, an excess of potassium (K) can also cause leaf edges to turn upward. Potassium toxicity is difficult to diagnose because it is usually mixed with the deficiency symptoms of other nutrients. Too much potassium impairs and slows the absorption of magnesium, manganese



This grower put a bamboo fence around his garden. The bamboo wall blocked wind and the neighbor's view. The bamboo fence lets just enough air through to provide air circulation and at the same time blocked the majority of desiccating wind



A plastic roof blocked some of the midday sun to help keep plants cooler on his terrace. The grower left air space below the roof to allow for air circulation, which helped keep garden cool too.



Planting in the shade will keep plants cool in hot weather. Although this plant receives less light and grew smaller, it produced some nice smoke.



After plants get big enough foliage shades containers from hot sunlight, which would cook roots and stunt growth.

and sometimes zinc and iron. Look for signs of toxic potassium buildup when symptoms of magnesium, manganese, zinc and iron deficiencies appear. These symptoms normally appear after plants have suffered water stress.

Soil may be wet and still not be able to supply enough water to roots. This is most often caused by a toxic buildup of (nutrient) salts in the growing medium. When fertilizer salts and salts dissolved in water build up, roots are unable to absorb water and nutrients. Sodium is the worst dissolved solid in water. When just 50 PPM (parts per million) sodium are in the water, roots are able to take in very little water and nutrients.

The first outward sign is droopy leaves. Plants wilt as the condition progresses.

The best way to avoid nutrient buildup is to use a fast-draining growing medium and keep allow plenty of drainage. These mediums have adequate air space to make the uptake of nutrients and water faster. Such mediums are difficult to over-water and give the grower much more control.

Roots take up water and nutrients in the presence of oxygen (air). Without enough air available in the root zone, roots cannot function properly. If the level of water is too high, most of the air to be forced out of the growing

A container on a hot patio can easily climb to 40 degrees or more in less than an hour of full sun. Temperatures this hot actually cook roots.



Beautiful Jack Herer bud in full bloom is the reward for keeping outdoor grow shows cool.

medium and roots soon rot. Interesting enough, when excess salts build up in the growing medium and roots cannot absorb enough water, plants will soon show signs of drying out, even though there is more than enough water in the container. If roots are also fried in a hot container under the blazing sun, problems are further compounded.

Some soilless mixes that hold a lot of air drain quickly and retain moisture well include high-quality coco peat or coir, peat moss mixed with vermiculite and rockwool. Often grow stores will have their own special organic soil or soilless mix that works well in local conditions. You can also find great soilless mixes at discount and wholesale nursery stores. If you plan to use a low-quality soil, make sure to mix it with 20-30 percent perlite to improve drainage.

Protect outdoor plants from hot midday sun with shade cloth. Growing under a shade cloth will cut water consumption substantially. Sunlight in the middle of a clear day will yield 50,000 foot-candles. This is much more than cannabis needs to grow big and strong. Shading plants lowers all stress levels and cuts maintenance. Setting up a 30 percent shade cloth would actually increase growth!

Protect containers from hot sunlight. Containers full of soil act as a heat bank. First the outside will be warmed by the sun. Once the soil heats up, it stays warm for hours. White plastic containers dissipate heat quickly. White Styrofoam containers repel light and the easiest to keep cool. Ceramic and concrete pots retain more heat, which keeps the growing medium warmer. Deflect sun-generated heat by shading containers. Set up a board or something to shade the containers from hot sun. This little bit of tender loving care will save you and your plants much misery!

Plants grown in gorilla gardens can often be tied down to stay out of midday sun. Many times it is possible to bend trees or bushes above the marijuana plants to provide shade



Ducting carries away hot air from this HP sodium lamp. The bends in the ducting and its length reduce air flow efficiency by about half. I believe the room would actually stay cooler if the vent fan was vented directly outdoors rather than attached to the lamp.

during the heat of the day.

Protect outdoor plants from wind to reduce transpiration and lower water usage. For example, in the Canary Islands where the wind blows 24 hours a day, growers build stone fences about a meter tall to break the wind. The rocks are stacked so that holes remain in the walls. The holes allow some air to pass through but the majority of wind is stopped. Always build wind blocks so some air passes through. When wind is blocked by a solid wall, it spins over the top of the wall and an even stronger turbulent of wind is forced down on the back side of the wall. The wind breaking wall actually causes more wind to blow on plants!

Indoors, containers tend to heat up less. You can keep them cooler by setting them on cool concrete or tile floors.



This grower keeps mother plants growing with 110 watts of compact fluorescent light. Such lamps are very efficient and create a fraction of the heat generated by metal halides or HP sodium lamps.

Also, in general the temperature on the floor is the coolest place in the room. Using white pots indoors will also help keep the growing medium cooler.

The air that comes into the room should be as cool as possible. Always bring it in to the bottom of the room because it will be cooler. One of my friends in California pulled cool air in from under house he was growing in. The air was about 5 degrees C. cooler than the ambient air. He also put the nutrient tank for the hydroponic system near the cool incoming air vent, which helped to cool the nutrient solution. Combining several small tricks like this will really help keep the grow room a few degrees cooler.

Always vent the indoor garden from the highest point in the grow room. Hot air rises and this is the best place to remove it. The ducting between the extraction fan and the air filter should be as straight and short as possible. This will increase the efficiency of the vent fan substantially. In fact, if the air



These buds look nice, but could have developed about 20-30 percent more weight if the room had been kept cooler.

must travel through a vent with a 90-degree corner, the fan loses about half of its efficiency!

Place ballasts outside grow room because they generate heat. Move

The best way to avoid nutrient buildup is to use a fast-draining growing medium and keep allow plenty of drainage. These mediums have adequate air space to make the uptake of nutrients and water faster.

everything out of the grow room that could generate heat, ballasts, radios, electrical appliances, etc. Some manufacturers offer reflective light hoods with a self-contained vent fan and ducting. The hot air created by the bulb is vented directly out of the room. Although functional, the ducting attached to the light reflectors is cumbersome in a small grow room.

Turn the lights on at night to keep the room cooler during the day. You can turn the vent fan on all day and night. This simple little trick will keep the grow room several degrees cooler.

If possible, move the grow room to the coolest part of the house. Growing in an attic or directly under a roof can create very hot conditions. Basements and rooms with no external walls or walls facing north are the coolest in most homes.

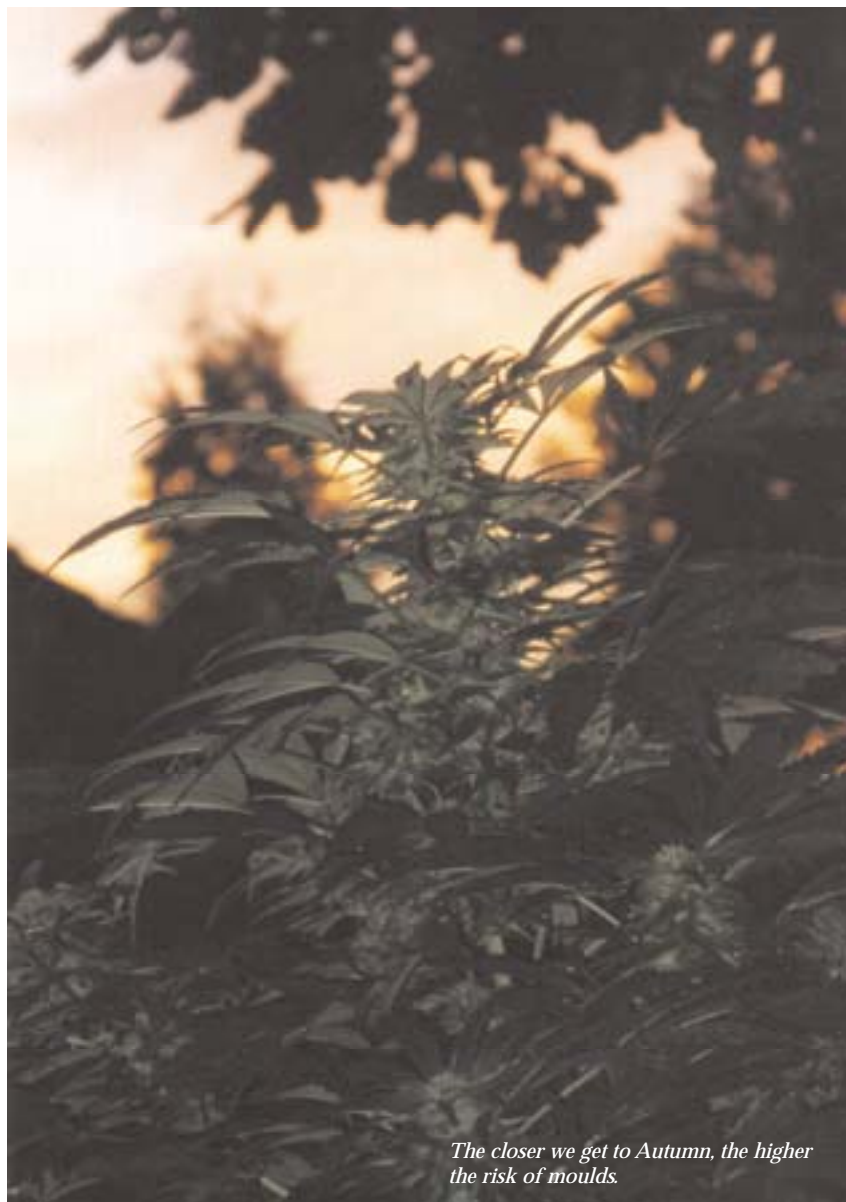
Remember, stay cool!

Jorge Cervantes is the author of Indoor Marijuana Horticulture: The Indoor Bible (with 200 ALL NEW color photos), Marijuana Indoors: Five Easy Gardens, Marijuana Outdoors: Guerilla Growing and hundreds of articles. See: www.marijuanagrowing.com. His works are published in Dutch, English, French, German and Spanish.

By Weckels, the grow specialist from Atami

What do you do when moulds attack?

In this article we will be looking at what to growers is the single most feared plant illness; namely mould, among which we include root rot, mildew, and bud rot. We will be looking at how we can best recognise these sicknesses and especially, how we can prevent them.



The closer we get to Autumn, the higher the risk of moulds.

Every outdoor grower has at some stage had to deal with the situation: you've done your best all year to raise a lovely plant. Just as the best period of the whole lifecycle of the plant should be breaking out – the bloom period – you find somewhere a small spot of mould that throws all hope of a lovely harvest out the window by taking over and destroying the whole plant in no time at all. For most growers such experiences are the final kiss of death on all their outdoor growing from then on; the high level of frustration means that next year they will not be making the same mistake again. It is obviously not for nothing that most growers then choose to seek their happiness by growing indoors and leave their outdoor adventures behind for good. Certainly for beginners, growing marihuana outdoors is one of the best ways of becoming well acquainted with the existence of moulds, the various types and how you can recognise them. This is not all a bad thing; those who see these outdoor experiences as a chance to build up a lot of knowledge will find themselves in the longer term at an advantage over their colleagues who have only ever had experience with growing under lamps.

Since we in the Netherlands and you in the UK generally have the conditions that encourage mould in the Autumn, namely plenty of rain, long-lasting dew on the leaves and between the branches and thereby the necessary high air moisture content. So we need to first of all consider what variety of weed we plan to grow. It stands to reason that we choose a variety that is less sensitive to mould for growing outside, which can only increase the chances of a successful marihuana harvest. These less mould-sensitive varieties are actually those that are the early-blossoming varieties, as the earlier the plant is ready for harvest, the less the plant will be exposed to our (often) poor Autumn weather. In this case you can also be better off choosing to grow from seeds than from clones, since at least then you know what you are buying. With seeds of course you also get a list of the variety's characteristics, including the duration of the bloom period, the sensitivity to moulds and the expected harvest date. Also, I have come to the conclusion based on my previous experiences that plants that have been raised from seeds nearly always come in to bloom earlier than plants that have been raised from clones. What's more,

clones also have another drawback when compared with seed-grown weed; since clones are nearly always from a mother plant that has been raised under artificial light (lamps) and optimal circumstances, they possess barely any resistance to moulds. The mother plant in fact never had to fear from such attack, since the grower has kept the climate of the indoor growing space perfectly in balance and by keeping air moisture down given the moulds no foothold from which to launch an attack. The companies that produced the seeds have often done so via strong selective pressure, with only the best and strongest kept for the production of seeds. In such a way the ideal outdoor growing varieties can be yours, which will in the long run save you a whole heap of mould-trouble.

During the growth phase of the plant you will find moulds do not so easily launch an attack, unless you are raising a variety unsuitable for outdoor growing or if there is exceptionally bleak weather, in which case very few plants will be able to remain unscathed. Fortunately, this last instance is quite rare, so we can begin our outdoor growing with a light heart. Since the temperature and sun levels in Spring and Summer are pretty optimal, the early morning dew that's found on plants quickly disappears, and the plants are very unlikely to be in any kind of trouble. It should be mentioned here that you should of course plant your ladies in a good spot in your garden. Plants that are standing in a shady spot, which leaves them (thanks perhaps to an overhanging tree) in an area of high air moisture content, run considerably more of a risk of mould infection, so such spots should best be avoided.

One other critical point during the growth phase is the chance of storms, especially those comprising very heavy gusts of wind. During these there is a strong chance that branches may be broken off the plant, and these wounds can quickly become infected by mould unless we quickly remove them or repair them with string and/or waterproof sticky tape. But also you should watch out for fallen leaves, since the leaves of the marihuana plant, as with any other plant, need to be removed from under the plant. If we were to just let them lie there, they will hang on to a lot of moisture and so increase the chances of mould. Another danger is that leaves from a marihuana plant that are left on the ground often become mouldy themselves, and once established these can easily spread to the plant itself. In actual fact, all dead plant material that comes from the marihuana plant is an invitation to moulds to come and do their worst. Dead remains of whatever nature should be removed as quickly as possible.

The removal of dead leaves is best done with a rake, but do take care not to snag any roots, pulling them out of the soil and damaging them. Also look out carefully for the main stem of the plant, since a large cut or bruised and soft spot on the stem means the bark can no longer protect the plant from the various varieties of rot and mould that threaten. Once you have

allowed a rot or mould to infect the main stem, then in no time at all the whole plant will become damaged as a result of this soft spot. Once you have allowed a disease into the main stem there is very little chance of escape for the plant. The best you can do is to support the stem (and thereby the plant) as best you can with stakes and splints, so that she will remain upright for as long as possible. In such a way, I have myself managed to keep a lovely plant alive, so that eventually the mould disappeared and the danger passed. If you discover mould on one branch of the plant only, the best thing to do is remove the whole branch, which will prevent the mould from spreading. When pinching or sawing off the side branch (depending on its thickness) you must make sure to cut two to three centimetres from the main stem. If you cut the side branch off too close to the main stem then the plant can lose too much feed sap, since it will flow too freely from the side branch wound. By leaving a decent gap in this way, you also do not negatively influence the sap in the main stem.

In the event that you do manage to accidentally damage the stem while raking away leaves, cover the open spot with tape, or better still, smear the wound with a special salve that you can get from various garden centres. This salve is normally only used on trees, but it is also very well suited to repairing the stem of our marihuana plant. The salve works in a similar way to iodine cream on humans, preventing infection and helping the wound to heal.

Root rot

One form of rot that growers frequently cause themselves is root rot. This comes a-visit when the roots are given too much water. Particularly at the beginning when the plant is still a seedling, growers frequently give the young plant too much water. The result of this is that the soil at the bottom of the flower pot becomes waterlogged and turns to mud. The root system of the plant then can get hardly any oxygen any more, and dies off. Once you have even a small part of the root system dead, often root rot will set in. This root rot will touch the whole root system and the death of the plant is just a matter of time. Because root rot is so infectious, the grower who has planted his or her plants in cement tubs now has an advantage, because the roots of the different plants are protected from each other by the cement tubs. But if you have planted a number of plants in the same tub or planted a number of plants next to each other in the ground, make sure that you when you remove the now (almost) dead plant you also remove its roots too. In this way you can prevent it infecting its neighbours and your losing the whole crop. Giving too much water to a marihuana plant also by caused by heavy rainfall. Especially in the Spring it can sometimes feel as if one rain cloud passes only for another to take its place, pouring in buckets. Besides these sorts of day, when the average outdoor grower is tempted to just stay indoors – and so relaxing his or her attention to moulds – the root system can barely cope with



The dew, that mostly covers the leaves in the mornings, creates with the constantly high air moisture content ideal conditions for moulds.



Here you can clearly see how, on these already harvested plants, excessive pressure on the root systems was avoided, thereby reducing the risk of bud rot.



In this photo there appears to be nothing wrong with the buds at all, but they are in fact thoroughly infested with bud rot.



This is one of the buds from the previous photo, a couple of days later. The bud is now quite clearly suffering from bud rot and should be removed as quickly as possible.



Here too the bud rot has clearly struck. Even the leaves have already become affected.

the quantity of water and the roots begin to gasp for oxygen. You come across this situation particularly if your plants have not yet established a leaf canopy that covers their whole pot or cement tub. The water comes down and straight in to the soil much more easily that it does with good, fully-grown plants that can use their leaf cover as an umbrella. We can of course protect the plants ourselves against excess rainwater by covering the pot or cement tub from above with (transparent) agricultural plastic, so that the plant only has access to the feed water we give it. And since in the Spring, and thus during the growth period, we are giving it the necessary bloom feed and stimulators with the feed water, giving the plants a hand by doing little things like covering its pot or cement tub can drastically improve our eventual yield.

Should you still manage to end up with waterlogged earth in your pots or cement tubs, immediately stab with a thin stick down into your tubs, making as many holes as possible from top to bottom in the soil, so that sufficient oxygen can still get down to the lower-lying roots. Also pay good attention to damaging the roots as little as possible when doing this. Especially the tap root (the main root), that often grows straight down under the main stem, must absolutely not become damaged. This serves much like the keel in a boat, keeping the whole plant in balance. Once you have put the tap root out of whack and you find your plant starts to list to the side, you should immediately stick a sturdy pole up against the main stem, so that the stem can be secured to it. Keeping the plant the right way up is very important because, for a start it stops the yet-to-develop flower heads from coming into contact with the soil (indeed, once safely trimmed and smoked they even give a little more pleasure for having been snatched from the jaws of death), and also because pressure on the remaining roots will not be so great if the stem is supported in this way, which with a plant leaning over on its side is certainly to be a problem. There only needs to be one more small gust of wind and the plant will be lying completely on her side. A ruined harvest and a disappointed grower is the result.

Water shortage

We have been discussing above the negative consequences of too much water, but a shortage of the precious fluid is not good for the plant, especially not once the flower heads begin to develop nicely. The flower heads consist to a large extent of moisture, and in order for them to continue to look good they need sufficient of it. One common scenario in which

this does not happen is when the grower brings the plants into a shed or garage just before harvest time, in order to keep the buds nice and dry and ripe for gathering, and then they forget that the plant still has need of water. There are growers who insist on shortening their bud-drying period by giving their plants absolutely no water at all in the last couple of days. I strongly advise against this – especially when growing outdoors – because when the flower heads get no water at all they begin to shrivel substantially, which allows the outermost edge of the bud to die. This is a pity – the bud could have been a little fatter and therefore of better quality. But it is also dangerous too, because it can cause problems with the so-called dry (white) mould. This type of mould looks like a woolly substance and is often a very thin layer of mould that rapidly spreads itself, thereby eventually not only reducing the drying time, but also drastically reducing your total number of hours’ of trimming too. The buds that are covered with mould are simply no longer fit for being trimmed by shears, and so your drying cupboard will be a little bit more bare.

The most feared form of mould is the famous bud rot. This very aggressive variety of mould, thanks to the speed with which it rips through a crop, can give even the most experienced grower nightmares. Once this type of mould is discovered we need to remove every flower head that shows even the tiniest sign of it. Even the removal of the infected flowers is not without danger. Once the bud rot has dried out, this type of mould can produce a rain of drifting spores and threads of mould wafting over the surrounding plants and flower heads, which enables the bud rot to take a hold even quicker. This is why some growers first damp the infected flower heads by (carefully) spraying water over them, so that the bits of mould and spores do not drift around when being removed. Care has to be taken though that not too much water is sprayed on these flower heads, or else there is a chance that the mould will be passed on to healthy flower heads by the water dripping down. As an outdoor grower, you can best do the infected flower head removal in the early morning (between 7 and 9 is ideal), because the buds then are mostly under a layer of dampness from the dew. The dew keeps the mould damp and stops the bud rot from drifting. Personally, I remove mouldy buds when they are covered with dew too, but with an extra trick applied. First I get a plastic bag and place it over the infected bud, so that the mould has no chance of spreading by drifting spores and/or dripping water, then I remove the bud as quick as I can. But even when the mouldy buds have been removed, the danger has still not been completely sorted out. The mould can still have infected other flower heads, without them yet showing the first signs of attack. That’s why it is a good idea to also keep checking the surrounding flower heads very carefully, certainly once a day, once the first signs of mould have been spotted anywhere.

Many growers will be asking themselves how it is possible to spot such moulds at an early stage. The answer to this is certainly not ‘easily’. Bud rot is partly as famous as it is because of the fact that it is mostly not discovered until it is too late for the flower heads. It is often the case

that it is the plumpest, best-developed of the buds that fall victim to it first, which only adds to the misery of the grower. The well-developed buds are the ones with the biggest dimensions and after a rainfall these can hold a lot of water, and combined with the moist Autumnal air these create the perfect conditions for this notorious mould. The reason that bud rot is so often discovered so late, is due to the fact that unlike other moulds, this one grows from the inside (in the flower head) to the outside as it develops. What from the outside looks like a healthy flower head can therefore be infected inside with bud rot where it remains undetected by us. You can check the biggest buds (which are both most susceptible to bud rot and, to us, the most valuable) regularly for bud rot, by gently bending apart from each other the small leaves of the flower heads that together form the large bud. When you do this very carefully and avoid pinching the flower heads themselves, then you will not do any damage to the flower heads, and can check the buds right down to the twig. Often you can recognise the bud rot when there are brown or yellow/grey THC-leaves sticking out of, what for the rest, is a healthy flower head. When you pluck these rotten THC-leaves out of the flower head, they come loose very easily and the flower head, without them, looks soft and papery, and you know you’re looking at an early case of bud rot. Remove the rotten flower heads as soon as you can, must be your response.

Mildew

Those of you who check your flower heads with any regularity for moulds will often keep your valuable buds free from mould. In the event of any being found, you can nip the problem in the bud (so to speak), so that the negative consequences can be kept to a minimum. One mould variety that is a lot easier to recognise is the so-called mildew. This variety of mould has a white colour and as the name suggests, is a mould that begins to grow when there is long-lasting dew on the leaves. In contrast to other types of mould this one also regularly attacks the large leaves. That is because these large leaves hold lots of moisture and they are the last leaves still wet with dew from the morning. Mildew, like the other moulds, loves these conditions, and this mould too can destroy a plant in the shortest of time. The big problem is that there is very little you can do with this mould. This is mainly because with the best will in the world the outdoor grower can do nothing to change the climate, and all that remains is to keep the mildew at bay the best he or she can, by removing affected leaves as soon as possible. There are loads of products that are designed to prevent this type of mould.

The problem with these liquids is that they must nearly always be sprayed directly to the leaves, and so the chance of a dangerously high air moisture content is actually increased. Only when you spray in Summer (in the evening) directly onto the leaves can you safely predict a certain level of defence for the plant against mould, and then the spray method is often successful. But once there are flower heads on the branches then spraying can actually work counter productively (it only serves to further increase the air moisture levels)



If you were to inspect this bud carefully you would discover immediately the brown spot in the middle of the bud. This too is a sure sign of bud rot.



Well-developed buds are especially vulnerable to bud rot and other moulds, since after a rainfall they hold a lot of water. Check them for this regularly.



We're looking here at a case of mildew mould. As you can see, this mould is also plainly recognisable on the large leaves.



Mildew is also infectious and only takes a day or two to take down a whole plant



With the aid of a dish we can let the plant take up its water itself, largely removing problems such as leaching of nutrients and exposed roots.

and it is much better to simply keep the notorious spots on the plant in check. So for example, it is best to remove the young shoots from the lowest hanging branches, which will often otherwise end up touching the ground or at least come into contact with it with the gentlest of breezes. Lots of these low hanging side branches get by far the least sun anyway, so they cannot be expected to produce any lovely flower heads of their own. What's more, it is these branches that hold on to the dew on their leaves the longest, especially their new shoots, forming the best spot on the plant for the introduction of mildew or other moulds. An additional benefit of us removing all the shoots from these lowest branches is that the wind will now blow nicely between these branches, allowing the plant to dry out a bit quicker and reducing the problem with dew.

Rust

Allowing the wind to dry out the plant also serves to protect it from rust. This is a mould variety that is often recognised as red or brown patches (rust) on the leaves. The infected spot is digested to leave a hole in the leaf. Besides these holes affecting the uptake of light by the leaves, they also often create a toehold for

new moulds, since the leaves have been drastically weakened by the holes. So we return to the removal of young shoots from the lower-most side branches: we let the main bud on each low-hanging side branch develop further, since these often get sufficient sunlight to mature to quite a decent size because all the nutrients of that branch are now directed solely at this bud. All small growth shoots have been removed from this low-hanging branch so all the resources are focussed on the feeding of this now large and well developed flower head. A much more difficult spot in which mildew can take up residence is on the many small THC-leaves that are situated on the outer surface of the buds. Precisely because some weed varieties produce considerably white buds it can be damned difficult to tell the difference between a mould variety like mildew, from healthy leaves richly bedecked with THC. Regular and thorough inspections, if needs be with a magnifying glass, offers the best defence here.

And finally...

We've been discussing above the most common strains of mould that we encounter in outdoor growing. Of course there are loads of other moulds and

derivative variations, but fortunately you will not come across these very often. Should you catch a dose of a rare mould on your plants and you have no idea what to do to combat it, take a photo of it or take an infected bud to your local grow shop (do ask in advance if this is possible). With a little luck they will be able to advise you how to be rid of your fungal foe. Another good source of possible solutions is to ask a market gardener. They have often had a specialist agricultural education and can maybe tell you everything you need to know. What's more they have often encountered at some stage almost every strain of mould there is, and can recognise your problem in a glance. Naturally, you should always proceed with caution when approaching 'civilian' farmers. Don't just go to the first one you encounter, since it is far from sure whether you'll be talking to a supporter of marihuana cultivation (and that's an understatement). Sometimes they can be a little, er, sensitive, having been dropped in the shit in the past for renting a greenhouse to one of your colleagues.

There are loads of heavy duty Latin names for moulds, but these fancy names do not make the buggers any easier to identify and can serve merely to make the whole



Here you can clearly see the brown spots that clearly indicate the presence of rust.

issue of moulds even more complicated. Thanks partly to this I have consciously chosen to use the names most commonly used in the growers' world, and thereby keep some semblance of recognition intact. It might seem after reading this article that the chance is high that any outdoor activity is doomed to end in a drama. Happily this is not the case and you do not need to go giving yourself nightmares unnecessarily. I have tried though to give you a guiding hand and to impress on you the need to be always alert to the possibility of moulds, so that should you find yourself in one of the dramas mentioned, you can take corrective steps as soon as possible. The prevention of moulds is also possible by building special structures – but there's so much to say on that subject that I'll leave it for another time.



A commentary concerning trade in cannabis in the light of semi-organised crime in the Netherlands and the UK. The purpose is to sketch a realistic view of the people in the illegal circuit, who make sure there is always hash and weed on the market. From the big boys to the small fry: Soft Secrets' special reporter, Charlie Stone tries to uncover all the facets within this 'underworld'.

By Charlie Stone

Part 9

The Girl Dealer

Olive is 34 years old, and has been involved in the distribution of cannabis for nearly 10 years. Female dealers, while not unknown, aren't exactly very common (in the UK, at least). Dealing, as with most other things drug related, would seem to be predominantly a male domain, so when Olive agreed to do this interview, it was too good an opportunity to pass on and we jumped at the opportunity.

SSUK: Olive, how did you get into this line of work in the first place?

O: Well, I was skint, on the dole and living with my best mate from school at that time. I'd just separated from a very shite marriage and had been left with a bit of debt from a drug consuming ex-husband. And the debt was with the school friend; he was dealing, and it was time for him to head off elsewhere...he was dealing quite a lot, and what he did was he left me with half an ounce of dope and fifty quid and said "right get yourself sorted out and pay me back".

That was good of him.

Oh, prior to that, when my ex-husband was around, we did invest in a few ounces of speed and sell that as well, and that also went on after he was away.

Okay, so that was how you first started doing it. How much did you shift in the beginning?

About an ounce a week. At that time though as I say, it was to pay off a debt and to keep myself in dope. It soon increased though!

Did you make a lot of money out of it?

It was a nice, easy, less stressful way... Like speed is the kind of thing where you can make a lot more money from it but it's much more of a headache, whereas dope is much less full on, and I wonder if that's because the dope culture's a lot more relaxed...even though there are still lots of tossers who buy dope as dope as well!

Did you find it easier to deal to men or to women?

Well, at that time, I had two close female friends who, one of them dealt a lot as well, and she totally bought

into the "I'm a dealer" lifestyle, and used to have people sitting round the house and waiting ages for their dope, giving them short deals, and I'm not saying she was a bad person but it wasn't really my way of doing things. She quite enjoyed the status it gave her with other tokers, whereas I was going it to pay off debt that I'd been lumbered with, so the way that I felt about it was very different and therefore the way that I went about working it was very different. The question you asked about whether I found it okay dealing to men...my own dealer was fantastic. He wasn't from this country, he was much older, and a very wise and discreet man. His dope wasn't the cheapest, but he would come within half an hour of you phoning, he'd come to your house, he was never there for any more than five or ten minutes unless he felt like a coffee and a chat. There was none of this hanging around for ages or anything like that. Which was quite different from the experience of other people I knew when they were buying dope in large quantities, so I think I was quite lucky in that respect. But when it came to selling to men, obviously a lot of people I dealt to at that time were around the same age as me or a bit older...However, I have to say that when I used to sell speed I found that I could be at big, huge parties where I'd be like fucking loaded up with whiz, trying to get rid of it and people would be buying off the blokes and wouldn't buy off me, and I used to think that was really weird.

How strange...

But then again that could've been my paranoia, but it didn't seem that way. I'd put word out with the party organisers that I had loads and they were my best mates anyway, of old, and I was there with ounces of whiz on me that I was finding it very difficult to shift because everyone was buying it off blokes. But that was in the early 1990's, and I think women dealing is more acceptable now than it was then.

Did you have the same experience with selling dope?

Not really. I never noticed, to be honest.

So no macho culture around dope then?

Speed is a much more paranoid

and severe scene than dope where everybody's caned and usually very sensitive to one another's feelings, you know. There were always loads of blokes trying to hit on me, including *my* dealer. As I say, he was much older and he did suddenly start dressing younger and being a bit overfriendly, but we got over that because we had a business relationship for a long, long time.

To get back to that, did you find that predominantly you had a male client base?

Yeah.

That's funny, because I had this idea that girls might prefer to go to a girl to buy their drugs because there's less of the hitting on you and all this kind of nonsense that you've talked about.

I did deal to women, but it's difficult to say if that's why they came to me because we never really talked about it. I definitely sold more to men than to women, which made me feel a bit more like "don't fuck with me because I'm in business here". With men, at least, even though they would on occasion try to hit on me. But the way I went about selling, when I was comparing the way that I sold with the way that my friend sold who bought into the whole "I am the dealer and I'm going to *make* you sit there and *make* you wait until *I'm* ready to give you the dope", I was more like "Get in, get your dope and fuck off again", charge a reasonable price, be reliable and you're not getting a shag either. And please don't feel like you have to skin up 'cause I don't really want to spend that much time in your company anyway! Not in all cases, 'cause I've got a lot of cases I like spending time with...

Sure, but you don't want Joe Punter off the street hanging about your house...

Yeah, drinking all the tea. But it got a bit much when the kids from the school opposite the house were coming round. I was kind of "oh no, I don't like this!" However, ten years down the line they're very respectful, which is dead nice, and they're offering to sell me skunk every time I see them.

How did you learn the ropes?

Easy. When I first started toking I was like fifteen or sixteen. My mate's big brother was huge on the dope scene. Now I'm from the North West (of England) and I don't live there any more, but obviously it's known for its

cultural mix and its dope culture, and the big brother used to trot off and go to the, shall we say, bohemian areas of Manchester and score his dope, and you'd hear the stories and you'd be sitting there wet behind the ears...you'd be scoring a sixteenth 'cause it was all you could afford and everyone else would be sitting there with ounces. And then there's the big man who's doing the nine bars, you know, coming round the house and cutting it up 'cause it's all part of his trumpet blowing, chest beating stuff. So you learn from them what was a good and a bad deal, and what was good and bad dope, 'cause at that time you did have a choice, it wasn't just skunk or soapbar...

Out of interest, what other types did you get?

Well, squidgy black, slate, what was known as Moroccan, Lebanese...

All genuine do you think?

In hindsight, yeah, having smoked some shit since. Oh, and good grass as well. It wasn't so much skunk at that time, but a wide variety of hashish. Anyway, you could buy a fiver deal of squidgy black and you'd be absolutely hammered, tripping! So you knew what was good and you'd know when you were getting ripped off. And you'd be going to houses in all these areas and you'd think "Shit!" and you'd have to bluff and double bluff to make it look like you knew what you were doing, so you had to learn really quickly. So I was sixteen or seventeen by this point and really into the drug scene, all the acid and everything going on, it was fucking great...

All the things we're not meant to talk about, but carry on.

Well, it was just how my life was at that time. Another friend who was a lot older, because by this point, I'd gone from being the friend of the younger brother to knowing everyone in my own right and got on well with them. And one or two of them had taken up dealing themselves, and being quite a people watcher I could see there was one mate who was dealing and he *knew* that all these people that were coming round weren't really his mates, you know? They weren't really interested in him or anything. It was the fact that he was the big man and had drugs basically. And he'd actually got his stuff from one of *the most* insincere in the town...I didn't like him at all, but I hung out with him because he was hanging about with my mate and we were all into the whole scene together. Anyway, I learned how to clock the shallowness of the scene, you know? This mate started getting into trouble with his mental health because he was really battering everything, which was something else I took on board. So those were hard lessons to learn at a young age, but when I started dealing myself - and again, I didn't really want to start

Speed is a much more paranoid and severe scene than dope where everybody's caned and usually very sensitive to one another's feelings, you know.

There were always loads of blokes trying to hit on me, including my dealer.

dealing but because of circumstances – I was kind of aware of all these things I’d seen in the past and thought, “right, this is what I don’t want for myself, but I need to clear my debt and make a bit of a living”. And I was skint, and I’d just started to study and needed to support myself through university, and that was really where it all started for me properly. I’d watched and learned from other dealers for five or six years before I started doing it myself.

Did you sell to lots of students?

I sold to a few. But not too many because I didn’t want it to get out in that scene because I was already well established where I lived.

Have you ever been busted?

Never, never. I was actually! I worked in a bar and customs raided it and they found some dope.

Customs raided it?

Well I was living on an island so I was lifted and it was great because I’d said that I’d left where I was from to the customs officers after I’d been arrested, after they found dope behind the bar and I had to be strip searched and arrested and oh it was quite a shock but I’d said to them in all sincerity that I had moved there to get away from the scene that I was in at home and it wasn’t until I’d been sent back to the cells that I actually remembered that a boyfriend at the time had asked me to look after his dope whilst I was at work and because you’re a toker you can’t remember because you’re stoned all the time. And I *could not* remember if I’d given it him back or not so it could

well have been mine after all but I’d obviously convinced the customs that it wasn’t mine.

So did they charge you in the end?

No! I was released without any charge. And then it was quite funny ‘cause the customs officer who arrested me used to come and shop in the shop I worked in and I’d be like shitting myself every time I looked at her!

What do you think about the cannabis laws in Britain. If you had been nicked...

I’d have been fucked. It would have fucked my life up and big time. Just putting it as bluntly as that then I think the cannabis laws in the UK are/were absolutely ludicrous. If it was somebody who cut the crap, didn’t sell too much, did it with some integrity. This sounds awful, this sounds like I’m being very self-righteous about it and I’m not but I bought of somebody who was incredibly discreet, we weren’t pushing it as such, if you’ll forget the bit about the school kids! You know, now I lead an incredibly respectable life, I live in a very respectable area and okay I stick out like a sore thumb but you know I don’t lead that life any more and I was using it as a means to get to where I am now anyway.

Okay.

So if I’d have been rumbled I’d have been absolutely fucked! I wouldn’t be able to do the type of work that I do.

If it came to the crunch and you had to go back to doing it do you think you’d be able to do it?

Yeah.

Not would you be able to get it but would you actually be able to get people round the house and all that kind of shit?

I don’t think I’d bother with poxy amounts. I think if I was going to now I’d probably buy a nine bar and flog it off by the ounce because I think I’m older and wiser and the people that I know are older and wiser and we buy the ounce and we make it last.

But buying that amount you’re not really going to make any cash out of it because it’s so cheap now.

I know actually, so maybe not then.

A lot of people that I’ve spoken have said that they’re not going to do it anymore because it’s so cheap that they can’t make enough money to make it worth their while...

Yeah. Perhaps maybe if I was ever in that position again maybe if I needed to perhaps I’d punt my ass instead! Do you want to ask me any more about what it was like actually shifting it or have you got the essence of it? Yeah, learning the ropes, I think that’s the crux of it for me. And you’ve got those older wiser people and you learn by their mistakes and they tell you their mistakes and you fucking take it on board and don’t fuck about with it. You’ve got the big fucking young chest beating twats selling huge amounts of dope getting busted and then you’ve got my dealer who looks like somebody’s dad, who’s got ounces and ounces of dope in a jiffy bag under his car seat and he’s driving you to the supermarket ‘cause he’s going to help you get your shopping! You just think “who’s the one who’s got it fucking right here!?”

The guy changes his car on a regular basis and has a legitimate façade. It doesn’t take a fucking mathematician to work that out!

Everybody I’ve ever interviewed who hasn’t been in jail says pretty much the same thing...It’s funny because mainly the ones who have been in prison are...

Well yeah, they’re gobshites.

With all the bling and the big cars and stuff.

Well, it’s attracting attention in a job where you really can’t afford that kind of attention. At the end of it, I really do have to thank my mate who left me with the half an ounce and the fifty quid. That was very good of him.

That was an odd way for someone to get you to pay off a debt, but it’s actually an extremely smart way to get someone to pay off a debt. Quite amazing...

Yeah, it was very benevolent of him and I haven’t forgotten it. And it was actually the dope, fifty quid *and* his punters ‘cause he moved away.

How many punters did he leave you with then?

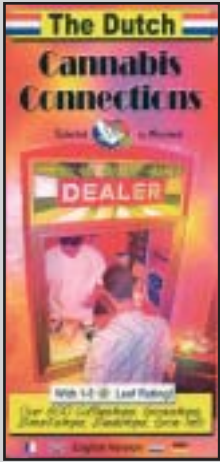
Well there were some of them I dropped off almost immediately anyway because I couldn’t be arsed with them.

That’s a good idea in itself...

Yeah, but I think I started with maybe twenty or so people and it just blossomed from there. And that was that, really.

BOOK REVIEW

Internet resources and a very extensive list of “Chronic Conditions Treated with Cannabis.” A few of the ratings (1-5 pot leaves) were surprising to locals, so check out a few of the places listed and see if you agree. - Kristie Szalanski



“The Dutch Cannabis Connections: Selected by Wernard” - Wernard Bruining

Many coffeeshop guides have been published throughout the world, all claiming to be foremost experts on the cannabis scene in Amsterdam. Whether you’re a tourist or a local, it’s good to have a heads-up on the situation, saving you time and money, as well as the hassle of trudging around the city. The benefit of these insider info comps is that you can plan your route ahead of time, whether your destination is coffeeshops, seed banks, grow shops, or smart products. One of the latest that has been published is the product of Wernard’s many years of experience in the cannabis industry, and a truly Dutch perspective. It may seem odd to refer to him on a first name basis, but he’s recognised around Amsterdam. Wernard happens to be the former owner of Mellow Yellow, the first “coffeeshop” in the now-famous industry. Things were different back in 1973, when the enterprising crew of the local hangout

began dealing on the sly from a compartmented leather satchel. Times changed, and Wernard continued in the scene by starting well-known Positronics, often regarded as the first growshop in Europe.

It’s obvious from the selection of businesses included in “The Dutch Cannabis Connections” that the author is eager to include a wide range of atmospheres and an honest perspective. However, a downfall of the publication is that the indexes are poorly organized and some of the shops are unfortunately no longer in existence, such as Wolke Wietje and De Theebout. A plus is the range of cities within the Netherlands that are listed, including Amsterdam, Alkmaar, Purmerend, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and Maastricht, among many others, of course.

Many guides focus on Amsterdam alone, while travelling outside of

the obvious locales is often more enjoyable. The booklet serves residents of the Netherlands as well as tourists due to including some well-hidden places that are worth visiting. Easy access to small chunks of information and nice photos lend a more “pocket guide” feel to the book, but an unfortunate lack of editing and proper translation makes the text rich pages easy to ignore. It’s a shame, because harm reduction, fun tourist stuff, and very basic grow info are included in the guide. Hopefully the Dutch, French, and German versions are tidier.

Check out the additional resources such as vaporiser info, handy maps,

Soft Secrets is giving away 10 copies of ‘The Dutch Cannabis Connections’ to UK readers. All you have to do is send in a funny postcard, and we will pick the 10 winners, who will receive their copy at their doormat. Please send your postcard with full adress to Soft Secrets, p.o. box 17250 , 1001 JG, Amsterdam, Holland. Closing date: october 30, 2004.



Discount Hydroponics, Hastings

Discount Hydroponics was early on to the grow scene in the South East of England, but they have never let being the first hold back their ambitions regarding service and sheer comprehensiveness of product range. Established by Bob in 1995, Discount Hydroponics this year moved to new premises just outside the old town centre of Hastings, keeping the original shop space on as a warehouse. The new gaff is just a minutes walk from the busy centre, but tucked away discretely with a private forecourt for parking (up to six vehicles). Cater for new users (including all-in kits) and experienced growers. "We've been selling for nearly ten years now, so there's not much we don't know about the business, from growing in soil, to passive or drip feed systems, to aeroponics - you name it. Asked about the product range, "It's more a question of what we don't stock," says Darren, Bob's son-in-law who manages the shop day-to-day. "We pretty much have everything there is that's available: Ionic, Vitalink, Dutch Master..." the list continues of names well and lesser known. Lights, accessories, controllers, meters, pumps and trays; in short, the works. They also have a comprehensive range of seeds from all the tops breeders. No, there's nothing they are exclusive distributors for and they don't make their own products. But they were the first in the UK to stock the Aardvark electric trimming shears, says Darren off the top of his head. There's a separate shop for the traditional consumption rather than production end of the business in the town centre,

Buddha HQ, where smart products and smoking paraphernalia are sold. Discount Hydroponics also has a web site and offers 48-hour delivery in the UK, but they concede it's not really updated that regularly. "We don't sell so much on the Net or by phone," says Darren. "We're mostly a face-to-face outlet." There are regular customers who value the face to face - along with the knowledge and range of products - enough to travel some distance, says Darren. "We have some customers who regularly make the trip over from Wales, some from London, but mostly the business is local, from Brighton, Bognor and around the South-east. There's no real competition in this part of the country."



Discount Hydroponics
21 Brook Street • Hastings TN34 1SJ, East Sussex
Tel: +44 (0) 1424 428 186 • Website: www.discount-hydro.co.uk

Northern Hydro Culture, Leeds

Leeds may be still mourning the decline of its footy club, but at least one West Yorkshire institution has its fortunes pointed distinctly upwards. Northern Hydro Culture was set up by Darren and his sister Jane in 2002 in the Meanwood district of the city. Due to their early success, they moved next door to larger premises in June 2004 and now occupy 1300 square meters of space, spread over two floors, exclusively devoted to the retail sale of hydroponic and irrigation equipment. Darren was a professional gardener and polytub grower before setting up Northern Hydro, and this expertise has clearly helped the shop's success. All kinds of growers are beating a path to their door, from orchid specialists to the Guinness Book of Records champion leak grower (a 36-inch white bit, if you're interested). They not only sell the gear, but will come and install it too. Darren cites numerous pubs and bistros he's sorted out (but didn't mention if he'll come and do your cupboard for you too). Visitors to the shop will find all the leading brands, including Growtech, Dutch Master, Vitalink, Optimum, Advanced Hydroponics, General Hydro, and Bio-grow. They also stock fans, irrigation parts and systems, carbon filters, ebb and flow tanks and kits, Allmix,

perlite and coco. Customers are from all over - as far afield as Lancashire and Durham - and are a mix of types, from middle aged gardeners to local students, says Darren. He is currently working on a bubbling system of his own design for release next year. Northern Hydro Culture is handily located at a junction with a large 'wasteland' car park right on the doorstep for easy loading and access.



Northern Hydro Culture,
52 Stainbeck Road • Leeds LS 7 2QY
Tel: +44 (0) 113 275 0330 / +44 (0) 794 784 5032
www.northernhydro.co.uk • Open: 10-5 Mon-Fri, 11-5 Sat.

Progrow, Exeter

The English Riviera is a little bit greener these days, thanks to the stirring efforts of Progrow in Exeter. The grow shop kit specialist was set up in 2002 by Steve, an engineer and welder by trade, and Dave, who was a chef at the time. "We were fed up working for other people," says Steve. "We wanted to start something for ourselves and saw a gap in the market for a soil and hydro grow shop in this region." And fill the gap they have. All in all, Progrow reckon they already have one of the biggest selections of stock in Southern England. "We're looking in the near future to launch our own range of products, but for the time being we have enough on our plate settling into our new premises and working to get our new - fully e-commerce capable - web site," says Steve. Ultimately, he says, they aim to "be the best in the south-west, if not the whole country". The shop is in what Steve describes as "our dream location": in the city centre, yet tucked away discretely, with easy access from all Exeter's main roads, plenty of parking and two pick up points at, either end of the shop. Exclusively a (retail) hydro and soil grow shop (they have a separate smart shop in town), Progrow now covers 2500 square feet on one floor. The two full time staff are there to guide the customer through a wide selection not just of all the vats, tubes and switches you

might need, but fans, ducting and such like. Steve's engineering background has definitely helped many a grower in this department. They also stock lighting (and are exclusive distributors of the Cannatronics range), as well as all the proven ranges of nutrients and stimulants, such as Nutriculture, Atami, GHE rainforest and AeroFlow lines.



Progrow
7 Verney Street • Exeter EX1 2AW.
Tel: +44 (0) 1392 276 998 • www.progrow.co.uk
Open 10-6 Mon-Sat, 10-4 Thurs.



Cannabis buffet for a hundred heads

Australian farmer - Ozzie G.

Ozzie G is an Australian who has been cultivating cannabis for more than twenty years in the land of beer bellies, koalas and kangaroos. Australia is good country for our favourite plant as it can bloom and grow really well in the wild. Ozzie G. takes us on a nostalgic trip back to the good old days and on the way he tells us more about his own methods of cultivation. This farmer's approach is larger than life and his success can be seen in his plants. The ladies this guy can raise are incredible! Just one plant will provide enough stash to keep one hundred smokers happy. Soft Secrets' Bart B. had the privilege to interview this Ozzie G.

By Bart B.

"I've been growing for a good twenty years now. Shit, how time flies! I began when I was quite young. I had always hung out with people who were older than me and they influenced me a lot. One day, I tried a pull on a pipe and really enjoyed it. It had such a wonderful effect. I got completely stoned, had a good laugh and a great time. I really enjoyed smoking during that period. I used to get €10 pocket money per week and so I would score €5 of weed and buy beers with the other five. We would each put €5 in the pot so that the five of us could share a big bag of excellent weed for €25."

"I smoke much less now than when I was younger. There is so much variety available on the market nowadays that it could take a whole century to try them all out. That could prove to be quite frustrating. Trying out new types has always been a favourite pastime.

effect yet also a powerful high. They were very strong plants and could withstand just about anything. After those, I treated myself to my first seeds from a seed bank, approximately eight years ago. First I worked my way through the entire Sensi Seeds collection, after which I did Dutch Passion and then the Joker Collection, which seems to have vanished or have they just changed their name? I remember their strains well. They had a Four Way x Skunk, Skunk 1 x Afghani; and a White Rhino x White Rhino. They all cost a great deal of money, back then.

Four or five years ago, I bought some seeds from Marc Emery; a Thai; Orange Bud and a NL x Kush. That White Rhino x White Rhino was such a fantastic plant. Only the Cindy 99 f2 that I recently cultivated comes anywhere near it."

would you believe it – they were all female. Good strong seeds, the plants smelled strongly and they returned a good yield. They are extremely bushy, whether grown indoors or out. The NL x Kush were also all females, such beautiful bushy plants with crystals covering the tops. Also a good yield, smell really strong, a bit like the original Northern Light with heads a slightly softer shade of green. Endless Sky was a plant with so many branches and long tops a la Superskunk. More heads than leaves and that also means less clipping later."

"The Cream Sodica is a crazy looking plant with red hairs all over the heads. I love it! Once when I was about fifteen, I grew one of these from a seed I had found in a bag of weed. I let it grow up in the mountains and she still looks same as she ever did. It is really an outdoor plant but it is currently sold for both indoor and outdoor cultivation. The Niagara is a fine variety as it has very long main branches that just fill up with buds. I did have a beautiful female but lost her due to overheat. My fault! Those AK47's are good looking plants but they smell too bad, they must be the very worst smelling plants I have ever come across! I don't like that! Take the Cindy 99 f2, this is my favourite plant at the moment. I planted two seeds and was blessed with two ladies. Finding the perfect plant is paradise! This is not a good type for crossing strains with.

perfect specimen, then I will hang onto her for a while. I usually take cuttings after a plant has been in bloom for about two weeks as then you can gauge how well the type is doing during this phase. Don't take too many cuttings, of course otherwise she will become stressed out. Stress is the greatest taboo ever amongst cultivators as it can often lead to sex change."

"I do prefer cultivating those dominant Sativa's to a dominant Indica. They are both bigger and faster during the growth process. They smell so much sweeter too and I am convinced that the yield just a bit more than Indica. I think that a 60% Sativa mix with a 40% Indica crossing will produce superior smoking quality. As a bonus – this hardy little plant makes maintenance really easy."

Growing systems, light and yields

"I start nourishing the seedlings and cuttings by giving them water mixed with nutriboost, as it helps roots to develop. As soon as they start looking healthy and strong, I start giving them a quarter dose of stronger fertilisers, for a period of three weeks. When they are ready to go into the grow room, I give them half the dosage of fertilisers for a week. Only after that, will I give the full dosage at maximum strength." "I keep the pH at the desired level and

Pointy Nug



I thoroughly enjoy trying out new flavours and highs."

"I find it particularly interesting how each plant develops in its own way and all the colour shades are so impressive. There are many more strains available these days, of course. You have to be really lucky to find good old-fashioned Sativa. Bit of a shame, don't you think?"

High yet mellow

"The first type that I tried to cultivate was a solid Australian Sativa from years long gone by. They were such sweet plants, with a gentle mellow

Bushes of Cindy 99



Thai

"The Thai was an unusual variety. I was growing two plants up, which according to the experts, would need fourteen weeks to reach full flowering, but after just seven weeks, mine were ready to be harvested. The tops were like golf balls, but also very long because the Thai was a purebred Sativa. They have a tendency to be hermaphrodite, but they are certainly worthwhile. I would have liked to see them after fourteen weeks. It would have been awesome. I do still have a few seeds, so who knows, something might yet come from them. I still have seeds from the Orange Bud. I planted just three of them and



Big Daddy is my other current favourite; it is ten years old now. It also has lots of wild branches and beautiful elongated flowers."

"I have used various Sativa's and Indica's in my outdoor gardens and I don't usually make mothers like most people do. I prefer to grow straight from fresh seed. If it proves to be a fine female, I will take cuttings. I'll strip her completely! If results show her to be a

for the first week I apply a 1200ppm nourishment level. After that I increase to 1400ppm and leave it at that during the vegetative growth. During flowering, I sometimes use 10/14 instead of a strict 12/12. Sometimes I push the 1400ppm, but not by too much as it can cause more trouble than reward. That is really the max! Should you reach 1800ppm, then it's time to rinse through with water and to give the plants plain water. It is advisable

Don't take too many cuttings, of course otherwise she will become stressed out. Stress is the greatest taboo ever amongst cultivators as it can often lead to sex change.



for beginners and newly experienced hydro-growers to stick by 1000-1400ppm. You'll be just fine so. I use a set-up with a big bucket that returns to the brain. This 50litre brain contains a pump, heating element and air rock. I have a 70litre reservoir, also containing a very large air rock. If I use two to four buckets with this system, then I will need four feeding tubes. You definitely need to raise the 50litre bucket from ground level to somewhat higher. The brain should be situated underneath. I keep a timer on the pump so that it is ready to give water. I feed the plants between two and four times a day, when the lights are on, for fifteen minutes at a time. When the plants are larger, I do give them more water, but only if they need it."

"The water therefore, is pumped up to the top of the bucket and runs back past the brain once the buckets are full. Make sure there are no leakages or blockages. Whether I use a small or a large bucket, I always place a torn piece of old cloth at the bottom of the bucket to stop the roots and stones that get into the tubes, from flowing away.

I use metalhlide lamps, twice 1000 watts and twice 400 to make a total of 2800 watts. A 1000watt lamp will give approx. 120.000 lumens and a 400watt lamp produces about 80.000 lumens.

The yield highs or lows is very much dependant on the types you work with. Good ventilation is the most important as it contributes towards good yields. I never grow more than four plants simultaneously, so I have two plants that get an advance of several weeks, depending on how they do, then I change into 10/14 or 12/12 for eight weeks. In this way, you can produce plants with a yield of up to one kilo easy. You will require a 90litre pot also! Roots really need space to spread out."

Obstacles and complaints with cultivation

"Root rot is one of the worst setbacks I ever experienced. It is very difficult to rescue plants once root rot sets in. If you catch it at the onset, it is just possible to recover with subsequent weight loss, but nothing too extreme. If the leaves start curling downward and



yellowing, root rot is the likely cause and you need to rinse the pots through and then leave them to dry. If that doesn't help – then get rid of them!"

"I have had some bad times because of mites. These nasty little creatures suck up all the nourishment in the plants. If they've got as far as making webs in your plants, then they are almost impossible to eradicate again. Be warned! Either invest in a domestic mite/ flea bomb, of the kind available in a supermarket or get rid of your plants. These flea bombs do work wonders at keeping these mites and any other insects at bay. I even use them preventatively so I can be sure the surroundings and my grow room are bug free before I even begin with the next crop."

"An overdose of fertiliser is always the fault of the farmer. It is always advisable to build up usage of strong fertilisers slowly. Too many chemicals and the leaves will curl up within two days and die off. The only thing to do in this situation is to rinse through with lots of water. Then go to bed, dream that the nightmare will pass and check for survivors only on the following day. If they have made it, leave them alone for another full day, before carefully starting again with a half dosage."

"A few handy tips for all farmers – never remove leaves from the plants unless they are very sick or completely yellowed. The plant needs them still in order to develop strong branches. Rinse



Good ventilation is the most important as it contributes towards good yields.

the plants through every two or three weeks and you will notice how much stronger they will grow. Try to stay out of your grow room as much as possible but do experiment. The more you know the easier it becomes!"

Further questions

To conclude – I asked Ozzie G. to answer a few more questions.

How do you produce those huge baseball bat sized buds?

"A good subject indeed! Anyone got any ideas? It depends primarily on the kind of plant you are using. I have grown a Superskunk that had enormous buds. I prefer to provide a good overall light, rather than concentrated on the top. It is also a good idea to carefully pinch the growing tip in order to force the plant to broaden itself. Feed them guano and root stimulator and they will love you. Take good care of your ladies and give them a thorough rinse with water every two or three weeks. Keep the brain neat and tidy. Enjoy watching them gain weight everyday."

How do you harvest?

"I grow with hydroponics. When the season is right, I grow outdoors as well. I usually harvest my plants by myself as I find it is much safer that

no one knows when it is harvest time. In the last week prior to harvest, I only rinse the plants with water. I will also start with removing some of the major leaves as this makes it easier to get at those buds later. Then I remove the branches and most of the leaf material around the buds. I hang them to dry in a warm place for four days before I cut all the buds loose and leave them on a box, until they are quite dry. The result is perfectly smokeable."

What does Australian law make of your kind of cultivation activities?

"The laws have recently been changed. Once upon a time you would just get a fine for three indoor plants, but now, you have absolutely no right to grow indoors at all. You may grow one plant outdoors. I have had some contact with law enforcement but fortunately for nothing serious. They just took my plants away and gave me a fine. And that certainly does not stop me from getting straight back to it. It is my hobby and in my opinion, these are the best plants in the whole world. I just love to ride out to the mountains and hang out, relaxing with a pipe in my hand. Yes, just lazing it up and enjoying the wondrous surroundings – that's real life!"

And so we leave Ozzie G. down there in his paradise, that is Australia...



Stephen Hawking

When consciousness is expanded, one's thoughts reach a higher level than in the everyday world. Questions like, who are we and what is our purpose and how it all began or will end can surface in the mind. For many centuries the answers to these questions were provided by the Church. You had to be all for God without complaining and especially without questioning.

By Feije Wieringa

Science was and still is dangerous, especially when judged by dogmatists. When Galileo realised that the Sun did not revolve around the Earth, but rather the Earth around the Sun and thereby robbed the Earth of its prime position in the centre of the universe, he literally risked his neck. The Pope and the rest of the clergy were furious! They are quoted as saying that the legs had been cut off their thrones.

Darwin's evolution theory is even now a hot issue. People thought they had a closed theory when Newton declared natural law. But then Einstein came with his relativity theory and showed that Newton's work was not the last word either. And even now, flaws are being found in Einstein's theories. There remain unanswered questions and gaps in his knowledge. A complete theory of the Universe does not exist yet. The question is, will we ever achieve such?

British scientist Stephen Hawking is working on it.

Early life

Stephen Hawking was born on the 8th January 1942. For those of you who find circumstance meaningful, that was precisely 300 years after the death of Galileo. Stephen's father was a doctor who specialised in tropical diseases. He grew up in the North London suburb of Highgate, a neighbourhood well known as a domicile for scientists and academics.

His sister was one year younger and according to Hawking, she was a lot brighter than he. But we have yet to hear anything from her. It seemed likely that the world would never hear about his theories either when one of the last bombs of the First World War (a German V2) crashed into the ground near the Hawking home. Fortunately young Stephen was not home at the time. As a child he designed his own toys and fixed the toy trains that he did have. "I was not particularly handy, more curious, as I wanted to know how things were put together. It is the same with the Universe. If you know how it works, it makes it easier to control it in a certain sense."

The Hawking's moved to a small dull provincial town, St. Albans, where the family soon gained a reputation for being eccentric. Hawking, "We weren't exactly eccentric, we were just city folk. We had a broader view. I'm pretty sure none of the parents of my friends in St. Albans could be called an intellectual."

Graves

Stephen's mother was a close friend of Robert Graves, a reclusive mystic

poet. Robert Graves had seen service in the First World War and was one of the few to read his own obituary in the local paper. It appeared to be a clerical error. Robert Graves was recognised by the British intelligentsia. Besides his poetry, he published eleven novels, including *'I Claudius'* and the sublime biography about his adventures, *Goodbye to all that*. That book, just like Orwell's, *Homage to Catalonia* is still being reprinted.

Robert Graves lived in Majorca and Stephen Hawking spent a lot of time in this stimulating environment. As a student of the local high school, Stephen was hardly an eager beaver. Lazy would be more apt. "I always did better in my exams and tests than in my class projects." At eighteen he almost succeeded in failing and being held back a year. Like many school kids, he just managed to scrape a pass. Funny enough he was affectionately known in his group as 'Einstein'. That was more because his intellectual capacity had not escaped the notice of his fellow students. Stephen loved to debate philosophy with his friends and one of the favourite questions was, "How did the Universe come into existence?" The other favourite, "Did God create the Universe or was it already there?"

Stephen Hawking never lost sight of these questions and they form the basis for his later work.

ALS

Just after Stephen had got engaged to be married and had settled down in Cambridge, where he would study Cosmology, he was diagnosed with ALS, a very rare muscular disease. It affects the nervous system. He noticed that he was becoming stunted. "I had never been good at sport although I did quite well at rowing. Also I had fallen down a couple of times for no good reason." A whole range of probing medical tests followed. When the final diagnosis was presented, the by then married Stephen was thoroughly depressive. "I listened to a lot of Wagner at the time, but that I was not drinking as heavily as the press suggested." The prognosis was also serious. The doctors gave him no more than a few years to live.

None of this stopped Stephen from continuing with his research. "I noticed that my reputation seemed to be rising as my health declined." His muscular functions were continually deteriorating and soon he had to use a wheelchair. To add to it all, he developed pneumonia but he kept working flat out despite his weakened state. He underwent a tracheotomy which is when they open your throat. His speech, which was already impeded, now stopped

functioning altogether. A Canadian computer specialist called Walt Woltoz heard about Stephen's problem and sent a copy of the programme, Equaliser that he had developed. With the help of this software, Stephen is able to convert subtle movements of the hand and head into words. Whenever a sentence is completed the computer says it out aloud. With the help of this program, Stephen is able to continue to deliver his scientific lectures.

"The only quirk is the American accent in the synthesiser. But it has become such a part of me now, that I would feel different if it were to be corrected." Although his disease leaves Stephen looking like a wreck, he does not come across as the typical mad scientist. During an interview with the BBC in which he was asked what music he would take with him were he to be stranded on a desert island, he proved himself to be a man of broad interests. He comments on his disease too, "I do not feel as though I am cut off from normal life, I do not even feel handicapped, it's more like I am someone with impaired movement, a bit like others who are colour blind. I guess you can't really call my life normal, but I do feel mentally normal."

One of the songs Stephen chose was *Please please me* by The Beatles. "The Beatles were a necessary breath of fresh air through the musty music scene of my generation."

Access ability

Stephen Hawking's greatest ambition is to get to the core of the Universe. He has already covered some distance but how far he is, nobody is sure. Neither does he. He has published a number of seriously scientific papers and also some in which his research is explained to a broader audience. In these he strives to explain the Universe without using complicated mathematical models. He is joined in this idea by the great Humanist and philosopher, Bertrand Russell, who is credited with explaining Einstein's relativity theory in layman's terms. "I got the idea of describing the Universe whilst wondering how to come up with school fees I needed for my daughter." But there were not many publishers who saw much prospect in a popular book on the big questions. Finally Bantam Publishers who specialise in popular pockets dared to bring out *The Universe*. The book ended up on the shelves squeezed between Tom Clancy and Robert Ludlum and became an instant bestseller, to the complete surprise of Stephen Hawking.

The Theory

Stephen Hawking takes the stand that the Universe was not created and therefore cannot be destroyed. He states that it simply exists. Because the Universe expands it can be compared to a spotty balloon. If you blow into it and imagine standing on one of the spots, it seems that all the spots flying away from you must have been smaller at first, then it follows that all matter was once compacted into an endlessly small unit. And with the Big Bang, the universe became what it is.



Science was and still is dangerous, especially when judged by dogmatists.

As a thinking person one might ponder what was before that. According to Stephen Hawking, this statement is pointless as our concept of Time did not exist. Time is a property of the Universe. Hawking's introduces the concept of 'imaginary time' and in such time, a 'time' that has nothing to do with our framework, there can be no beginning or end of the universe. To understand more of his concept of 'imaginary time', it is necessary to read *The Universe*. You will need it to understand the more complex terrain of elementary particles and quantum physics.

Matter is what serves to curve space/time. This implies that matter fills space in such a way as to push it aside and is therefore cut off from the rest of the universe. Such areas form islands in the the Universe and these are known as black holes. If anything falls into a black hole, it never comes out again. A black hole is so compacted that it bears resemblance to the universe in its beginning. To escape a black hole, one has to overcome the speed of light, which according to Einstein's relativity theory, is impossible. And yet, it seems, minuscule particles do in fact seep out. And so starts a new history. A new singularity comes into existence. It is feasible that our own universe is the result of just such a singularity. And it follows that if more singularities can arise, then there must be more universes in existence.

Now that is a mind expanding thought! The question begs: What happens if an astronaut falls into a black hole? Will his matter be destroyed or will he pop out in another universe? Stuff for Science Fiction writers! But tragically for us, we are just a part of it all and the rest escapes our observation.

In answer to the question of whether God exists, Stephen Hawking answers, "I have shown that the manner in which the Universe came into existence is not necessarily the whim of a personalised deity. If you rephrase the question as to why the the Universe exists, then perhaps God can provide answers for those who want such."

To escape a black hole, one has to overcome the speed of light, which according to Einsteins relativity theory, is impossible.

Predetermined

If everything in the Universe is regulated into patterns then one wonders whether our free will does operate or has everything been predetermined? This question has kept many a philosopher,

priest and lay man pondering for centuries already.

Stephen Hawking explains that our minds are so complex, that so many connections can be made that an uncertainty principle also arises and possibly that is what we experience as free will. But that's not for certain.

Perhaps that is both our joy and our despair. For day to day life, these matters are not so important. For as long as we are unaware of the basis of our motivation, we can believe that a free will does exist. And if everything is predetermined, then we cannot know to what end either.

Hashy Dog Tale

by Fraser Clark

OUR ACCESS ALL LEVELS reporter

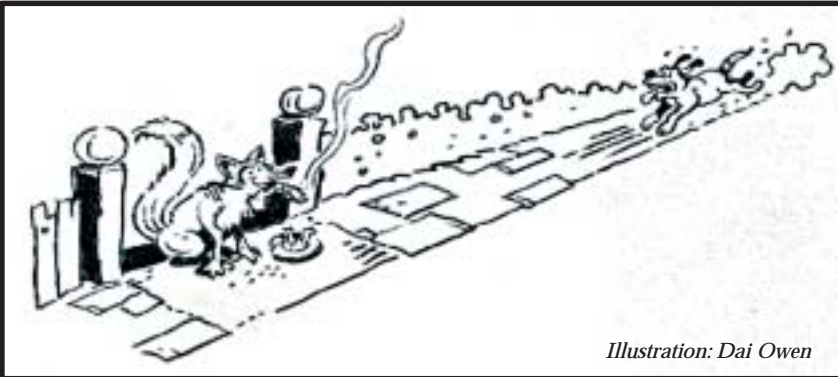


Illustration: Dai Owen

I'd rolled a particularly fat one that night. Not the fattest ever, but slightly unusually large. Why? I'd grokked it was the anniversary of the first time Suzi and I went to bed - not that Suzi's anything more than slightly special to me, like the fatty. I'd been looking for this small piece of second shake Moroccan hash I'd lost, when I'd happened upon something she must have dropped under the couch days before. Anyway, failing to find it, the hash, I unpeeled a new quarter ounce of a slightly better second shake, in the words of my regular man anyway.

So, something in me concluded I was owed a fatter one than usual, partly to celebrate the Suzi anniversary and partly to celebrate opening a new chunk.

The clock said 5am, I'd been banging away on the computer since Newsnight ended.. And I'd no sooner finished this aforesaid larger than average fatty when I realised I was ready for bed.

Which means something completely different to dog owners than to the rest of the population. Not that I think I 'own' my dog, Jonty, but that would need a whole book.

It wasn't time to stagger through to bed, doing ablutions on the way, snuggle down and dream into some sense the unclosed rag-ends of the day, not at all, it was time to don shoes and jacket, try to calm Jaunty down so he didn't wake the neighbours, and go for bloomin' walkies!

I tell you, every single time that delicious moment has come over me since he and I teamed up, that melting golden second when every part of you seems in total agreement that Dreamtime is due, I have never wanted to go for bloomin' walkies!

But I'll tell you something else. Every single time, without exception, when

he's finally got me out there, I've rejoiced! The palely delicate blue-grey promise of the new day, stealing like a shy virgin toward her one day's reign, lies across the silent, tree-lined streets as I follow eager greyhound bum down pavement. And it always mysteriously turns out I wasn't nearly as tired as I thought!

In these night-time walkies he runs ahead, fully trained (99%) to stick on the pavement. As a Lurcher, it's never entered his head that he's in this world for anything but hunting - cats, foxes or squirrels on these nightly rambles. (He looks at me as I type, as if to point out I'm ignoring scratching, eating, farting and sleeping).

So he runs ahead, popping experimentally into every second or third gate in the hope of dislodging something into flight, and often jumping from garden to garden when the dividing walls or hedges are permeable. I always run this movie in my head, shot from a helicopter, where each garden's security light acknowledges this guy one by one as he walks a dark street - the unseen parallel dog!

Johnty never catches anything, by the way, though he usually parcels a cat or two up a tree or two; and as for foxes - that encounter can sometimes chase its tail round two whole buildings!

Tonight seemed a particularly fecund night, for immediately came the scrape of paws on concrete as he hit top acceleration gear and rocketed ahead at 50 mph down the pavement into the gloom. I reckon the cross of three quarters Whippet and one quarter Pit Bull must make him the world's fastest dog over 50 yards.

I saw the fox he was after (though remember that fatty, and, anyway, I'm still not sure it was a fox). A cool customer anyway, for he sat there calm

as you like while Jonty hurtled the 30 yards between them. Then, at the very last second, with slaving hound almost upon him (I even wondered if he was going to stand and fight!) he suddenly seemed to re-enter consensus reality to scoot off left, out of view, into a garden, with Jaunty a second behind.

As my own philosophical stroll gained the half way stage of the dog's sprint, Jaunty re-appeared, walked a few yards towards me, and then lay down flat! Unprecedented behaviour!

As I reached him, I was looking at what appeared to be a sleeping dog. Had the fox actually fought him? Was he playing at something? "Jonty?" I tried, unsure what to do. But I instantly grew alarmed when he showed no response. Kneeling beside him, I stroked his suddenly little head. He was just a body - oh, but what a tiny helpless body! With whatever he actually is gone, it was just this grey-brown slab. "Jaunty!"

[Then I remembered that, the night before, I'd had this odd dream (but which dream isn't?) I was some kinda molecule in the dream (whose atoms had democratic votes) and this demon was trying to pull some of us off to the side and get us to unite to make something I didn't like. I wanted to rejoin and unite with all the molecules to make something much better. Ever had that kind of dream?]

Then he lifted his head, rolled a white eye that I fancied took me in, and said, though without moving his lips: "Whassitallabout, man?" and collapsed again. He was alive! The fox must have turned on him! This tiny guy would have had no chance against a wild animal. Right? And had he really spoken?! It's never happened before or since.

Molecule by molecule, over the next few minutes, Jonty returned from somewhere. Presently he was sniffing around again while I was simultaneously rejoicing and despairing - how our two consciousnesses could communicate to uncover what had happened! Had some part of his mind really talked to me?! Or had some part of my mind just 'heard' it?

He'd definitely been unconscious, that's one of the few unassailable facts in this hashy dog story. I checked his body for blood or wounds to see if the fox had attacked him. Nothing,

thank goddess! Doggess?

It occurred to me half way through the next day what has maybe already occurred to you: that missing piece of Moroccan! I've never (knowingly) found it. Had Jaunty glopped it down, to be hit by it as he raced along? But what about the voice? And he's never shown any interest in the stuff since - which, on the other hand, might be entirely logical.

Do you suppose, if Heaven exists, that it's all recorded in some akashic record which, when I get there, I can look up? Maybe.

Anyway, by a fortnight later, having discussed it with any friend willing to give me the space, here's the conclusion I've squatted. A two year old dog which attempts a right-angled turn at 50mph is going to learn a great deal about the laws of physics and mechanics. Yes, I've concluded he veered sideways into a wall and plumb knocked himself out, briefly came to, staggered instinctively towards the Security of his Pack (me, Perfect Master), and then fainted again.

An ex military friend tells me that's quite impossible for a dog to do, however.

The voice? Well, there was the shock I was in. And there was... that fatty! With the new hash.

Should a hashy dog story have a moral? Here it is, just in case. Like JohnT, we enter this world knowing we can do everything. Don't leave it knowing you've done nothing :)

When I read the this story to the most ancient hippy I know, he reckoned the hash came on, and on some level the fox waited for Jaunty to come round the corner, and then addressed him thus: "Cool it, puppy boy. Why are you chasing me? We're all dogs together, bro." At which point Jaunty was enlightened. And promptly lost consciousness!

Is that why he called me "man"?

I don't believe that for a moment, of course, but it does tie in with my dream the night before about all us molecules becoming One. So maybe it's true on some other level?

And no, if i had any more dreams after that, i can't remember them.

Hunter's Bar and Coffeeshop, Amsterdam

So, you're fresh off the plane, you walk out of Central Station, and there it is: Amsterdam. In a city of almost 300 coffeeshops it's difficult to distinguish between the good and the bad, the rowdy and relaxing. Few coffeeshops still serve alcohol, either because they opened after liquor licenses were disallowed or due to the more hectic atmosphere that sometimes results when patrons mix THC and booze. One exception among few is Hunter's Bar and Coffeeshop. A few minutes walk from Central Station lands you in a relaxed, roomy shop where you can smoke your first spliff off the plane. An extensive selection of liquor adds to a crowded beer list, and if that's not enough, will a bottle of champagne satisfy you? The interior matches the slightly chaotic local atmosphere but is surprisingly spacious and has ample seating. There are several coin-op Internet accessible computers and lots of local events fliers to keep you busy. At press time the shop and website were facing renovation, so you may not get to see the old pool table sunk into the ceiling. While drinking your carefully selected pint (most are still under a fiver!) you can munch on lots of snacks and nuts. Local DJs spin on weekends, but the shop welcomes those who happen to be traveling with their own records. While your mates listen to you make an ass out of yourself on the decks, they can skin up some very tasty weed,

all from an extensive and well-labeled menu. Buddha's Sister, Kalimist, and NY Diesel all seem to be favorites, and you can also purchase seeds from the Growi, Soma, and

Nirvana companies. While the interior is slightly dim and it's a bit of a shock to stumble back into the bright street, the music is chill and well selected and the staff is very friendly. And one last thing- this may be the only coffeeshop that sells mobile phone credit! - KS



Hunter's Bar and Coffeeshop,
Warmoesstraat 24, Amsterdam
Open daily from 8AM until 1AM, Fridays and Saturdays until 3AM.

Cobeco Pharma, Rotterdam

Energy and smart lifestyles

Situated in Rotterdam, the largest Dutch producer of lifestyle products is Cobeco Pharma. They prepare food supplements with herb extracts and vitamin preparations. Cobeco Pharma distribute 20% of their own products whilst 80% is bought up by wholesalers who subsequently market under their own name. Since the early Nineties, Cobeco Pharma Manufacturing has been supporting the development of large and small businesses trading in nutritional supplements, sport supplements and cosmetics. Companies approach Cobeco Pharma Manufacturing with ideas for new products and they will then work out the details from concept to end product with total discretion and in complete confidence for the clients idea, composition and design. Plus they take the legal requirements that have been set as standards by countless European and International institutions into account. They have all the necessary expertise in house. For product development they have a laboratory and a pharmacy where once the product has been created it can be worked into tablet form or capsules, powders, solutions, drinks, creams, gel or lotion. They also organise the packaging into pots and bottles, dispensers, tubes, all complete with the information leaflet and a box. They also have a design department for designs and labels. The only thing they do not have is their own printers. Service, speed and efficiency are the most important foundations for this company. Ten percent of the products of Cobeco Pharma Worldwide comprise smart products.

These nutritional supplements originating from anti-depressives such as Extacy work synergetically and so stimulate positive feelings. As of 6 April, the main ingredient of smart products, Ephedra has been banned. Cobeco Pharma is the first to come up with a completely new product line not using Ephedra. The name is Lifestyle



Products. Once again, consumers can choose amongst eighteen new lifestyle products for body & mind, party & after-party, repair & represent or sex& relaxation.

Be smart and surf to www.lifestyle-products.nl and make life pleasant again.

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't Nes Café, Amsterdam

Attention irritating tourists: looking for a super-trendy, packed, souvenir-laden coffeeshop dripping with neon lights? Then go someplace else, as the Nes Café will disappoint you. This shop goes against the commercial principles of over-charging naïve tourists for mass-produced smoke and cheap memorabilia. The unassuming café, open and owned by Frans Tames since 1991, is centrally located just off of Dam Square, around the corner from the famous Dam Monument. Check out the Nes website (which could use a good spelling/grammar check, but it's my only complaint) for the history of the place and some amusing links, as well as live feed from the pool table. A modest terrace and tidy bar disguise a licensed coffeeshop that fools many tourists who don't look twice. Once you've visited a few of the chain shops, the international atmosphere and relaxed vibe in this place will be refreshing. Don't worry, the chatty bar staff will keep you from drifting off.... The hash menu contains some interesting labels, like the Varanasi, and the selections are true to their names. You can even choose from several price ranges of Ice-o-Lator hash. The weed menu consists only of tasty, unique varieties grown in soil, without any chemical flavour. At first glance, one might think that the menu prices might denote lower quality, as is common in Amsterdam, but at the Nes it's just the opposite: why not sell high-quality smoke at non-Amsterdam prices, and offer honest advice as well? I'd say that the specials are more economical because they last longer than the one-gram bags, but when you taste bio weed like the Sour Diesel, Copper Sativa, and Hindu Kush, it'll be hard to put down the Rizlas.

For those of you who can handle mixing booze and THC, drinks flow from the usual hot and cold into the hard stuff. Locals/expats make up a large percentage of the crowd, a good sign, and are usually slugging Gulpener, Leffe, or Zatte, an Amsterdam brew that sneaks up on you. While the Nes Café has a distinctive sports bar atmosphere, it's



never intimidating (ladies!) as you can play a game of chess or check your email for free while waiting to get your ass kicked at pool (on a Brunswick, no less). The music is a refreshing change from whiny mainstream pop, as random blues albums or classic reggae is often playing. The shop is appropriately lit and clean with varied seating, and much more welcoming than most smoking bars. The high level of service here should not be expected in too many other places. Tip the guys (and gal) and buy them a drink. - KS

't Nes Café
Nes 33 • 1012 KC Amsterdam
Tel: +31 (0)20 623 4250 • Website: www.nes-cafe.nl
Open: Tuesday- Thursday 17:00-01:00
Friday, Saturday 13:00-03:00 • Sunday 13:00-01:00
Closed Mondays

Spectrum 311.

'Lying Eyes'.



This is the debut release for North London trio who take their name from their favourite hydroponic grow lamp. The

influence of the crop in question is clearly audible in this atmospheric, hypnotic and catchy tune with its deep bass, wah wah guitar and moody, echoing vocal. In a dubbed out remix emanating from the fingertips of Juan McLean, currently favoured leftfield producer, detailed percussion and Eastern trumpets bring a contrasting lightness resulting in a well chilled out head thrill. Look out for this outfits album to be released at the end of the year.

Vatos Locos.

'Attack and Release'.

Dragonfly Records



Recorded in both Mexico City and Ibiza, this recent release on the respected Dragonfly label is very well made, full throttle, full bodied

trance music. This is trance, as it should sound, not as it often does, tinny and empty. Held together by a pounding acid bass line, the tunes build up and rise and fall in a way that definitely makes you want to dance and once up there, achieve that shamanic dance floor state. Swirling, psychedelic chant like vocals fly through, adding colour and a kind of higher resonance to this sonic trip to inner space. The melodies are catchy but not cheesy and there's wicked acceeed sounds and effects used throughout. Even for dance music lovers not usually so into the trance thing, this album is well worth checking out.

Wayne Smith.

'Under Me Sleng Teng'.

Greensleeves



This comes as one of a crop of re-releases of classic J.A. reggae albums from the Greensleeves stable, all being made available at a very affordable price. The actual tune

HOT WAX

By Kaz Peet

A STONED SELECTION

'Under Me Sleng Teng', widely sampled and used with brilliant impact on the underground dance and sound system scene, appears along with its' dub version on this excellent roots, dancehall album, originally released in 1986. Other recent re-releases include Doctor Alimantado's 'Born For A Purpose', Hugh Mundell, 'Mundell', Eek-A-Mouse, 'Mouseketeer', Rankin Joe, 'Weakheart Fadeaway' and Yellowman's 'Nobody Move Nobody Get Hurt'.

Aim.

'Fabriclive. 17'.

Fabriclondon.



The Fabric CD series continues with an imaginatively groovy live mix from one of the clubs resident DJ's, Andy Turner, aka Aim.

Defying musical boundaries the selection, like his DJ sets, includes hip hop, soul, funk, jazz and there's even a touch of the mellow end of sixties psychedelia with the beautiful 'Wasn't Born To Follow' from The Byrds. A keen record collector from an early age as well as a self taught music producer, Aim presents us with an unhurried journey through his record collection and influences. The hip-hop element always deep and cutting edge, includes choice pieces from Scott Lark, Lewis Parker, Boogiemonsters, A Tribe Called Quest, Ice Cube as well as the classic track 'Faith' by Lords Of The Underground. On the funk side there's the truly fantastic 'I Don't Need No Doctor' by The Village Callers alongside tunes from Telegraph Avenue and Tempo 70. To please the collectors amongst us the big band jazz sound of Tom Scott with the very rare 'Today' is included. Fingathing, a member of which Aim often works with to produce his own music, nicely rounds of this sonic voyage with the pure ambience of 'Lady Nebula'.

Compilation.

'Is It Rolling Bob?'

Sanctuary Records



With it's unique concept of a reggae tribute to Bob Dylan, his songs being performed here by well respected artists,

this album works extremely well. Bringing together quite a range of styles, tracks include 'Just Like A Woman' sung by Beres Hammond with his sweet serenading tones, the gutsy roots of Nasio with Drummie Zeb & The Razor Posse doing a version of 'Gotta Serve Somebody' to the pipe scorched throaty frontage of Gregory Isaacs delivering 'Mr. Tambourine Man'. What really makes this album is it's most far and away outstanding track, courtesy of da man kall Sizzla with his version of 'Subterranean Homesick Blues'. Always a singer of deep songs he blends pure ragga wickedness and bad bass riddim with the tunes original gentle melody and Dylan's lyrical political genius to absolutely brilliant effect.

Youth.

'A New Chapter In Dub Vol. 2 The Secret Language of Ordinary Objects.'

Dragonfly Records



A classy new work from Youth and posse, this psychedelic dub album is captivating and enthralling throughout. Opening with 'apple tree in my backyard', a piece that Youth co-wrote with Alex Patterson, aka The Orb, things kick in to a suitably trippy start. At its core the album is a well crafted, mellow paced and uplifting bouncy trance sound with a deep bass substrata. Echoed and delayed vocal inserts make

timely appearances adding to the overall hypnotic, entraining and heady feel. The closing tune, 'the golden legend' (take me dancing where the sun meets the sea mix) by dub trees, has full, dub treated lyrics, so ending this spiral of sound in a more rootsy, gritty kind of way.

Craig Armstrong.

'Piano Works'.

Sanctuary Records



This neo-classical release features 19 piano pieces from the well regarded Craig Armstrong and is absolutely perfect for

when you need to totally destress and be transported to a blissful place of peace and relaxation. Never dull, it stirs the listener's own imagination with a sense of joy and ease into a movie of one's own making. Craig Armstrong is a composer who draws from the past as well as looking to the future with techniques such as the inclusion of electronic tones and sounds. This album features piano versions of Massive Attack's 'Weather Storm' and 'Heatmiser' as well as themes from the films 'Love Actually', 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'Moulin Rouge'.

Compilation.

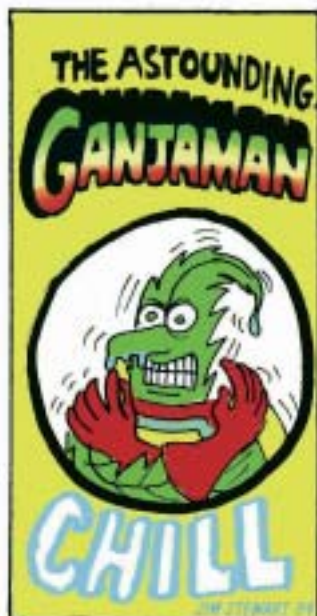
'Scoobay!' Greensleeves.



This wicked new rhythm album from Greensleeves features the latest and hottest acts and tunes currently being played in the

dancehalls of Kingston, Jamaica. The selection ranges from the more long established stars such as Beenie Man, Wayne Wonder, Elephant Man and Mad Cobra to the newer blood like Vybz Kartel and Lextus. Two sisters stand out from the crowd; Martina with 'Inna Di Centre' and the fabulous, Lady G with her dirty, takes no prisoners vocal style, here performing 'Finger Licking'.

This music, often dealing with serious issues or the news of the day always has a knack of making you smile, with, for instance, silly lyrical rhymes. Apart from it being brilliant dance music to get really loose, it is perhaps in this integral humour where the incessant magic of ragga and dancehall lies.



The Rasta Who Flew Too High

by Fraser Clark

OUR ACCESS ALL LEVELS reporter.

The name's Rusty, 38, first came to England from Antigua on an orphan exchange when I was 14. (*He produces a plastic milk crate for me to sit the tape on, and tidies up his array of CDs on the pavement*)

So my first smoke was free weed by the roadside as a kid. And obviously I'm a black man, so then I became a Rastafarian, grew my dreadlocks, and got involved with marijuana and all that. I arrived in England a smoker, so, naturally, I started dealing, just making a living, and slowly I started meeting bigger connections.... We're talking the '80s through to '92, '93.

My girl friend's a high flier, and she gets a student transfer to Holland to do media and drama. And because I loved her so much, I followed her, to the Hague. In the local coffeeshop I met this grower Colin who took me in so to speak, he loves the whole Rasta ganja concept, and West Indian was unusual for him, so he says 'I got greenhouses, I'll pay you to help me out growing!' So that's where I learned the whole growing concept.

He supplied the local coffee shops, doing 200 plant runs, 3 month cycles. I became his hands and eyes - and watchdog when he was off doing the business. As a bit of an old hippy, he was glad to download the harder work

Basically I was growing super skunk, but when Jack Herer arrived we took on that strain, and then we cross-bred our own. By the end of my girlfriend's three year course, I was doing everything, extraction, spidermite, everything.

Colin was upset I was going cos there was a trust there, he knew his babies were safe while I was hands-on, because being there on a daily basis is the only way to do it right.

Back in London I got this marketing job for a healthy cereal bar, *Multigrain* or something, for *Kellogg's*. I was vegetarian, see, so it interested me, and the sales people were great, taking on a Rasta vegetarian who was ready to wear a suit. Then it started dawning on me: London ganja was not only shit, it was £150 an ounce! Why work for peanut bars and the taxman when I could introduce my own system into England?! When I'm done calculating, quality, money, I started

thinking... *I could be a millionaire!!*

Doing something I believe in!

So, instead of working for the Man, *Kellogg's* funded my first harvest, £750 on the necessary equipment, extractors, lights, tubes, plants.

So how did your first harvest go?

Pretty well. I ended up with 4 or 5 kilos of dynamite stuff. Pushing it out at £120 an ounce gave me £15,000 in my pocket. Then I doubled up.

Did your second harvest go as well?

You've always got to watch over your system. It's timer-fed, lights are automatic, you don't have to be there, but you do! - to check your extractors are working, say, because you'll get dampness, your buds will rot in the stagnant air, other times you overheat, something gets blocked... Anyway, I got the cycle down to 2 months, more plants in there, and now I'm using my cuttings, not seeds.

My girl friend's got a job now, flying high, wants to tie me down! But I'm "growing" myself, I'm blossoming into this Big Time Operator, I'm a Player!

How did you deal with all the money?

If it's in the house I'll get burgled, so I shove it in banks and building societies, in my own name, I was that naïve. Colin never taught me the business side!

Paranoid?

Obviously, to some extent - it was minimum half kilos now. Mostly to black guys, yeah. They couldn't believe my stuff, they'd go *phaww, where you get this shit?!!* And now I'm living high! Driving a big BMW, I got a flat in the West End, gold chains round my neck. You could say the Greed had me by the short hairs. I saw myself as a Rastafarian though - farming great weed matched my vegetarian principles, I was selling at fair prices, and prospering righteously! No way was I doing anything immoral, except cheating the electric company!

Were you a nice guy? Generous?

Actually, very nice. I wonder why I gave so much away sometimes. Like

now (glancing ironically at the queue for the hole in the wall beside him) But it was like a never-ending stream - I totally lost respect for it. I went on a £2000 one week cruise once - just around Europe! It was a roller coaster for nearly 4 years. I must have spent over a million altogether. A big house on Ealing Common, clothes, best restaurants, mixing with the pillars of society.

How did you pass the money off?

Inherited from my parents, musicians in the Caribbean, hence nobody had heard of them. An independently wealthy vegetarian Rasta who always had fine quality grass must be an ok person, not a pimp or a Drug Pusher!

So how did it go wrong? Was it gradual, or sudden?

The event was sudden. But you look back and wonder if something had already been going wrong. Most of my original connections had dropped out, made enough or whatever, like shopkeepers giving up their shop. I was making new connections. Cos I was the Skunk Man, with kilos. Now it was dealing with people I didn't know. The black London scene, you know, young black boys with their expensive everything, the hard fast life - I looked like that myself of course! I started worrying about rip-offs - guns and shit, there was enough temptation. When I thought back... certain individuals? Maybe that grow shop? So one day I'm with my babes in our Love Lab when BAFF! What's that, electric go down? Then it's steps down the stairs and the cellar door bursting inwards on itself. They'd smashed their way right through the house. Stay where you are! About 25 cops. It turned out they'd been watching me. In court they showed pictures of me going in and out of the house.

BRITISH BORN ANTIGUAN IN POSH HOUSE WHERE TENANTS WERE MARIJUANA PLANTS!

That was the headline. Street value: £1million. Actually about £40,000. And of course, since I'd been banking in my own name, they seized everything, £75,000 in my main Barclays account alone.

On remand for 7 months, I knew I was going down. I decided to say I'm very sorry, your honour, I won't do it again. I didn't cut my hair so the judge could see a Rastafarian having a serious change of heart, giving up his religious beliefs. Well, I got 3 years.

The whole time in jail I was bitter, I'd lost all my money, my friends - who didn't visit. I used to think: just wait, you thought I was big before, but I'm going to pollute London with the most powerful skunk ever.

When I got out, I stayed with so-called friends but wasn't so welcome now. I told my probation officer I'd be out on the streets soon and she found this probation hostel where I had to be in by 9pm! Well, after 2 weeks I came back an hour late, and BOOM I'd broken my agreement. The probation can't help me either cos I've broken their rules.. the Council's tied in with the hostels... I'm Priority for a council house because I'm just out of prison, so when my name comes up I'll get one.

But in the meantime I've "*voluntarily made myself homeless.*" I can still sign on as Homeless Priority or something at Kings Cross every day. In the end it's just too much hassle, it's a lifestyle, they're all junkies around Kings Cross. I was sleeping in doorways and parks.

That whole trip was such a humbling experience that I switched from turning on the world to not wanting to ever risk going back there again! I want to revenge myself on the system, but it's just not worth risking my freedom. And once I accepted there are laws in life, the bitterness just dissolved. The circles I'd been moving in weren't good circles, it was all image, probably making their money doing bad things, or their parents did. What happened to me was I GOT LOST IN THE MONEY THING FOR A BIT.

Ok, Rusty. Most readers probably dream of doing what you did. Any advice?

Don't get caught! And... if you do what you do, don't be flash with it. Don't let the money change your life, that was my downfall.

Can I have my 50 quid now, Mr Fraser?

When: July 1 2004
Where: Casterney, Holland
Number of plants: 4100
Details: The plantation was busted because the local power company detected 'suspicious power leakages' in the area. All plants (still in vegmode, what a bummer) were immediately destroyed and all equipment was seized by local police. 1 Man was arrested on the spot.

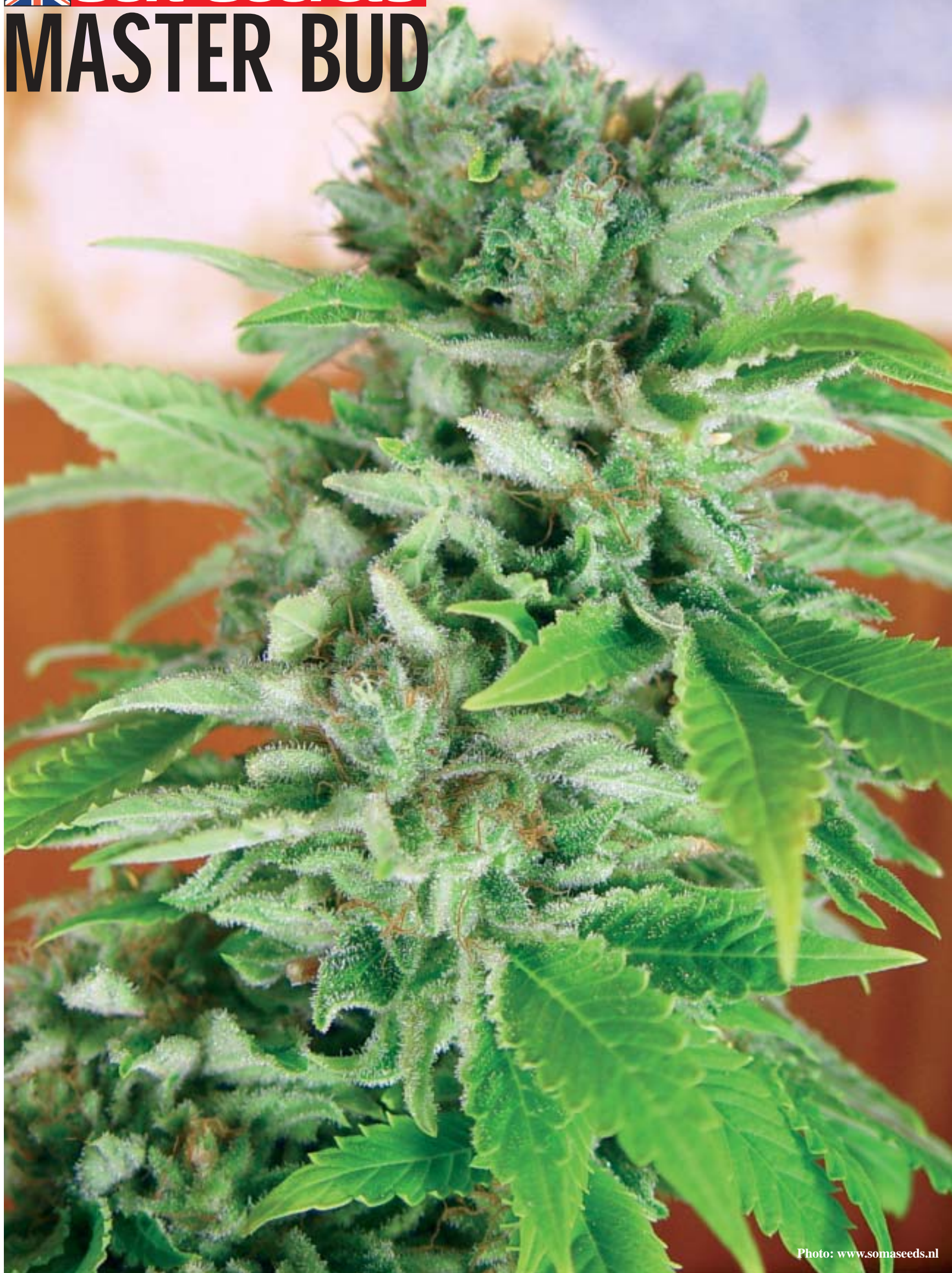
Photos: Gé Hirdes



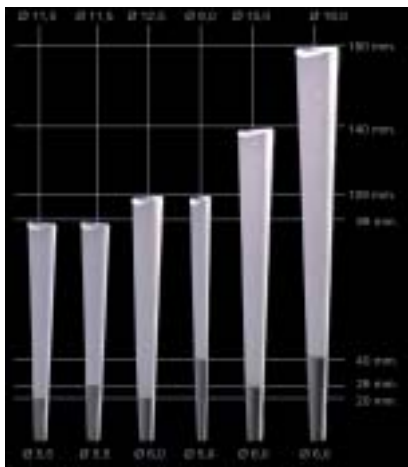
BUST OF THE MONTH

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That's a lot of blow, folks...

Picture this: you're the owner of a coffeeshop, one frequented by loads of

Kristie Szalanski

tourists who are challenged in the "skinning up" department. Let's say you have a mate with you that you've suckered into helping you prepare the herbal feast for tomorrow's hungry stoners. You've got two people, four kilos of weed or mix, a night shift to kill, and a MACH 6 machine from Vandenberg Special Products/Mountainhigh. What the hell is that, you ask? It's a joint centrifuge that produces 108 neatly rolled spliffs in just two minutes. You just can't make this stuff up....

In 1994, Martin Vandenberg was building machines. His brother Arthur was selling adverts. The two happened upon their brainchild at a party one evening while wondering why coffeeshops continued to roll joints by hand when a machine could probably do it. Another consideration was the hygienic concerns about smoking a pre-licked spliff. From there the two spent seven months developing the invention that has almost replaced the old-fashioned pre-roll. These spliffs are streamlined: the mix is perfectly packed into the pre-fab cones (complete with filter tip) by centrifugal force. You tap each cone into its slot, dump the green stuff on top, smooth it over the machine, close the lid, and press the button. A few minutes later, each section can be tapped onto a flat surface, and the joints pop out of the top. Twist the tops and you're ready to smoke. Or sell....

As if that's not enough, you can even have each paper cone printed with a basic one- or more coloured logo: from the shop, or to denote the contents. Popular choices are "weed" vs. "hash," or "pure" vs. "mixed." Imagine how impressed you'd be if as a pre-roll weary tourist you're presented with a perfectly rolled, labelled cone. Of course, it's up to the individual shops to impress you with the contents of the spliff. While some who've sampled the fruits of the MACH 6 complain that the mix is packed too tightly, making the act of smoking an effort, others claim that the speed, ease, and uniformity of the mass-produced pre-rolls makes up for the slight strain

on the smokers. Novelty, of course, also still counts for a lot. Individuals as well as retailers seem to be gaining curiosity regarding the Mountain High products. Www.mountainhigh.nl offers the basic range of "Cones" products, and supply and demand has worked in the company's favour. Evidence of this can be seen in the wide variety of pre-fab paper combos that are displayed in the company's wholesale catalogue (which is very well presented, by the way). Smokers who can't be bothered to roll simply empty their ground-up weed/hash/tobacco into the waiting paper cone. Mountain High strives to use the thinnest paper possible to ensure that you taste the contents and not the container. The Cones range in length from 98 to 180mm, and end filters run from 20mm to 40mm in length. Whether you prefer a short, thin hashie with a long, slender filter or a big fat four-gram cannon, there is a perfectly rolled cone for you. All of the paper cones arrive to you in a recloseable pack that nestles the filled product between moulded acrylic and a thin piece of cardboard. Simply fold back the top of the package, slide out the plastic sheet, and either tuck them in or set them free! The cones are packaged in singles, three-packs, six-pack singles (Joints a la carte), eco paper 15-packs, and even 25-piece and 50-piece packs. The "Cool Box" links the Cones lines with the MACH 6, and can be used by individuals and retailers to manufacture "moderate" quantities of joints, up to 60 spliffs in one or two sizes. As an extra bonus, there is even a special range of "reefer" Cones, specially made for pure joints and equipped with an extra-long filter. All of the Cones products can be filled in the Mach6 / Coolbox and the new Vibrations series machines and then packaged in one of their exclusive novelty packs. The machine itself can be adjusted (via rotational speed) for a tighter or looser roll. You decide how many or how few to roll; and you can even request "made to measure" forms, cones, and tips. Each spliff from the MACH 6 machine is uniformly packed, sealed (without saliva!), and has only a 3mm paper overlap and a 0.7mm glued seam. The end result is great for home, coffeeshops, vending machines, and

Win cool gadgets!

Win a Mountain High surprise package, containing cool Mountain High gadgets from Holland! All you have to do is answer the following question: How many joints can be produced with the New Vibrations series of Mountain High? Send your answer on a postcard to the folks of Mountain High and the first 10 entries will receive their package automatically at home. Do not forget to spell your name and address correctly!

Vandenberg Special Products b.v., P.O. Box 91083, 3007 MB Rotterdam, NL Website: www.mountainhigh.nl E-mail: info@mountainhigh.nl Tel.: 0031 (0) 186 60 55 90, Fax: 0031 (0) 186 60 55 92

festivals. Mountainhigh.nl posts all the technical details regarding the mechanics of the MACH 6.

If none of this impresses you, check out the Mountain High site and see if any of their other product collections thrills you. Ten new lines have been introduced since the company's inception, including six-packs with empty cones, novelty postcards with space for a display spliff, seed packaging gear with a handy roller thingy (definitely the technical name for it), and the joints "a la carte" for the casual smoker on the go. All of the background prints can be chosen from a wide variety of colourful designs, and the cone-oriented packs are all resealable acrylic and cardboard so you can safely store the freshly packed spliffs. Vandenberg Special Products also offers commercial printing services for smokers and non-. Check out their website to witness their product lines in full splendour, order a catalogue, or even request a demonstration of the monster MACH 6 joint centrifuge. Oh, and by the way, for those of you who still have a short-term memory, with the Mountain High machine, you can produce 2,000-10,000 joints a day. Got a light?

CANNABIS EVENTS

2nd Marihuana Cup of Valencia High Quality Seeds takes 2nd prize

Spanish smokers and growers converged recently to participate in the II Marihuana Cup of Valencia. Usually, cannabis competitions in Spain last a few days, and a few die-hard stragglers continue partying after the prizes have been awarded. In this case, licensing issues and a touch of police involvement (no surprise) prolonged the suspense for considerable time.

The competition itself was based on entries either in the Sativa category or, of course, the Indica family. In order to participate, each contestant had to present a minimum of ten grams to be distributed to several different types of judges. (Miguel Gimeno became everyone's friend when he brought 50 grams of his own crop to be raffled off.). If the grower wished to participate in the "Expert Jury Prize," several more grams were handed over. Seven of the

ten were distributed to the judges to be scored, then two of the remaining three were handed out to the "Popular Jury," comprised of everyone who was in attendance. The final one-gram bag was kept as a sort of "control group," proof that the entry existed and used in case of ties or complaints. While three months of organization and planning was culminating in the Judges' area, the "Popular Jury" was receiving their small samples and planning to return for the closing ceremony.



The lucky venue was the Café Munchies, appropriately, and the lucky winner was Sensi Seeds. Jack Herer took the first in Sativas, grown by Jose Daniel T., and the number one Indica went to a Black Domina from Jorge C. High Quality Seeds placed second in the Sativas with the Durban Poison Amazing Special presented by Raul R., which is popular in Valencia for its "penetrating smell," fruity flavour, and strong effect. The second place Indica went to Tt, produced by Jose David B., also earning him the "Expert Jury Prize." The other "Expert Jury" went to another strain from the Iberic Cannabiogen Bank, which was called Capricho. This winner was presented by



Luis M. and Leshaze from Maria Luisa C. The "Popular Jury Prize" was awarded to a Northern Lights x Shiva presented by Miguel H.

All who attended enjoyed themselves immensely and were able to sample many different varieties of cannabis. From 120 selections, the judges narrowed the field to 40 competitors. As Nol van Schaik said of the entries, "These are very good marihuana [varieties,] no doubt the sun of Spain produces very good hemp; what's more there are lots of Dutch genetics, but also very interesting Spanish sativas."



Conviction for possession with intent to supply Cannabis factory 'was for dealing'

Bristol Evening Post (Final)
Friday 14, May 2004

A BUILDER who turned his South Gloucestershire home into a cannabis factory has been found guilty of possessing the drug with intent to supply.

Bristol Crown Court heard that John Kemp, aged 34, converted the first floor and attic of the Grove, Rangeworthy, into a cannabis factory full of the illicit crop.

Though he denied growing the drug with intent to supply it, a jury took just under an hour to convict him.

The recorder, Mr Richard Tyson, adjourned sentencing to a date to be fixed.

Kemp told the court that he suffered from nerves and claimed he was growing the drug purely for his own use.

After the hearing the father-of-two told the *Evening Post*: "How did they find me guilty? The cannabis was for me, I've never ever sold cannabis and I don't really understand how the jury reached its decision. I'm not impressed at all."

Andrew Macfarlane, prosecuting, said police went to Kemp's home in the early hours and, as they did so, a man ran from the property.

Mr Macfarlane said that, when police went to Kemp's rented home, they found cannabis plants in all four

by GEOFF BENNETT

bedrooms and the loft. A bed and a wardrobe had been put in the living-room, as well as a mattress. The first-floor bedrooms contained cannabis plants as well as growing paraphernalia, including lights, fertiliser and timing devices.

He said polythene had been put on the walls and windows to help with the cultivation.

The police calculated that some 3.5kg of cannabis was kept in the bedrooms and more was found in the loft.

If the drug was dealt, said Mr Macfarlane, the quantity would equate to some 9,000 street deals, with a street value in excess of £25,000.

Mr Macfarlane said: "We calculate that the crop would have taken Mr Kemp five to 11 years to smoke himself. If the defendant was attempting to grow this for his own consumption, we would ask: why the additional supply in the loft?"

"The Crown says it was a sophisticated production line designed for the commercial supply of cannabis."

The court heard that Kemp told police he had set up the first two bedrooms of his home for

cannabis-growing and decided to convert the rest. He admitted his family had to sleep downstairs and said he would have to spend half an hour every day tending to the plants and watering them.

He said all the upstairs rooms were used for growing apart from the bathroom — adding that he needed to have regular baths because of irritation caused by the plants.

Timing devices costing £1,500 meant that heating and lighting took care of the plants automatically, as well as providing a carbon dioxide supply between 7pm and 8am.

Mr Macfarlane said: "He says it was for his own consumption and he was pretty upset that he lost it all because he was a month away from full production."

Kneale Kimber, a forensic drugs consultant, told the court Kemp — who said he smoked about 3oz of cannabis a week — would not be able to work or drive having consumed that quantity.

Kemp committed the offence while on bail for a similar offence of cultivating plants in two rooms of a house in Mile Walk, the court heard.

For that offence, the court heard, in which Kemp admitted giving cannabis to his friends, he was ordered to serve a 150-hour community punishment order.

SUNDAY MAIL, 22 aug.04



Blown away: Hero

Cannabis 'superhero' slammed

ANTI-DRUGS campaigners have hit out at "immoral" comics starring a cannabis-smoking superhero called Ganjaman.

Hundreds of copies of the £3, 36-page adult comic, part of the Z-Men series, have already been sold in Scotland.

In the latest edition, Ganjaman — created by Glaswegian Jim Stewart, 39 — battles Doctor Bong, who poisons cigarettes so smokers become flesh-eating zombies.

Bong also sends henchmen to kill Chancellor Gordon Brown.

Gaile McCann, of Mothers Against Drugs, slammed the comics, saying: "Anything that pokes fun at Glasgow's dire drugs situation is a disgrace."

"These comics don't show the real damage cannabis can do. It can lead to schizophrenia and serious mental health problems."

Lancashire Evening Telegraph (Blackburn) Monday 24, May 2004

Sick OAP's U-turn bid fails after bribery claims

Granddad's Indian jail appeal misery

THE family of a frail granddad who was jailed in India for drugs offences fear he will die in prison after his appeal failed.

Ismail Mitha, 69, is said to be devastated when a Gujarat court threw out his appeal after prosecution lawyers claimed they had been offered bribes.

Mr Mitha, nine years into an 11-year sentence, is seriously ill with heart trouble and his family — from Pleckgate, Whalley Range and Revidge in Blackburn — are worried his spirit has been quashed after waiting four years for the hearing.

International pressure group Fair Trials Abroad earlier

By IAN SINGLETON
Telegraph Reporter

claimed Mr Mitha, a British citizen of 37 years, was framed by a "corrupt" Hindu police force that targeted him because he was a Muslim.

Today, the group's director, solicitor Stephen Jakobi, revealed his astonishment at the latest development. He said: "I think it is shameful that an allegation of bribery has not been followed up with some evidence. It is amazing it was not substantiated."

Mr Mitha's daughter, Rukana Mitha, 34, of Pleckgate, added: "We are back to square one. We are at a stage where we don't know what to do."

"My father is so frustrated and his health is deteriorating further. We are very worried about him."

"He was very optimistic about the appeal but now is very low."

Mr Mitha and his wife Amina, 70, divided their time between England and India, where the couple looked after a disabled relative.

In 1995, they returned to England for a wedding but headed back to India after receiving an urgent message that ethnic tensions had flared up in their Gujarati village.

Soon after, a dozen drugs charges were brought against them, relating to the many different places police claimed to find cannabis around the

property they were lodging at in Gujarat. It took almost five years for a trial to be concluded, during which time the couple were held in custody.

Mrs Mitha was cleared of all 12 charges but cannot leave the country because prosecutors appealed.

Mr Mitha was found guilty of possessing the cannabis police claimed to have found under a mattress, even though no one could verify its discovery.

He has already had two heart by-pass operations, one while in prison that the family paid for, and needs another urgently as his left renal artery is said to be 80 per cent blocked.

isingleton@the-lat.co.uk

South Wales Argus (Newport) Tuesday 11, May 2004

Sentence to stand, says judge

A MAN jailed for his role in a cannabis growing factory in a remote Welsh farmhouse has failed to get his sentence reduced.

Leonard David Pugh, 49, of Bull Street, Pontypool, was jailed for 12 months at Cardiff crown court on

February 2. He pleaded guilty to possessing cannabis with intent to supply and cultivating the drug at Lower Celllau Farm, Llangattock, Lingoed, in the Black Mountains near Abergavenny.

His co-accused, Kevin

John Brankley, was jailed for three years on the same charges, as well as for possessing, with intent to supply, powdered Ecstasy and amphetamine.

London's Criminal Appeal Court rejected submissions by Pugh's barrister,

Bernard Powell, that 12 months was "manifestly excessive".

"A sentence of 12 months was entirely appropriate and squarely within the bracket available to the learned Recorder," Mr Justice Hughes concluded.

Citizen (Gloucester) Friday 7, May 2004

Cannabis cash to be kept

A MAN jailed for his part in a multi-million-pound cannabis supply plot has had his £12,371 confiscation order overturned.

Henry Joseph Lunnon, 27, of Oldhams Caravan Park, Gloucester, was jailed for 13 months at Sheffield Crown Court in February 2003, after pleading guilty to conspiring to supply a Class B drug.

On May 14 last year, a judge made the confiscation order under the Drug Trafficking Offences Act.

London's Criminal Appeal Court yesterday quashed the order.

Mr Justice Eady, sitting with Lord Justice Kay and Mr Justice Royce, noted the basis of Lunnon's guilty plea to the conspiracy charge - accepted by the Crown at the time.

It included an acceptance that, before the relevant cannabis seizure, Lunnon had no previous involvement in drug trafficking.

On September 13, 2002, National Crime Squad officers arrested Lunnon and other men after a lorry was driven from Holland to Sheffield.

Sacks containing 1,892kg of cannabis blocks were found concealed in scrap metal. The estimated street value was between £4,731,650 and £5,677,980.

Part of the basis of Lunnon's guilty plea was that he became involved, without detailed knowledge of arrangements, and received no financial benefit.

In making the confiscation order, the crown court judge said Lunnon had admitted telling lies - relating to the ownership of a car - and there was scant documentation in respect of his business.

Irish Examiner (Cork) Thursday 13, May 2004

Crohn disease sufferer fined over growing cannabis 'medicine'

by Catherine Ketch

A WOMAN who was fined for growing cannabis to alleviate a serious illness yesterday said that she had been criminalised for taking her own medicine.

Xak Arooo of Rathgaskit, Ballyneary, Co Cork, was fined €250 by Macroom District Court last week after gardai found 69 cannabis plants at her home.

Ms Arooo's solicitor showed the court reports from a doctor and homeopath, attesting to the fact that his client suffers from Crohn's Disease.

"She told gardai that the plants were grown exclusively for her own use, and they accept that the supply found was enough for one year. It is also accepted that cannabis has some benefit for this incurable disease," he told the court.

"My client made no personal gain from these plants. She lives on her own and is a very quiet person. She



Xak Arooo: says drug helped alleviate the effects of Crohn's Disease

also accepts that she can't do this anymore."

Ms Arooo began smoking the drug for health reasons when she was 17 and has used it for several years. She says it eased her stomach cramps, gave her an appetite and also helped relieve the depression of coming to terms with being sick.

She also claims that nothing else has quite the same effect. "I've tried orthodox medicines and they actually inflamed the disease. The

side effects were exactly the same as the symptoms of Crohn's," Ms Arooo added.

She claims that cannabis is one of the oldest healing plants and contains 16 different healing substances. It is also used during childbirth and for PMT.

"There are a lot of companies in the US, Britain, Germany, Holland, etc, that are experimenting with the effects of cannabis on cancer, MS, Crohn's and those suffering from long-term debilitating diseases."

She also said the drug is a good relaxant, adding, "I'd rather smoke a spliff instead of taking a drink."

But since the plants were taken by gardai, she has turned to taking a drink to relax. "It is the only legal substance that I can get freely that actually numbs my pain," Ms Arooo said, claiming that she rarely drank before this. "My health has gone downhill. There's no way I can ever grow it again," she added.

Sentinel (Stoke-on-Trent) Final edition Wednesday 5, May 2004

Inquest adjourned on cannabis arrest man

AN INQUEST into the death of a man found hanging in his prison cell has been adjourned.

Michael Minshall, aged 44, of Rockside, Mow Cop, was found hanging from bed sheets in his cell at Walton Prison, Liverpool, on April 16.

He had been charged in connection with a £35 million cannabis haul at Liverpool Docks after cannabis resin was seized by Customs and Excise

officers. Mr Minshall faced charges of importing the drug and being concerned with its supply.

He was pronounced dead after fellow prisoners found him in his cell.

An inquest will be held on June 7, following an independent investigation into the death by The Prisons and Probation Office for England and Wales, (PPOEW) which investigates deaths in custody.

A spokesman for the PPOEW said: "At the moment it is too early to release details of the investigation."

"We expect the investigation will last between six and eight weeks," added the spokesman.

Cause of death has yet to be released.

Mr Minshall's relatives have declined to comment and will await the investigation results.

Evening Gazette (Colchester) Monday 3, May 2004

Police discovered ecstasy and cannabis in car

Drugs found: singer jailed

A PROFESSIONAL singer has been jailed after police found ecstasy in his car.

Ian Hyam was stopped by officers after they had to avoid his car as it came towards them in Mersea Road, Abberton.

A breath test proved negative but when his car was searched, 57 ecstasy tablets and small amounts of amphetamines and cannabis were found, Chelmsford Crown Court heard.

Hyam, 41, claimed he knew nothing about the ecstasy and amphetamines and claimed they had been planted in his car.

He denied charges of possessing the drugs with intent to supply but

by PAUL HANNAH

was convicted after a trial. He admitted the cannabis charge.

He was jailed for a total of three years and told to pay £200 towards the costs of his trial from £260 found on him when he was arrested.

The court heard police were on patrol on August 25 last year when they saw Hyam, from Dudley Road, Clacton, driving towards them in an erratic manner.

Officers had to take avoiding action and they turned around and stopped him further up the road.

A roadside breath test proved

negative but Galaga King, prosecuting, said the amphetamines were found in a tin on the passenger seat and the ecstasy was discovered in the driver's door compartment.

Hyam claimed he had never seen the drugs before and did not know how they got there. Someone must have set him up, he said.

He also suggested as he did not always lock his car, someone could have planted the drugs.

Jonathan Greer, mitigating, said Hyam was a professional singer who ran his own karaoke business.

He maintained the drugs were nothing to do with him, the court heard.

Telegraph & Argus (Bradford) Friday 14, May 2004

Fine for cannabis grower

A man who was growing 105 cannabis plants to help ease the pain of a disability has been fined £400 by Bradford magistrates.

The court heard yesterday that Richard Snell, 22, suffers from a blood disorder that affects his circulation and is waiting for a knee operation as a result of the illness.

Joanna Butler-Savage, prosecuting, told the court that as well as growing the plants Snell had also attached a wire to the bottom of his electricity meter which meant that he was getting electricity for the powerful lights needed to grow cannabis for free.

He was arrested when police searched his home at Findon Terrace, Ravenscliffe, Bradford, and found the plants growing in his bedroom, bathroom and loft.

In mitigation, Alistar Bateman, said the drugs were solely for Snell's personal use.

Snell pleaded guilty to producing a controlled drug and to dishonest use of electricity for which he was fined an additional £250.

Evening News (Norwich) Tuesday 4, May 2004

Recovering addict grew cannabis at home

A RECOVERING heroin addict was growing cannabis so he could use the drug to help him get over his addiction, Norwich magistrates heard.

Police found 23 cannabis plants, two of which were mature and ready to harvest, when they raided Carlo Dei-Rocini's cottage home.

Dei-Rocini, 24, of Lower Farm Cottages, Carleton St Peter, near Attleborough, admitted producing cannabis.

The case was adjourned for a report to assess his suitability for

by GRIZELDA GRAHAM
grizelda.graham@archant.co.uk

a community punishment order. Prosecutor Susannah Chowdhury said police went to the defendant's home with a search warrant on April 20.

Dei-Rocini was in a bedroom with two girls aged 14 and 15.

The officers could smell cannabis and found a small bag of herbal cannabis in the room, but there was no evidence the girls had been using the drug with the defendant.

Twenty-one small cannabis plants were found in an annexe to the room, along with a lighting system, some plant food and paperwork relating to the growing of the drug.

Two mature, flowering plants were found in a shed, which also had a lighting system.

Dei-Rocini admitted growing the plant for his own use.

He was a recovering heroin addict and his recovery was being helped by the use of methadone and cannabis.

Chris Brown, for Dei-Rocini,

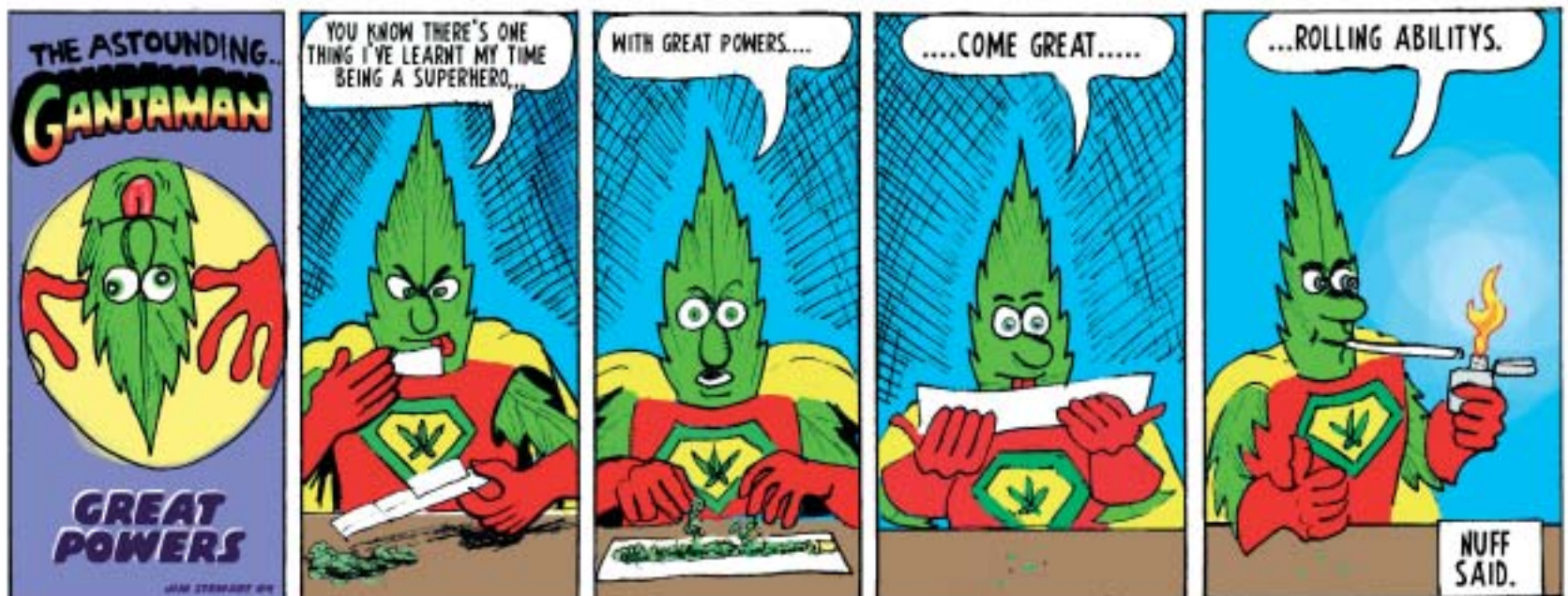
said there were only two mature plants capable of being harvested.

There was no suggestion of any commercial gain.

The system he was using was not sophisticated and the small plants were not doing particularly well.

He made no secret of the fact that he used cannabis, because it helped his withdrawal from heroin.

He had decided to start growing his own cannabis in a bid to stay away from the drug-taking fraternity.



News Letter (Northern Ireland)
Thursday 20, May 2004

Cannabis haul is 'significant dent' in organised crime

A 48-YEAR-OLD Ballymena man is expected to appear in court this morning charged in relation to the third largest seizure of cannabis in Ulster.

The man faces six charges, including possession and possession with intent to supply, following the drugs haul with a street value of almost £2m.

District Commander in Ballymena, Terry Shevlin said the drugs seizure of 350kg of cannabis and 10kg of amphetamines, made a "significant dent in organised crime in Northern Ireland".

He said the find was made after information was passed to the police.

The drugs - with a street value of £1.8 million - were found during a search of premises at Glarryford, near Ballymena, on Tuesday.

The massive drug consignment was shipped in from north Africa and may have originated in Morocco.

Supt Shevlin told the News Letter the search of premises in Glarryford was carried out by uniformed and drug squad officers.

He said police were following a line of inquiry that an organised crime gang was involved.

Det Supt John Fenton, acting head of the Drugs Squad, said the criminal gang involved was very sophisticated.

"We are doing everything we can. We are acting on all actionable information and

By GEMMA MURRAY
Security Correspondent

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intelligence which is available to us," he said.

"We are obviously aware of the top criminal gangs and we will certainly be putting our resources towards them."

Mr Shevlin said a proportion of the drugs would have been destined for the streets of Ballymena - with the remainder destined for other parts of the Province.

"Cannabis is still the number one drug of choice in Northern Ireland," he said.

"Ballymena is reputed for heroin use and the drug is still used in the area, but it would not be true to say Ballymena is still the drugs capital of Northern Ireland."

"As well as good police work there are many good initiatives ongoing in Ballymena to combat drugs including a drugs referral scheme and rehabilitation projects. But, of course, drugs is still an issue here."

Last week, police disrupted what they described as a sophisticated international drugs smuggling operation.

Cocaine with a street value of more than £1m was seized in Belfast.

Guns, ammunition and about £10,000 in cash were discovered in a follow-up operation in the Parkhall estate in Antrim.

Daily Echo (Bournemouth) Monday 17, May 2004

£3.5m cannabis haul in lorry at ferry port

By Emma Joseph

CANNABIS worth £3.5m has been seized by customs in Poole.

Around 1.3 tonnes of the drug was found in a lorry which arrived at Poole Ferryport late on Thursday evening.

Customs officers stopped the lorry, which was carrying a mixed freight load, after it arrived from Cherbourg as part of their normal duties.

During a search of the vehicle the officers found about 1,300 kilos of cannabis resin concealed in two commercial air conditioning units being carried in the load.

The driver, a 52-year-old UK national resident in France, was questioned by customs and later released.

Enquiries are continuing and officers continued to search the lorry through until Friday evening.

Bob Galger, Customs South West spokesman, said the discovery was an excellent detection by one of the customs mobile teams.

He added: "It clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of our new flexible and mobile way of working. Poole Ferryport should not be seen as a soft touch by smugglers."

in line with the government's drugs strategy, customs' main priority relating to drugs is to reduce the availability of Class A drugs.

"But we continue to uphold the law relating to other illegal drugs, including cannabis."

Mr Galger said the drugs haul sent out an important message that customs was still taking attempted imports of cannabis seriously

after its declassification.

He said: "It quite clearly shows that customs are still detecting cannabis and we will continue to do so."

"Even though it's a class C drug it's still prohibited."

Customs officers have seized drugs and alcohol on numerous occasions at Poole Port.

Most recently, in November, they discovered £2.5m worth of cannabis resin hidden among pallets of ceramic tiles on a lorry from Cherbourg.

Last June 14,000 of vodka worth £140,000 was found on a vehicle from Spain behind a load of cabbages.

And last May £3m worth of shrink-wrapped pallets of cannabis resin was seized from a UK-registered lorry arriving from northern Spain.

News Letter (Northern Ireland)
Friday 21, May 2004

Briefly

Man remanded over seizure of cannabis

A 48-YEAR-OLD man charged in connection with one of the largest drug seizures ever made in Northern Ireland was remanded in custody yesterday amid fears he may abscond.

Unemployed Michael Lawrence Beech, of Dunclug Gardens, Ballymena Co Antrim, appeared at the town magistrates court on six charges related to the haul of cannabis and amphetamines seized by police on Wednesday.

He faced five charges of possession and possessing with intent to supply both the cannabis and amphetamine. A further charge accused him of cultivating cannabis plants.

He was remanded in custody until June 17 after police objected to bail.

A detective constable told the court that there was "a real likelihood he may abscond".

He said that, when charged, Beech replied he had "nothing to say" but the detective believed he could connect him to the charges.

Defence solicitor John McAtamney said his client would be denying the charges and accused police of having "grossly exaggerated" the street value of the drugs.

Evening Express (Aberdeen)
Wednesday 5, May 2004

Undercover police find drugs stash

A YOUNG man caught with drugs with a possible street value of £14,000 has escaped a jail term.

John McGregor, 22, of Dee Street, Aberdeen, was said to have agreed to hide a stash of cannabis for a payment of £50 a fortnight.

The High Court in Edinburgh heard he wanted to help because the drug dealer who asked him to provide a safe house had treated him like a son and he felt under an obligation.

Judge Lord Wheatley heard that McGregor was "an easily led young man who wanted to look good in the eyes of people he admired".

Solicitor advocate George Mathers, defending, said McGregor had no previous involvement with drugs.

McGregor was put on probation for three years and ordered to do 240 hours unpaid community work.

At an earlier hearing McGregor pleaded guilty to being concerned in the supply of cannabis.

The court heard how undercover police trailed McGregor last September.

When arrested he had almost two kilos of cannabis in a rucksack and another seven kilos in his bedroom.

Lord Wheatley told him he had admitted a very serious offence but had been "taken advantage of".

Western Daily Press (Bristol) Friday 21, May 2004

Let-off for cannabis pupils

THE head of a West school has been told he cannot expel three pupils for bringing drugs into school.

Headteacher Clive Lambert expelled the three teenage boys from Herefordshire's only Roman Catholic high school after they were caught with cannabis.

Governors who operate a zero tolerance policy at St Mary's, Lugwardine, backed the headteacher who feared the boys had brought the cannabis into school to sell or pass on.

But parents of the boys, all year 10 pupils, complained to the local education authority and an independent appeals panel - made up of an education professional, a parent and an expert lay person - told the school to al-

low the boys back into class. Now the head and the governors have agreed to abide by the decision and three other pupils suspended after related matters have also been allowed back into lessons.

But Mr Lambert insists he was right to expel the boys after the incident. He said: "I'd do exactly the same again. Given the standards at our school and what parents expect, there can't be any other way."

Director of Education Dr Eddie Oram said: "Reinstatement is not exoneration. Young people make mistakes. The panels assess whether or not they should get a second chance. In these cases the panel could not see reasons for permanent exclusion."

Northants Evening Telegraph Saturday 22, May 2004

Drug grower must pay £4,262

A DRUG user found with the remnants of a dead cannabis plant in his airing cupboard has to pay more than £4,000 or go to prison.

Detectives made a successful application yesterday to confiscate up to £29,735 from Darren Folwell, 38, because they believe he made that amount from growing cannabis.

But Folwell, of Edinburgh Close, Rothwell only had £4,262 confiscated by the courts. If he fails to pay before August, he will be sent to prison for three months.

Judge Peter Morrell made the order at Northampton Crown Court yesterday after Folwell admitted a charge of cannabis production as well as possessing cocaine, ecstasy and cannabis on February 20.

Det Sgt John Hayes, head of the economic crime unit for Northamptonshire Police, said Folwell was convicted of a criminal production of drugs, allowing officers to look into six years of his financial records.

He said: "But for the one cannabis plant we would not have been able to confiscate the money."

"The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 extends our powers in the fight against crime, in particular the cash seizure and confiscation powers as part of Operation Payback."

"We will utilise those powers to target the activities of criminals to ensure crime does not pay."

Clive Sutton, prosecuting, said Folwell was in court to be sentenced for drugs offences resulting from a raid on his home when police found cocaine, cannabis and ecstasy.

Judge Morrell sentenced him to 12-months probation with a curfew order.

Folwell will have to stay inside from 6pm to midnight five days a week, nine hours on Saturdays and 12 hours on Sundays for the next four months.

Cambridge Evening News
Wednesday 26, May 2004

Ice cream seller had cannabis outside school

AN ICE cream seller who admitted having drugs in the van he had parked outside a village school has been fined £70 for possession.

Police searched 23-year-old Adam Turner's ice cream van outside Cottenham Village College on Friday after being told by authorities at the school about rumours that he had drugs in it.

Turner, from Broom Street in Littleport, was discovered to have five grams of cannabis in the van.

But the amount found was not enough for

Turner to be charged with possession with intent to supply and at Cambridge Magistrates' Court yesterday he pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of possession of a Class C drug.

In addition to the fine, he was ordered to pay £55 in costs.

After the hearing, Tony Cooper, principal of Cottenham Village College, said: "Last week there were rumours around the school that there was more in the ice cream van than just ice cream."

"We simply passed that information on to the police and they dealt with it. You will appreciate that if people are suspicious and there are rumours of this sort of matter, it is our duty to inform the police."

Mr Cooper added: "I would hope the message this sends out to our pupils is that if they think there is some illegal activity going on it will be dealt with."

News Letter (Northern Ireland)
Thursday 20, May 2004

Cannabis haul is 'significant dent' in organised crime

By GEMMA MURRAY
Security Correspondent

g.murray@newsletter.co.uk

intelligence which is available to us," he said.

"We are obviously aware of the top criminal gangs and we will certainly be putting our resources towards them."

Mr Shevlin said a proportion of the drugs would have been destined for the streets of Ballymena - with the remainder destined for other parts of the Province.

"Cannabis is still the number one drug of choice in Northern Ireland," he said.

"Ballymena is reputed for heroin use and the drug is still used in the area, but it would not be true to say Ballymena is still the drugs capital of Northern Ireland."

"As well as good police work there are many good initiatives ongoing in Ballymena to combat drugs including a drugs referral scheme and rehabilitation projects. But, of course, drugs is still an issue here."

Last week, police disrupted what they described as a sophisticated international drugs smuggling operation.

Cocaine with a street value of more than £1m was seized in Belfast.

Guns, ammunition and about £10,000 in cash were discovered in a follow-up operation in the Parkhall estate in Antrim.

A 48-YEAR-OLD Ballymena man is expected to appear in court this morning charged in relation to the third largest seizure of cannabis in Ulster.

The man faces six charges, including possession and possession with intent to supply, following the drugs haul with a street value of almost £2m.

District Commander in Ballymena, Terry Shevlin said the drugs seizure of 350kg of cannabis and 10kg of amphetamines, made a "significant dent in organised crime in Northern Ireland".

He said the find was made after information was passed to the police.

The drugs - with a street value of £1.8 million - were found during a search of premises at Glarryford, near Ballymena, on Tuesday.

The massive drug consignment was shipped in from north Africa and may have originated in Morocco.

Supt Shevlin told the News Letter the search of premises in Glarryford was carried out by uniformed and drug squad officers.

He said police were following a line of inquiry that an organised crime gang was involved.

Det Supt John Fenton, acting head of the Drugs Squad, said the criminal gang involved was very sophisticated.

"We are doing everything we can. We are acting on all actionable information and

Evening Echo (Basildon) Friday 7, May 2004

Crash driver on dope

AN INEXPERIENCED driver who was high on cannabis died after flipping his car on a dual carriageway, an inquest heard.

Abdul Mumin, 17, from Tilbury, was killed after his Rover Metro spun out of control, hitting a crash barrier, on November 8 last year on Lodge Lane, Grays.

His passenger, Mujakkir Ali, was thrown from the car but escaped with just a cut to his head. An inquest yesterday heard a toxicologist report revealed Mr Mumin had been smoking cannabis just hours earlier.

Mr Ali - the victim's cousin - told Chelmsford Coroner's Court how Mr Mumin, who held a provisional licence, sped up to catch a green traffic light.

He said: "I remember a car in front with red lights and Mumin swerving into the right hand lane."

"I think he hit the kerb and then the car flipped."

A postmortem revealed that Mr Mumin died of multiple injuries. Coroner Caroline Beasley-Murray recorded a verdict that he died as a result of an accident.



Der Wrecked Baron IN ACES HIGH

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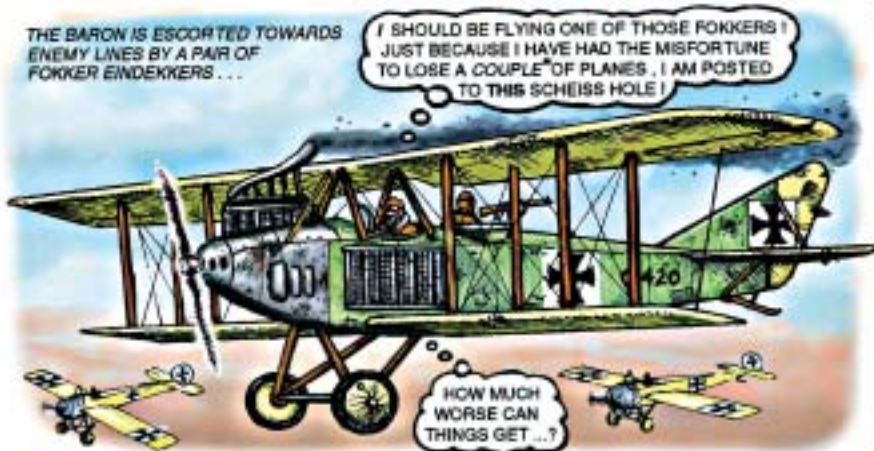
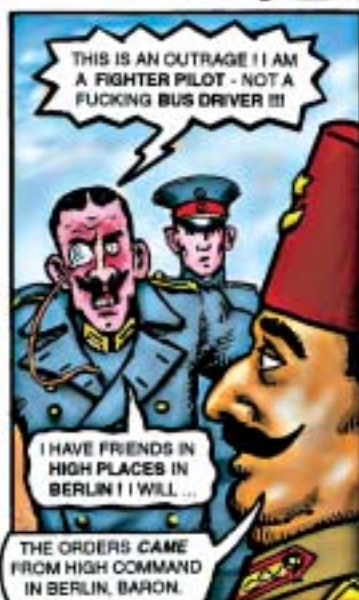
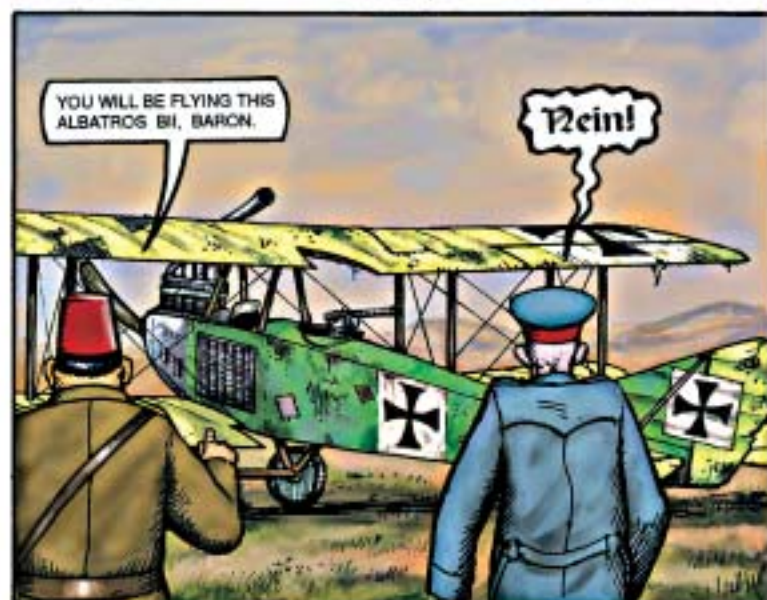
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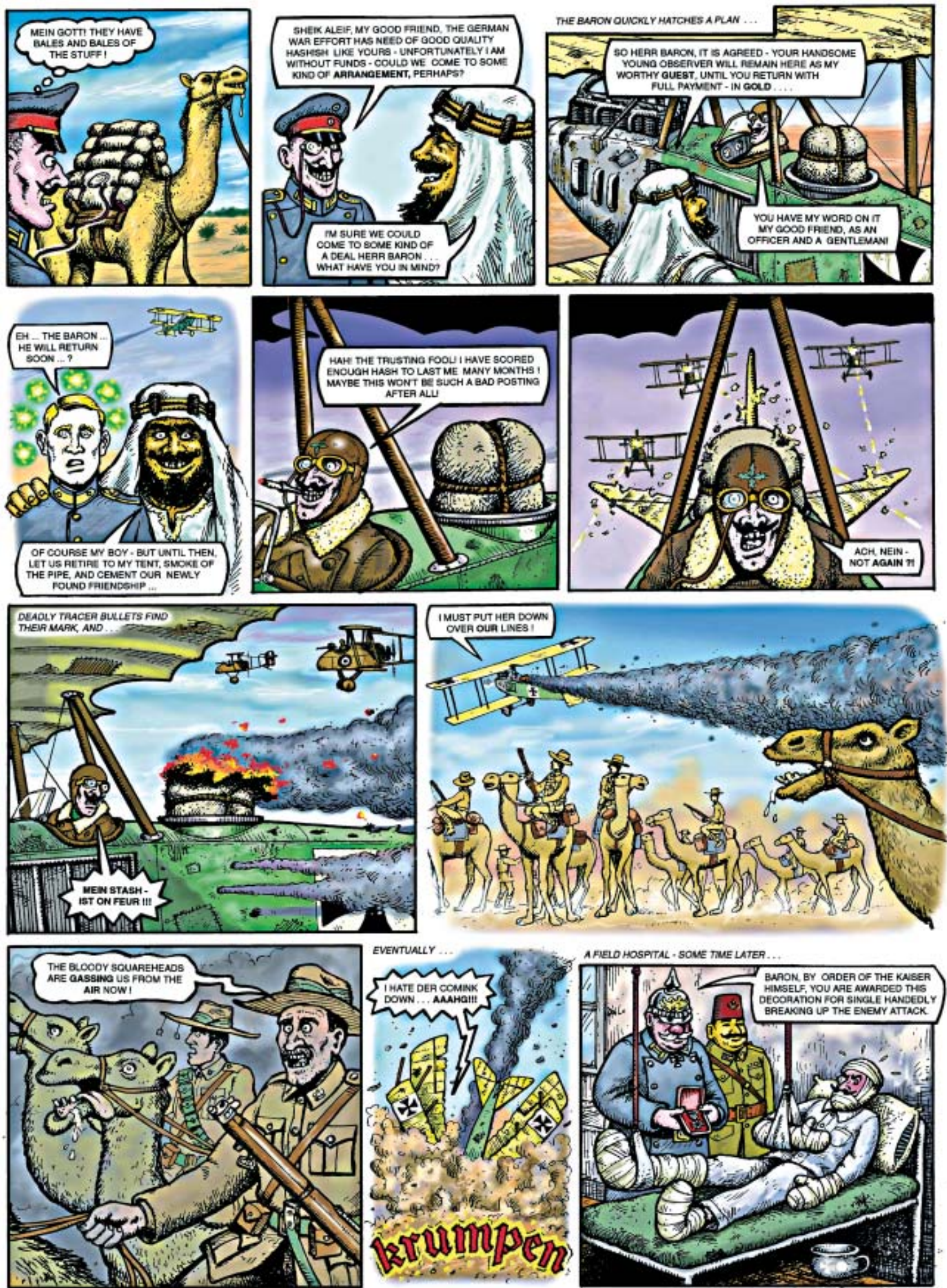


THIS MAN HAS BEEN ASSIGNED AS YOUR OBSERVER, BARON.

LEUTNANT HEINZ SOUPPE, HERR BARON. IT IS AN HONOUR TO FLY WITH YOU!



* SINCE OPENING OF HOSTILITIES IN AUGUST 1914 -
126 AIRCRAFT DESTROYED OR DAMAGED BEYOND REPAIR.



Sunderland Echo (City Final)
Wednesday 26, May 2004

Builder's prints at drugs farm

A BUILDER has gone on trial accused of helping to construct a cannabis farm.

Vince Patrick Jevons's fingerprints were found on growing equipment during a police raid, Durham Crown Court heard.

Tim Gittins, prosecuting, said police were confronted with a "forest" of cannabis when they raided the house in Seaside Lane, Easington Colliery.

The court heard how the plants were found to be "premium grade" skunk cannabis and each harvest had a street value of around £18,000.

Jevons, 33, of Thorpe Street, Easington Colliery, denies being concerned in the production of a class B drug.

The jury heard how Jevons explained the fingerprints to police by saying he had carried out routine building work for the owner of the house, but had no knowledge of the cannabis farm.

Proceeding

Cannabis dealer jumps bail after family pay €8k

Evening Echo (Cork)
Thursday 20, May 2004

By LIAM HEYLIN

Court Report

A CORK drug dealer, facing the possibility of 10 years in jail, has jumped bail and fled to Boston, leaving his family facing the loss of €8,000 that they put up in bail money.

Derek O'Connor, of Killala Gardens, Knocknaheeny, Cork, was due to be sentenced at Cork Circuit Criminal Court but now it has emerged that he has skipped the country and is in Boston.

Judge Patrick J Moran has issued a bench warrant for his arrest.

His failure to turn up in court for sentencing could put the bail money at risk.

Prosecution barrister Donal McCarthy said the message should go out that people should not give bail unless they are prepared to take responsibility for the defendant show-

“

My son promised he would turn up. He left us in the height of debt. I cannot afford it. I am on disability.

ing up in court. Now that Derek O'Connor has absconded, the defendant's father, Donal O'Connor, is worried the family will be at a loss for the €8,000 they lodged for Derek O'Connor's release pending sentencing.

"My son promised he would turn up," Donal O'Connor said.

"He left us in the height of debt. I cannot afford it. I am on disability."

Judge Moran said he would adjourn sentencing until November 5 and adjourn his decision on what is to become of the bail money until that date also. In the meantime, the bench warrant for Derek O'Connor's arrest still stands.

The defendant pleaded guilty to having more than €13,000 worth of cannabis resin for sale or supply on November 24, 2003.

Having this amount of drugs or more carries a mandatory minimum jail sentence of 10 years and up to life imprisonment.

The sentencing judge can impose less if there are exceptional circumstances to be taken into consideration.

The defendant's own bail was €8,000 of which €3,000 had to be lodged.

In effect, the family came up with all of the cash, €8,000, to meet the two lodgments.

Bristol Evening Post (Final)
Friday 7, May 2004

Did man profit from cannabis?

BRISTOL: A hearing to determine whether a builder had profited from cannabis plants grown at his home was adjourned at Bristol Crown Court.

ME sufferer Kevin Bainbridge, aged 38, of Chelsea Park, Lower Easton, said he grew the plants in his loft for therapeutic reasons.

In March he was given a community punishment order for 240 hours after police found 11 plants and three cereal boxes full of dried cannabis leaves.

An investigation into Bainbridge's assets was launched, to see if he had made any profit from his crime.

Yesterday a court hearing to determine if Bainbridge should pay costs was adjourned until May 31.

Aberdeen Press & Journal
Friday 7, May 2004

Cannabis charge

A MAN appeared in court yesterday after police discovered what they believe could be one of Scotland's biggest cannabis farms. Stuart Nesbit, 48, was charged with being involved in the supply of cannabis when he appeared at Kirkcudbright Sheriff Court. He was arrested after raids on two addresses in the Borders, where plants and equipment were seized. The drugs were believed to have a street value of over £250,000, said Dumfries and Galloway Police. Nesbit, of Waterhead Farm, Carsphairn, made no plea and was released on bail.

Coventry Evening Telegraph
Tuesday 18, May 2004

Cannabis arrests down

THE number of arrests for cannabis possession has fallen since the drug was reclassified earlier this year, the Home Office says.

In 1999, 88,548 people were charged with cannabis offences, 90 per cent of which were for possession.

A Home Office spokeswoman said the department could not publish new data on the exact number of arrests because it was "provisional and unchecked."

Shields Gazette (Late/Final)
Monday 17, May 2004

Drug user walks free

A CANNABIS user who supplied the drug to friends to fund his habit has walked free from court.

Ronald Brown, 27, was caught with 9oz of the class B drug when police raided his home on October 31 last year.

Newcastle Crown Court heard how he told police he would have smoked half the stash and sold on the rest, mostly to pals.

As well as the cannabis resin, a dealer's "tick list" and £125 in cash were found at his home.

Judge Aidan Marron sentenced him to an 18-month community rehabilitation order and confiscated the money.

Brown, of Hawthorn Avenue, Cleadon Park, South Shields, pleaded guilty to possessing cannabis resin with intent to supply at an earlier hearing.

Lancashire Evening Telegraph (Blackburn) Friday 21, May 2004

Would-be drugs dealer jailed

A 20 YEAR-OLD man told police he had dealt cannabis from his Oswaldtwistle living room to help pay his mortgage and fund his own drug habit, a court was told.

But Alan Thomas Kirkley's second income earned him a spell behind bars when he appeared before Blackburn magistrates and pleaded guilty to possession with intent to supply.

Kirkley, of Stanhill Road, also pleaded guilty to possession of amphetamine and damaging a

window belonging to Timothy Hartley. Kirkley was sentenced to a total of 60 days in prison.

Scott Ainge, prosecuting, said the drugs offences came to light after a police raid at his home address.

The damage to the window had been committed in the early hours of the morning. Mr Hartley heard a large crash and looked out to see Kirkley holding a metal bar with a spiked ball on the end.

Kirkley told police there had been a verbal altercation between

him and Mr Hartley. Sian Hall, defending, said the offences represented a watershed in Kirkley's life.

"He decided that things had to change and that is exactly what he is planning to do," said Miss Hall.

She said that on the day of the criminal damage, her client's girlfriend had taken an overdose and he had received a phone call to say she was in a coma.

"She had taken that overdose at the address where he broke the window," said Miss Hall.

Herald Express (Torquay)
Tuesday 25, May 2004

Reefer man's college 'moon'

A MAN with cannabis psychosis who 'mooned' at South Devon College students while he smoked a joint has been remanded in custody for a further period.

Carl Worthington, 23, of Crownhill Rise in Torquay, appeared at Torbay magistrates court.

He could face an application by police for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order at a later date.

Unemployed Worthington pleaded guilty to two offences at a previous hearing.

He's admitted criminal damage on April 8 after he smashed up the birthday presents his mother had bought him and damaged a wall and door handle.

Worthington, a persistent offender who has been in court numerous times this year, has also pleaded guilty to threatening behaviour at South Devon College after some students spotted him smoking a reefer outside the college's main entrance.

Prosecutor Howard Phillips described what happened outside the college on March 10. When Worthington was challenged about his behaviour, he dropped his trousers and exposed his backside to students.

He told one: "I'm going to knife your mum and your babies, and I'm going to come after you."

Magistrates had at a previous hearing adjourned the case for reports.

They heard a psychiatric report was not ready and remanded Worthington in custody until May 25.

On one recent court appearance, Worthington's defence solicitor told the bench that his client's behavioural problems were the result of smoking too much cannabis — so-called "reefer madness".

Citizen (Gloucester)
Thursday 6, May 2004

Jail term cut for cannabis case man

A GARDENER from Stonehouse who was jailed for setting up a "cannabis factory" and securing a mortgage on false pretences has had his sentence reduced in London's Appeal Court.

Darren Butler, of Adelaide Gardens, was jailed for two-and-a-half years at Gloucester Crown Court in October last year.

He had admitted possessing cannabis with intent to supply, simple possession of the drug, and obtaining a money transfer by deception.

The 25-year-old, described as "enterprising and hard-working" in all other respects, was prosecuted after police raided an industrial unit rented by him in Stroud, discovering large numbers of cannabis plants and associated equipment.

The "volume" of plants was sufficient to fill a van, a Land Rover and four-door car, said Mr Justice Fulford. A further 2.8kg of processed cannabis was found at his home. The total street value of the drugs was £20,000.

The deception offence related to Butler's application for a £34,000 mortgage, secured after he falsely

by Citizen reporter

claimed to be employed by another man. In fact he was self-employed said Mr Justice Fulford.

Butler told police he was cultivating the drugs for "medicinal" purposes, but this contention was rejected by the prosecution.

Crown lawyers claimed he was involved in a "sophisticated growing operation for commercial purposes".

The landscape gardener said he personally began using cannabis to combat the effects of a grievous head injury and resulting coma.

Mr Justice Fulford, sitting with Mr Justice Aikens, said there were no grounds for interfering with the two-year sentence passed for the cultivating offence, observing that "significant sentences will follow in cases of cannabis cultivation on a commercial scale".

But he said the six-month consecutive sentence imposed for the mortgage offence should have been made concurrent, giving a total sentence of two years.

He noted that the building society had suffered no loss as a result of the subterfuge.

Butler's overall sentence was reduced to two years. ©

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Shropshire Star (Mid Wales)
Thursday 20, May 2004

Police raid finds drugs

A man has been arrested after police found more than 20 cannabis plants when they raided a Mid Wales home.

The arrest was made in Llandrindod Wells at 10.30am on Monday.

North and Mid Powys community safety officer Constable Gareth Slaymaker said police had executed a search warrant at a house in Cefnlllys Lane and officers discovered a cannabis cultivation set-up with more than 20 cannabis plants and a large quantity of herbal cannabis.

The arrest brings the number of arrests for drug offences this year to 41 in the town.

Dorset Echo
Thursday 20, May 2004

Drug grower is punished

A MAN who grew 60 cannabis plants for his own consumption has been given a 150-hour community punishment order by Weymouth magistrates.

Shane Sykes, 21, of Chickerell Road, Weymouth, admitted the offence and another of possessing cannabis at an earlier hearing adjourned for reports.

Richley Wood, prosecuting, told magistrates that a police search of Sykes' home revealed the cannabis plants which were being grown hydroponically in a room downstairs. Cannabis with a value of £150 was found in a bedroom.

Roger Maxwell, defending, said: "Everything found by the police was for his own consumption."

Magistrates also made a destruction order for the plants, equipment and herbal cannabis and ordered Sykes to pay £60 costs.



Jailed trucker on way home

JAILED trucker John Vasey could be back at his Wearside home tomorrow after being granted bail by a court in France.

Mr Vasey, of Lambton, Washington, was arrested in March last year after crossing the border from Spain with £2.5million-worth of cannabis in sealed containers of cargo he had collected from Barcelona.

The 43-year-old, who has been held in prison in the French town of Perpignan since his arrest, has always protested that he had no knowledge of the haul.

A French court yesterday granted him bail of 5,000 euros – approximately £3,500 – delighting his family and local solicitor Clive McKeag, who has been fighting for his early release.



JOHN VASEY

Sunderland Echo (City Final)
Tuesday 4, May 2004

John's father Ken, 73, said from his Washington home today that his wife Mary and John's cousin Sue were in Perpignan arranging the payment of the surety.

"I expect him to be released today. Getting a flight home

today could be pushing it by the time they have organised getting the money to court, the papers being sent to prison – and the flight can't be booked till he's out.

"The whole family is looking forward to seeing him and I am sure John will want to see his son David, who's nine."

The family has posted a message on the John Vasey website praising the work of his French lawyer, Jean Guyot, and Mr McKeag.

Mr McKeag recently claimed that Mr Vasey was the victim of international drug barons.

Northern Echo
(Darlington / South Durham)
Friday 21, May 2004

Police officers raid £10,000 cannabis farm

A DRUGS unit has uncovered a cannabis farm worth an estimated £10,000.

Langbaugh Police raided the property in Tebay Close, Ormesby, Middlesbrough, on Wednesday lunchtime.

A 25-year-old man was arrested and released on bail pending forensic tests on 28 plants found in a bedroom.

Detective Constable Paul Gordon said: "This was an intelligence-led operation which resulted in a substantial recovery of cannabis plants.

"We will not tolerate any form of dealing drugs or the production of drugs in the Langbaugh area."

Anyone with information on drug-dealing or production can call Langbaugh Drugs Unit in confidence on (0800) 092 9102.

Daily Telegraph
Friday 28, May 2004

In Brief

Pupils banned over cannabis

Three pupils have been expelled from their public school for taking drugs.

The boys, all aged 16 and about to sit GCSEs, were put on early study leave from Eastbourne College, East Sussex, after being caught twice using cannabis.

Yorkshire Post (North/York)
Thursday 22, April 2004

Briton in court on drug charges

A British backpacker held in India on drug smuggling charges has appeared in court at the start of her trial, the Foreign Office said.

Daisy Angus, 23, was arrested at Bombay Airport on November 21, 2002, with 22lb of cannabis in her suitcase.

The fitness instructor from Bournemouth, Dorset, later confessed to her father that she knew she was carrying the drugs.

She is held at Byculia Prison, in Bombay, and has appeared at a city court for the start of her trial.

Southern Daily Echo (Southampton)
Thursday 20, May 2004

Round-up

Cannabis plants found in front room

POLICE found two cannabis plants when they searched the front room of a house in Southampton, the city crown court heard.

At the time Paul Gilpin was on licence from prison for a 30-month term imposed for supplying crack cocaine and Ecstasy.

Gilpin, 39, of Yorke Close, Northam, admitted producing cannabis for which he was jailed for two months.

Judge John Boggis QC ordered the sentence to begin after he has served the outstanding six months and 18 days of the previous term.

Gilpin was cleared by jurors of possessing crack cocaine.

News of the World
Sunday 23, May 2004

Drug pupils get reprieve

A HEADMASTER who expelled three pupils for bringing cannabis into class has had to allow them back.

Clive Lambert kicked the boys out of St Mary's High, in Lugwardine, Herefordshire. But the local education authority overturned his decision after parents appealed.

Colofon

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A word from the publisher:

The UK government has embarked on a process of relative liberalisation towards the use of cannabis, and cannabis activists are engaged in broadening this engagement. Several local councils and police chiefs now actively support a Dutch-style coffeeshop system as a way of separating soft and hard drugs, as it has proven to do in Holland. Whether they are finding their way to new coffeeshops or growing for their personal supply, cannabis users are a menace to no one, and are causing no discernable social problem. Some politicians and commentators are calling for the outright legalisation of marijuana. Let's wait and see how the debate develops during a period of relative peace between all sides of the argument. In the meantime, the publisher hopes Soft Secrets will show the public a positive side to the normalisation of cannabis use, and is anxious to offer a forum to both pro- and anti-legalisation advocates. This assumes that the publisher does not necessarily agree with everything that appears in articles and advertisements. The publisher therefore distances himself explicitly from published statements or images that might give the impression that an endorsement is being made for the use or production of cannabis.

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