







EDITORIAL

Lies, damned lies and statistics

There are, famously, lies, damned lies and statistics. Any observer of the debate surrounding the UK's drug laws might also add: 'and political footballs.' With a general election still a month away at time of writing, the dope football has been bouncing all over the stadium, off the floodlights, into the crowd; everywhere except in the goals. Following the trajectory of this insane match is something beyond the powers even of a John Motson.

In the last few weeks alone we've had the tabloid frenzy over the University of Maastricht's (and similar studies from Sweden and New Zealand) findings that stronger weed and earlier first use by teens is leading to an explosion of mental health problems. One former cabinet minister wrote in a London newspaper that "a whole generation" will soon be hearing voices in their heads? Other press commentators wonderede if we were on the verge of creating a "psychological underclass"?

The Government's rapid reaction spin squad, sensing a vulnerability, rushed out with a promise to review the reclassification following this and other reports that Britain is being "flooded" with forms of the drug that are far stronger than the social drug of the 1960s.

Yet other studies from the US and Australia have found no rise in schizophrenia over the last 30 years, despite explosions in cannabis use in the same period. Recent research also suggests that one of the chemical ingredients of cannabis, cannabidiol, exerts a powerful antipsychotic effect. The UK firm GW Pharmaceuticals, which is awaiting approval for an under-the-tongue cannabis spray for multiple sclerosis patients, plans to investigate cannabidiol as a treatment for schizophrenia.

Then we also hear that demand for cannabis has "exploded in the wake of the relaxation of drugs laws," according to senior Scotland Yard officers. Following a series of massive seizures in south-east England in the early part of this year, law enforcement officials believe criminal gangs are trafficking large quantities of cannabis because they reckon the reclassification of cannabis in January 2004 means the police have 'taken their eye off the ball'. A senior officer connected to the Met's organised crime unit told The Observer that criminal gangs' reactions to the liberalization, and judging by the surge in seizures, the decision to reclassify was wrong.

But in the strippey shirts, kicking from left to right, the British crime survey finds that cannabis use is falling and the Home Office says there's no evidence that the

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reclassification has led to an increase in demand. The Association of Chief Police Officers says they continue to support the government's decision to reclassify cannabis

So who do we believe, the good cop or the bad cop? Transform, a pressure group opposed to drug prohibition, points out that seizures are not an accurate indication of increasing supply or demand. 'No one knows how much is coming in, nor how big stockpiles are, so even a huge seizure cannot be seen as evidence of anything.' In short, the goalposts are moved depending on what people want to prove.

That's the real problem; research into cannabis' effects have frequently been initiated by junk science. Even solid research today can be the cause of spurious fears when it is (as so often happens) grossly misreported. After all the science, pseudoscience and distortions, it's obvious that new claims about the harm of marijuana use should be treated with a degree of skepticism.

The five million-plus cannabis users in the UK and drugs experts say only a fraction have been affected by mental health problems as a result of their choices. The 'stronger dope than when we used to smoke it' is an urban myth up there with Kentucky Fried rat. Users are still in danger of arrest and imprisonment, however.

Jules Marshall

Page 3 Girl Sweeth Tooth

Specifics: A beautiful plant with a beautiful taste and a very positive vibration. A smiling high is guaranteed from these heady flowers. The plants are quite hardy and easy to grow, and prefer a drier finishing time, as the buds become fat enough for mold to be of concern. These chunky monkeys often require staking but in a windy location they should be stout enough to hold their own (significant) weight. Does well as a small bush but will become a large bush given adequate growth parameters. Whether this is an exceptional commercial strain or head stash is for you to decide.

Genetics: 25% Sativa – 75% Indica

Flowering time: 8 weeks Indoors Yield: 500 gms per m²

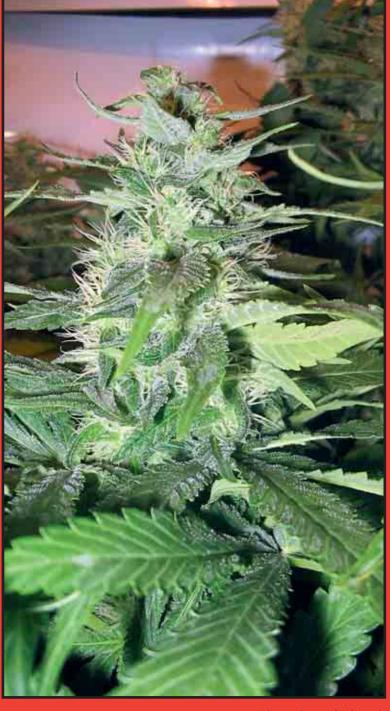


Photo: Spice of Life seeds









PoBox 17250, 1001 JG, Amsterdam, Holland or E-mail SSUK@softsecrets.nl

Dear Soft Secrets



Top Mag Soft Secrets,

3 Sweet Tooth No. 3s, half harvested. Very good yields. Nice Mellow taste and buzz. *Mick*

It looks like your dog doesn't want to be recognized, mate...

Dear Soft Secrets,

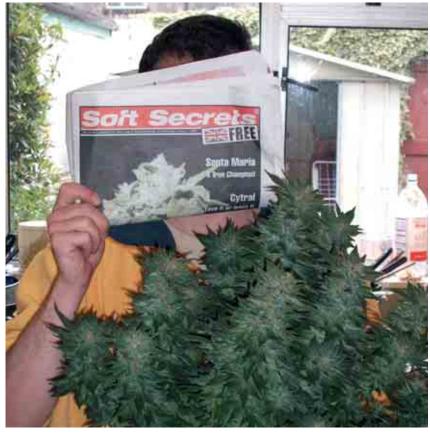
Your paper is so good for the scene over here in the UK, it's definately opening people's eyes. I've enclosed pictures of my 1st grow. I've grown all this in two FLO GROS with 1 600W HPS in a cool shade with a big exhaust fan, all in my self-made rock solid growroom made from



MDF wood, all reinforced, it can take 300 litres of water in weight, it is built on coasters and runs lotally silent (4x4x8ft.)

Tony, Peterborough

Nice set up, Tony, but next time try a SCROG grow to create an even canopy.



Hello People Of the Herb!!!

Had to send you pictures of my beautiful babies! After 100 days this White Widow was simply covered with glands and is now gently drying...This is my first indoor grow (& proud) with 600W HPS, full NFT system, amazing Canadian nutrients, extraction, CO2 and loads of TLC! Thanks Soft Secrets and mother nature!

Houba from Dublin!!!

Did you use Advanced Nutrients products on this bitch? Excellent choice, mate! Judging from the brown hairs, this lady is ready for the chop. However, the leaves are still too green, so next time stop feeding your babes about 10 days before harvest, so they can suck all nutrients out of the leaves.



There she is guys. Great issue on Nederhash.



All in all we had over 75g of pure homemade heaven, all the hash you see here is a combination of BB, WW, WR, BB jelly and a friend's stash of AK47.



Hand sieved WW resin before being pressed



A scale shot of a 21.8g slab of White Russian hash (wet). Dried out 14g.



1.3g of hash oil from 11g of bud, extracted using a Honeybee. We dome the same later using 14g of leaf trim and bud to get 2.0g of oil, used in a 2g.:5g resin powder (BB) to make some BB jelly hash. Oil sitting on a 10g piece of WW hash.



Glands under a microscope.



A freak leave. Some leafs towards the top bud looked like little buds in the centre, weird.

Hi there Soft Secrets.

A few pics of our latest creations. Well, to be honest it's our only creations so far being a firsttimer and all. A friend and I got some great info and help from a certain free newspaper, wink wink. So we thought 'Bollocks, let's do it" and this is what we've got so far: 14 BubbleBerry's, 6 White Russians, 5 White Widows. All grown in coco with B'cuzz Blooms under a 1000w bulb with SuperNova shade. Dried weight all in all 810grams, 29oz plus 33grams of top hash. **DJS & NAS, Kent**

Fucking A guys... For firsttimers straight of the bus you managed to get a harvest professionals would kill for! Well done to you lot! About that freak leaf: you see this stuff sometimes. Plants that are a bit unstable tend to grow an extra leaf from the top of the petiole (leaf stem). This one is special because it has actually turned into a flower on top of the leaf. Real freaky!

Attention Guerilla Growers!

Fancy a FREE packet of High Quality Seeds? Feeling up to growing Master Kush, Holland's Hope, White Widow, Olé 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. Should your garden pic contain a visible copy of Soft Secrets UK, we'll send you 2 HQS packs. Wait, there's more! If your garden should happen to feature your topless girlfriend or wife, you even get a pack of prime Black Label stock, the label of the Champions! Send all entries to Soft Secrets, PO Box 17250, 1001 JG, Amsterdam, Holland, or e-mail them to SSUK@softsecrets.nl NOTE: Naturally, all entries are handled with the utmost discretion. Names, letters and addresses will be destroyed as soon as seeds are sent. We don't publish out of focus pics, and we're not too fond of photos of plants in their vegetative stage. It's fat buds we want to see! We do not correspond about submitted photos



Dear Soft Secrets,

Please find attached pics of my Girl and Jack Herer. She was grown using BioBizz products under a 600w lamp. Love.Peace.Herb. Sativa2004

You guys make it clear to all that you don't neccesarily need a lot of plants to get a decent harvest. Just one single plant grown the right way (and topped off course) can yield a field of buds. Well done!



"Just say aye to Igrow lads, and taste the forbidden fruits! See page 17!"

Dear Soft Secrets.

On the 4/01/05 the police came knocking at my door asking for a word with me, to my surprise someone had grassed me up for growing. They entered my house asking were my plants are. In to which I replied "What are you talking about?" They said we can get a warrant to search your property. I realised I was getting busted so I came clean and took them upstairs, to show them my room which was kitted out with 2x400HPS, 1 6" inline fan (which I had not long purchased in which it was keep my room at the right temp & humidity and I was slowly seeing the results), 4 oxy pots, 2 auto pots with coco which was my first try at this method of growing, 2 Chronic growing, 2 Black Dom, 2 Blue Haze and also they took all my food which I had recently spent cash on and my pH meter, also some Skunk which I had bought from a friend, also some Ice-o-lator hash. F*cking bastards!

Then they called for backup to search my property in which they found my digital scales. I was asked was I selling, in to which I replied "No, they are for me to check what yield I get from my plants then to see if I can improve next time. I was arrested and taken down to the cells. I was there for 6 hours and I really thought I was getting a fine or sent down for a couple of months. But to my surprise I was let off with a caution. I told them it was for me and I did not sell the Skunk once it was grown (which I only sorted out to my friends, just to pay for the electricity which I failed to mention in the interview).

I just wanted you to know what had happened to me as it will not be printed in the local papers. So hopefully us UK guerilla growers can grow legaly in a couple of years and not have to have the fear of that dreaded knock at ther door. If not I might be looking to take up residence in the Netherlands as I am already missing my hobby of whatching my little ladies grow and giving me their wonderful buds. Cool Soft Secrets, you guys are awsome. Thanks for the inspiration to get growing! Pat, Cambridgeshire

Well Pat, thank you for sharing this story with us. You came out of this real well, so let's hope the UK police will lighten up more and more as the truth about cannabis is known to more people than ever before.



Hi Soft Secrets,

My Ice Plants, 7 weeks into their 12/12 cycle and growing hydroponically under 1 600w HPS.

Mr Thomas, London

Thomas, those are great looking buds.. Well grown, mate!

Hello Soft Secrets.

3 Clones of White Widow, started in May, finished end of Octobre. Yield 180gr dried. Grown organic on the balcony using BioBizz nutes.

Denis, Amsterdam

You can't expect too much from any outside grow here in Northern Europe, but we think there's still

some pretty good smoke to be had out of these babes.



Hi there,

Here are my plants, they are Super Silver Haze x Skunk and are on their 47th day in flower. They're grown in an NFT 424 under a 600w HPS lamp. Cheers for a great mag and all the info!

J, Yorkshire

Those Adjust-a-Wings reflectors are real kickass equipment! Thanks to the adjustable 'wings' you can lower your

reflector a lot more while creating no extra heat-stress for the plants. The spreader does a good job lowering the output of heath from the bulb.



This is my first winter crop and although it's a good smoke the buds (Northern Lights) were much smaller than they have been!! Roll on the summer!

Jack from Kent

And bring on your bird in a skimpy bikini on the beach!

Dear Soft Secrets,

after a long and painful 8 months of no growing I manage to sweeze one crop into a friends house. The plant shown is one of 5 Heavy Duty Fruity's. We also had 2 Power Plants. The Heavy Duty's took about 6 weeks and the Power Plant a little longer. All from clones grown under a 250 halide for veg (one week) and all flowered under 250 sodium. The plants finished about 45cm tall and yielded about 24 grams a plant.



Owen Plymouth

Lovely plant, Owen. She's definitely grown the way it should be.



As much as I hate to part wit this photo I feel as muck as I love your magazine. Yours is a truly greatly presented paper full of professional advice.

Mr C., Worcestershire

Mr C, normal lads take a rose with them to their first date... But what the heck, if she doesn't show up, you can smoke it by yourself.

Dear Soft Secrets, Here is one lucky dog. **T, England**

Look at the bastard, lazy, fat and wellfed, not a care in the world. And this is what they call a dog's life..?







JULIAN, Devon

Mate, we hope you didn't dry those buds by laying them in trays. If you did, the possibility of mold on the buds is a mere certainty. There always needs to be a good air flow around the buds when drying, to prevent mold. And is that a NYC Diesel? Nice photo!



Dear Soft Secrets

I'm about to start on my second crop using only a 400w system and Biobizz All-Mix and fertilizers. My first harvest turned out pretty damn good, not sure what variety the seeds were, any ideas? My beautiful girlfriend has promised to bare all at next harvest-time. Please keep up the good work!

Cue Ball Noggin, Yorkshire

The leaves are looking lushgreen so the plant obviously loves what you do to her. We guess this could very well be a White Widow or White Russian, anyhow, white she looks for sure. Well done mate, and bring on your topless bird next time, ey?



Dear Soft Secrets.

Love your paper, it has helped me out no end. Been growing a while now. There's Chronic, Bubblegum and Durban Poison cross Skunk No1. Just drained nutrients, only 5 days to go. Already chopped the lower buds off the DP, dried it in 6 days (couldn't wait any longer) and got just under 6oz (well happy). Keep up the good work!

Tel, Kent

Fuck Tel, that's a cannabis dungeon we wouldn't mind exploring. Masterfully grown plants and a kinky chick hot as hell... You're one happy chap, dude! But just to spoil your luck a little weeny bit: that Mylar will reflect the light a lot better if you hang it straight, now it's too wrinkled and we don't even want to know how come...

Greetings 2 all growers!

Here's a pic of my 1st attempt at growing the lovely herb. I used 2x400w HPS lamps. The plant was an unknown Sativa x Indica, but judging from the heights she reached she was more Sativa!!! I managed to blag my mate's lady into getting 'em out. Keep up the good work, S.S is the best. **NUTTER.**



Some fine cannabis specimens you got there, mate... Next time, remove those lower branches so all energy can be put to work for the big buds on top. Say hello to the lovely lady, she's a sweety for bangin' 'em out for the lads.



Hi Soft Secrets, Here's a picture of my Jack Herer I've just finished smoking. It was superb. SHEFFIELD DAVE

Dear Soft Secrets,

My first grow, grown in organic soil using BioBizz nutes under a 400w sodium. For my next grow I want to use the SCROG method.

Michael & Mase, Dorset

May we suggest you try and top your plant a little earlier next time, to maximise harvest. You can top the plants once they have around 4 to 6 branches. It will be much more effective to top a small plant then a bigger one. We love the pussy-mask!





We want to inform you via this channel about our company, I.G.T., and that is why we have conceived of this campaign for you. You will receive this discount on \pm 80% of the articles we offer.

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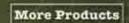






















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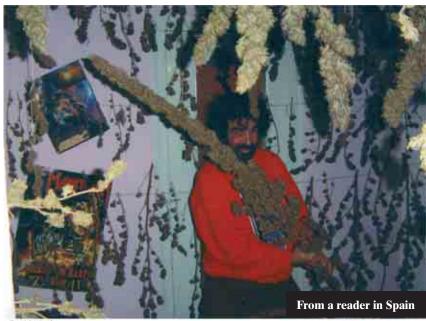
Affiller -

General Manager

Extra! From our international editions





























Dear Soft Secrets,

Here's 109 dried oz of High Quality Seeds White Widow (Black Label), grown from clones off my mother that you sent as seeds last year. 40 Plants vegged 3 _ weeks under 6 x 600w, in 10+15 buckets of coco fed on Canna A+B nutes, misted with Nitrozyme every day during veg, then fed on A+B + PK13-14for 1 week. Then flushed with pure water for 2 weeks & 2 days.

Yours, Liverpool

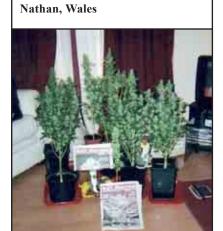
Great photo, great plants, great growing. High Quality Seeds send their regards!



Hello Soft Secrets,

Here I am with my boyfriend's Skunk #11 plant 1 week before trigger. She produced almost 3oz of super fruity Skunk. We were smashed for weeks!!!

Well baby, why didn't you invite us to the party then?



Hello Soft Secrets,

400w Sodium Vapour.

The plants are White Widow growing

14 and shooting powder in flowering.

I had about 6oz of dried bud (amazing

crystals!) which I thought was very

good for a White Widow. Only had a

on coco soil and fertilizer, used P-K 13-

Dear Soft Secrets

What can I say but a top paper. Had plenty of tips and did this lady from a clone. Bent it with a string from 4 week old and it took of from there - thanks to Soft Secrets. Did it in coco, 400w Son light, took 5 months to grow. But what a top smoke! Got 135gr dried. I've learnt a lot reading your 'Growing for Dummies' section. Keep it up all you at Soft

Secrets!



Not bad at all, dude. Are those branches collapsing under the weight of the buds or did you do a SCROG grow? Those fine ladies seem to be producing some very hard buds. While they may be not all that impressive in size, it's also the density of the buds that counts. So in any case: a big up to you!

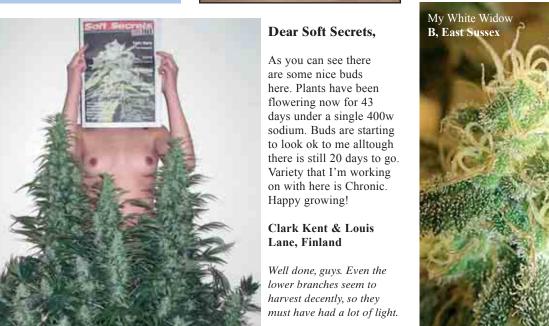
Hi Soft Secrets,

There I am waiting for the boys to show, if you know what I mean. Great magazine, thank you.

T., UK

Unfortunately we really don't know what you mean, baby. 'Waiting for the boys to show'... Whatever it is, it sure sounds highly interesting. Just to make sure: it's not the boys from SSUK you are waiting for to show up, is it? IS IT??!!









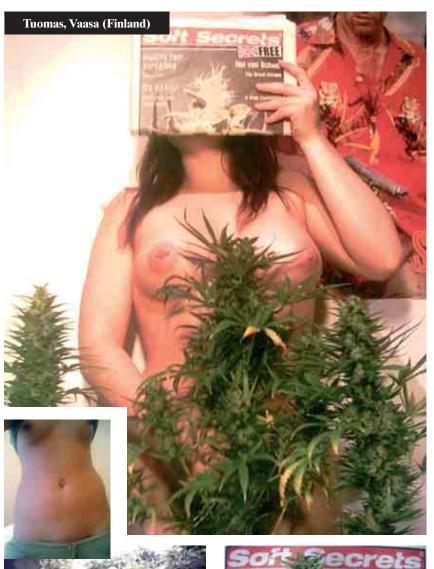
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Big Boy & Big Girl, West Yorkshire



















Nottingham Bud Squad





The Zwerfketel

Please say a warm 'hello' to the "Zwerfketel". This 'tower' style self-contained growing unit gives hobby growers with limited space the opportunity to grow 100, 170, 200 or 270 plants in a very small surface area, and uses very little energy. With its modest diameter of 125 cms., you could lose the Zwerfketel in any quiet corner of your house. Neither re-

building nor blacking out parts of your home are no longer necessary. The Zwerfketel is light-proof and even odour- and noise-less. The only thing you can hear is the quiet expulsion of air from the carbon filter. The Zwerfketel is available in two sizes: Model 1 with enough room for 100 plant, 60 cms high and with a diameter of 125 cms and fitted with a single 400 Watt lamp, or Model 2 with sufficient room in it for 200 plants. This is 105 cms. high, also with a diameter of 125 cms., and is fitted out with two 400 Watt bulbs. Users can also choose to add a further extension ring at a later stage of growth, which adds another 40 cms to the height of the unit and allows a further 70 plants to be squeezed in. The extension ring works with either model. The makers of the Zwerfketel had modest growing ambitions when they started out. They were looking to create a system that is economical in its energy use and that takes up very little space. Simple aims that have been more than fulfilled! Thanks to the special air-cooled lamps the plants can grow without any danger right up to the warm glass surrounding the bulbs. The result exceeded expectations, with marvellous yields for a start!! The lid and the base are made of polyester. The interior consists of metal outer-

and inner rings with a space in between then. In this space are placed ordinary hydroslabs, the slabs are watered and a hole is pricked through the inner surface of the interior wall of the slabs. Now you can just plug the Zwerfketel into a socket and start growing! The unit is built out of plates that can be easily assembled by non-professionals. The plates come packed away rolled up in discrete brown boxes or delivered loose as flat plates. A simple construction guide is enclosed, along with a clear growing guide.

For more information call +31 (0) 78 654 9167 www.zwerfketel.com



The 3 Darkest Secrets

3 Pac Magic Grow heralds the dawn of a new age for all growers in earth and soil. With its introduction, even committed hydro- and coco growers now have a good reason to switch back to growing in soil. The results and yields that are being obtained with this magic formula are simply super-

natural. The magic formula of 3 Pac is a combination of subsoil fungi that, together with the other two components, ensures an extraordinarily strong root system. Because roots are always having to deal with incubating diseases, thanks to which they can never be growing at 100% efficiency, various mould (Myco) are grown to counteract this. Myco are selected moulds that break down all disease agents, thanks to which the roots really can function at 100 %, and this ensures a dramatically improved rate of uptake (that can reach 700%). It makes sure that the plant has more roots and above all can make more sugars. Thanks to this the plant has a higher-tomaximal sugar level, which makes the plant less susceptible to all sicknesses and/or complaints (even bud rot barely raises its head ever again). It is very easy to use so every beginner should have no trouble getting started with it. Elsewhere in this edition you can see in our advert how it works and what these three dark secrets are. So find the magic formula and have yourself a great and magic 2005!

Call for more info: + 31 (0) 31 4393 748. Fax: +31 (0) 31 4393 437 • www.3pac.nl



An exuberant bloom with **House & Garden**

At least 20% heavier harvests is the promise held out by Shooting Powder. With just 65 grams of this powerful bloom stimulator you can turn 100 litres of water into a magic potion to transform your buds into sturdy, fat orbs of loveliness. The manufacturer advises that Shooting Powder should be applied in the last three weeks of blooming to achieve a maximum harvest.

Info: House & Garden

Tel: +31 (0) 610 939 412 www.house-garden.nl

Logic, naturally, with Ecologic

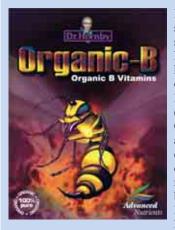


ECOlogic is known for its various earth mixes made from high-value components in a base of, among other things, white peat. These soil mixes conform to the RHP kite mark. The range includes ECOlogic Lightmix: this is a light, pre-fertilised soil mix with a fine structure. Thanks to the mild fertilisation this soil is the ideal aid to growing in the first weeks. ECOlogic Allmix: the widely-known complete prefertilsed soil mix; it has a rough structure

and only needs water adding to it. It contains sufficient nutrients to last the whole grow (of course you can always add your favourite booster and stimulator) ECOlogic Potgrond: this mix of various peat types is great for building up young plants. The soil is lightly pre-fertilised and contains no perlite. ECOlogic Cocospeat: this mixture of coco fibre and coco grit is enriched with trichoderms. ECOlogic Perlite: ideal for your air and water management, and the smallest pack of perlite available in the Netherlands. Get to know these ECOlogic soil mixes and ask at your local grow shop for the introductory packs!

More info from Plagron: +31(0) 495 631559 www.plagron.nl

Organic B from Advanced Nutrients



Finally there's an all-organic B vitamin supplement on the market, as an alternative to synthetic B vitamins. Organic B from Advanced Nutrients is made up of three unique yeast extract hydrolysates that together give a balanced feeding of B-1 (thiamine hydrochloride), B-2 (riboflavin), B-3 (Niacin), B-5 (Pantothenic Acid), B-6 (Pyridoxin), B-7 (Biotin) and B-12 (Cobalamin). Organic B also contains proteins, peptides, free amino acids, lipids, vitamins, minerals, trace elements and cytokinins. Organic B is completely organic and can be used in hydroponic and soil mediums. They are also a great source of food for beneficial microbial growth products like Voodoo, Piranha, and Tarantula, all from Advanced Nutrients. Although Organic B has only been

available on the European market for a few months, it is fast becoming a favorite of many of the Netherlands' top breeders and growers because of its ability to promote fast root growth and produce strong healthy plants.

For more info call IKON International (Wholesale only), Telephone: +44(0)1925 822503 Fax: +44(0)1925 822601 or go to www.ikon-international.com

Raise organic clones with Plagron



It often goes firmly against the grain of many organic growers to have to plant their seeds or clones in such a ghastly thing as a stone wool block. Fortunately, those organic specialists of the first order Plagron have released a fullyfunctional alternative to those well-known yellow blocks: the coco startblock. Just putting this sweet brown pot into use is a pleasure in its own right: simply stand it in a layer of water, and within several seconds you will see before your very eyes the little block in its paper sleeve swell up to almost twice its original volume and transform itself into the ideal airy starting block.

Info: Plagron Tel: +31 (0) 495 631 559 www.plagron.nl

Green Sensation for a sensational bloom



This new bud on the extensive Plagron product family tree delivers unheard of results in the last 4-to-6 weeks of bloom. Green Sensation is a complexly put-together bloom stimulator made from organic and bio-mineral nutritional elements. Thanks to the sophisticated composition the plant is provided with all foodstuffs it needs for a sensational bloom and fruiting. The most important effects of Green Sensation are: more and fatter buds, an elevation of the sugar concentration in

the fruit and a higher resistance to stress. With this revolutionary bloom stimulator you have no need of any other additives and you will save at least 35% of your basic nutrient costs! As well as the advantages to your wallet, Green Sensation scores highly for its user-friendliness. Thanks to this there are sensational end results achievable with ease: fatter, harder buds, with a considerably higher THC level.

Info: Tel: + 31 (0) 495 631 559 www.plagron.nl



Small One Stripper.



Big One Stripper.

New trim machines for the home grower

Straight out of Switzerland comes two new trim machines for the home grower. The small version is called the 'Small One Stripper'. This trim machine trims whole plants up to eight times faster than trimming by hand. The user only needs to hold a branch and wave it with a dabbing, turning movement against the grill of the trimmer. Then the leaves are trimmed off with Swiss precision, while the bud is left nice and intact. The trimmed off leaves are removed automatically to a vacuum cleaner, and from this leaf material hash (skuff) can be easily made.

The big version o this trim machine is called the 'Big One Stripper'. This gigantic, fast trimmer trim a whole plant within a minute, making it at least 20 times faster than by hand. With this trimming machine no vacuum cleaner is needed. A

plastic fibre collection bag for the trimmed off leaves is delivered with it. Both apparatuses are certified with a CE-kite mark and various safety features. A third mid-sized version is currently under development.

Info from: Growside Maastricht VOF. Tel: +31 (0) 43 362 7990 www.growside.nl



'Sweep' Detector tracks down hidden transmitters

The 'Sweep' Detector P 4.5 offers the sophistication of a professional counter-measures system in a small and compact device and with the same possibilities, and is suitable detection of hidden audio- and GPS/GSM transmitters (for example under cars). It is ideal for 'sweep' assignments such as before an important meeting takes place. The transmission can be traced and verified, with

audio and visual alarm. A silent 'sweep' can by conducted by using the apparatus with headphones. During the meeting the P 4.5 can be hidden in a pocket and kept alert for other sweeps' in the space. The P 4.5 is of high quality, simple to use and reliable.

Info: Detect Nu. Tel: +31 (0) 26 445 9343 www.detectnu.nl



The Florada

One of the big attractions for the public at the recent Highlife fair was the Florada grow system. This impressively technical tour de force from the Netherlands makes optimal use of the space, is unusually stingy in its energy use (40 Euros per month!) and is extremely safe. Even though the Florada comes over as pretty big, the size is actually not so bad: with a height of 2.20 metres incl. roof and vacuum extractor, and a diameter of 2.20 metres, it will fit without problem into most houses, somewhere. What's different to other growing drums is that the plants in the Florada grow horizontally and leaning somewhat to the

front. Thanks to the sophisticated design, the growing surface area comes to at least 5 square metres. It can be a bit of a slog for you to fill the unit, because there is space for 432 clones. These are illuminated by three central 400-Watt lamps (with cool-tubes) mounted on top of each. The plants are never destined to become large, but thanks to the huge number of them and the extremely high light availability, monster harvests are still achievable – up to 3 grams (!) per Watt. The Florada has been developed for growing with stone wool in its standard design, but the manufacturers are already experimenting with coco mats, so that in the near future organic growers will also be able to get to work with it. The safety aspects are guaranteed by the high-value CE-checked junction box. The Florada is delivered as standard with no air extraction fitted, and can be seen in operation in the showroom in Breda.

Info: Florada Tel: +31 (0)76 544 94 96 www.florada.nl

Organic Iguana Juice Bloom



Advanced Nutrients' Dr. Hornby wanted you to have an all-organic liquid one-part bloom formula that dissolves well in water and is totally bioavailable to your valuable medical crop. That's why he designed Dr. Hornby's Iguana Juice Bloom, which has been thoroughly field tested and proven to give exceptional yields. Indeed, Iguana Bloom produced yields so impressive that they nearly equaled the one gram per watt performance of

AN's synthetic formulas! When they competed Iguana Juice with some competitors' one part organic formulas, Iguana destroyed them. Dr. Hornby's Iguana Juice is a powerful blend of organics that produces more fruiting sites, short internode lengths, enhances flowering response and bud formation, and creates beautiful fresh aromatic bouquet that only organics can produce. Dr. Hornby's Iguana Juice contains a fish base from the superclean ice cold waters of the far North Pacific Ocean, plus over 70 minerals, krill extract, yucca extract, earthworm castings, seabird guano, bat guano, and alfalfa. This specialty product is backed by AN's amazing 100% performance guarantee.

For more info call IKON International (Wholesale only), Telephone: +44(0)1925 822503 Fax: +44(0)1925 822601 or go to www.ikon-international.com

Grow easy with Easygrower

The Easygrower distinguishes itself from other grow units with its construction; it is built from four standing parts, three of them with no base and the fourth with a base, which the user can position on the ground without having to be inside the Easygrower unit itself. As well as this the Easygrower is also fitted with a polyester water reservoir of about 250 litres, so that giving your plants water is child's play. So with this product you will never have any trouble again with transporting water. Another big advantage of the Easygrower is that it has a diameter of just 120 cm and is only 145 cm high. This gives the interior an effective space



of around 3.25 square meters. The Easygrower is equipped with four round inserts, made from black filter material so that no light can seep out or get in. Designed in this way, you will never have any trouble with loose dangling pipes and suchlike. On the under-most side of the water reservoir there is a opening that is large enough to be able to position the pump from outside, and if necessary to replace it. The specially designed Easyblower 250, with replaceable cassettes, is positioned directly above the de cool-tube to ensure that there is an optimal air extraction. De Easygrower 180-400 is designed for 180 plants with just two 400-Watt lamps. The advantage of this is that the energy costs (ten Euros per week) are kept relatively low.

Info: Easygrower Tel: +31 (0) 10 295 7488 www.easygrower.com

Out of the cupboard with Hy Supply

With their new grow cupboard going by the simple name Growkast, the guys from Hy Supply wholesalers have launched a neat piece of grow tech design. The Growkast is available in two sizes: 121 cm x 109 cm x 220 cm and 215 cm x 109 cm x 220 cm), and can be easily constructed even by a grower with three left hands. Its advantages include the lightness of the material out of which it is built, its fire resisting (think safety!) and strongly insulating properties, and the absolute light- and sound-proofness



of the design. In principle the grower himself must choose the growing technique he plans to use in the cupboard. For a small extra charge the unit can be delivered assembled as a turn-key product.

Info from: Hy Supply Tel. + 31 (0) 481 452 290

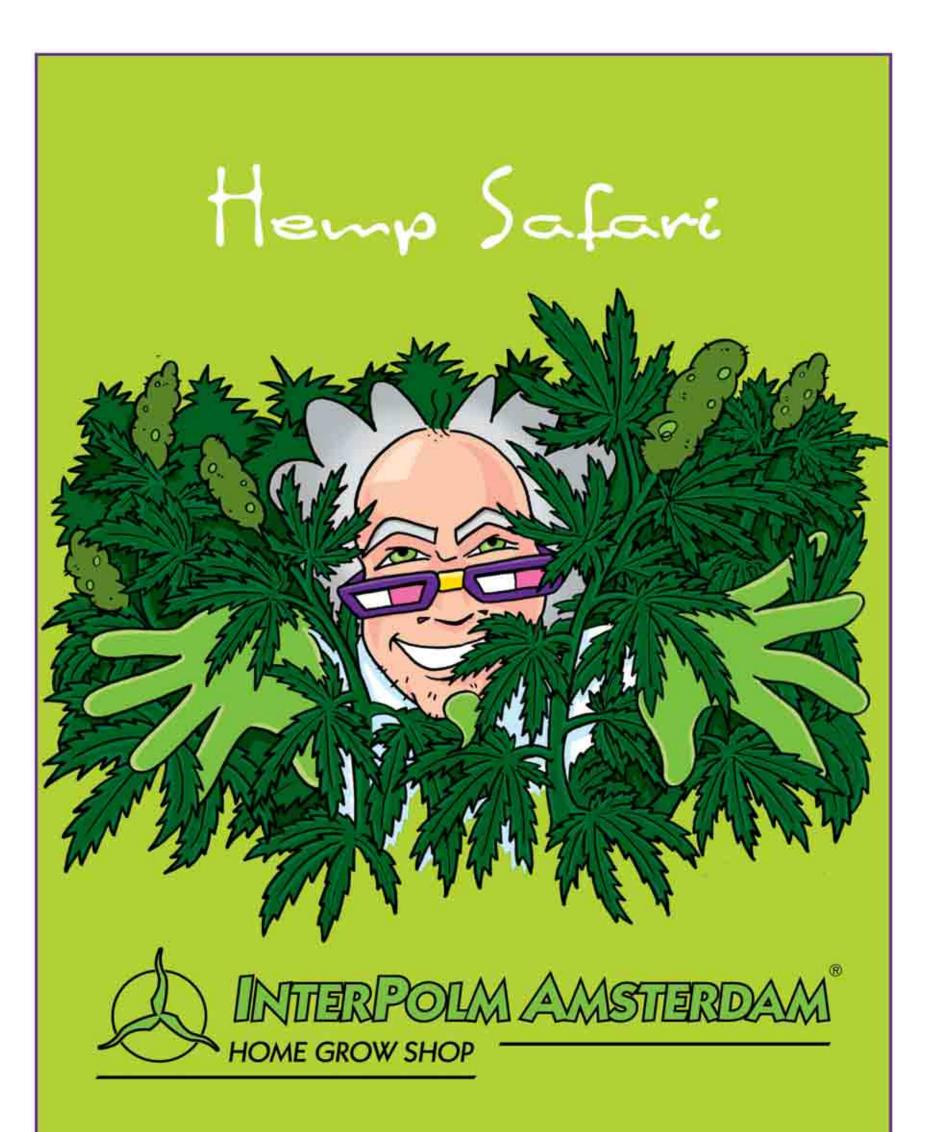
Make your own Ecosystem at home



Ecosystem has brought out another and complete growing system, this time a variant on the drum-principle. The exceptionally handy round design (diameter 122 cm, height 168 cm) is fashioned from panels that open, something that considerably increases the user-friendliness in comparison to other grow drums which you generally have to put the clones into from above. Another strong point is again the efficient use of every inch of space, by which on slightly more than a single square meter 80 plants can be raised. Two vertically hanging 600-Watt lamps with cool tubes create a sea of light. The

only thing you need to get this splendid tub up and running is a score (20) of stone wool slabs, since the Ecosystem delivered complete with bulbs and a carbon filter.

Info: PK Trading Tel + 31 (0) 10 280 9878 www.pktrading.nl



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Tarantula from Advanced Nutrients



Advanced Nutrients is proud to announce Tarantula, a pioneering product that contains the highest concentration of beneficial microorganisms of any plant growth product we know of. But why do you need beneficial micro-organisms at all, we hear you ask? Because the best soil in nature, the kind of soil that plants are rarely grown in by today's indoor growers, contains a rich blend of micro-organisms such as Bacillus, Streptomycetes, Actinomycetes, and Psuedomonas. These tiny organisms help soil and other grow media to be a very favorable environment for plant roots. And when plants are in an environment that favors their roots, they grow faster and more efficiently uptake their

nutrients, which means they can better handle stress, and better produce bigger flowers and fruit. AN's Dr. Hornby believes in healthy plants and healthy grow mediums. He set out to restore nature's balance to the mediums that growers use. He spent three years peering into the world of micro- ogranisms. Sometimes he found himself almost permanently squinting at the little microbes as they colonized root zones and created symbiotic relationships that greatly pleased plant roots. During extensive field testing under the most rigorous conditions, Dr. Hornby found that his special Tarantula formula, which contains 57 different types of microorgansms and 1.4 billion "colonyforming units" per gram, fostered exceptional growth in vegetative and flowering phases. Root mass increased by the application of Tarantula, and was increased even more when Tarantula was used in conjunction with another revolutionary Advanced Nutrients product, Piranha. Indeed, one field test showed that growth and root mass increased 25% more when Piranha and Tarantula were used together, compared to when Piranha was used by itself. Another benefit of Tarantula is that it fosters microbial action that releases "cytokinins" that aid in producing more extensive lateral branching, more budding sites, and buds with greater grith and weight. The positive effects of Dr. Hornby's Tarantula and beneficial microogranisms cannot be overstated. The product creates a healthy root zone that gives plants greater ability to uptake nutrients and to be strong and stress-resistant, all the way down to the cellular level.

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Hy-Ox from Advanced Nutrients



This AN product is for use in hydroponic reservoirs. Hy-Ox super oxygenates the water for better nutrient and oxygen transfer into roots, stems, flowers and leaves producing a more robust plant. Hy-Ox contains pure 35% food grade hydrogen peroxide (H2O2) and in addition to oxygenating your nutrient solution reservoir it also checks exessive biogrowth and disinfects the solution and eliminates the anoxic conditions that contribute to the generation of odors. Because it works as a disinfectant, Hy-Ox should not be added if you are using biological additives such as the beneficial microbes, beneficial fungi, beneficial bacteria or enzymes such as those found in Voodoo Juice, Piranha, Tarantula or Sensizym.

For more info call IKON International (Wholesale only), Telephone: +44(0)1925 822503 Fax: +44(0)1925 822601 or go to www.ikon-international.com

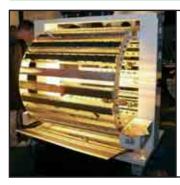


Cool grow cupboard with electric roller blinds

The Coolkast is a carefully considered grow cupboard with an extra: an electrically operated door (with a choice of key hanger device or remote control), that furthermore closes fully light- and air-tight. The Coolkast offers ultimate flexibility and is in effect a bespoke piece of equipment: it is available in any shape and

size. In consultation with you, whatever you might require such as filter(s), ventilator, irrigation system, circuit board, Secla VSA + lamp, Megalux-cap, SMS Controller and a Mini-Maxi meter can be delivered. All the components will need putting together before you get down to work, but that is a doddle and easily achieved with a half hour's work. Also available from Bio Ibo (Schelluinen) and BioBello (Helmond).

Info: Grow World Tel: +31 (0) 55 5403 381 www.growworld.nl



Merry go round for your plants

In Canada it's been turning since 1999, cranking out harvests for its happy customers, and now the unique Omega rotating grow system is available in Europe. In the Omega's horizontal drum are the stainless steel trays in which the stone wool blocks fit, while in the centre of the

drum are two 600-Watt lamps, housed in cool tubes. The carousel turns 24 –hoursper-day and makes a complete revolution every 50 minutes. This is necessary, otherwise the plants would follow their natural inclination and grow against gravity, which in this case would mean away from the light. The merry-go-round can house 260 clones and can be easily moved. The growing surface area comes to just 2.5 square metres, and the unit's height is 180 cm. There are two models available: Basic and Pro. With the Basic model, the user has to mount the lighting and ventilation himself. The Pro model is a plug-and-play system.

Info: PK Trading Tel: +31 (0) 10 280 9878 www.pktrading.nl



"No, there's nothing in this cabinet but sexy lingerie, I swear!"

iGrow now!

The now famous iGrow cabinet is a ready-to-use camouflaged growing cabinet that looks like a regular wardrobe but, on the inside, is an ingenious growing system. It comes in the shape of the ready-to-use iGrowbox Senior or Junior, growing cabinets good for 4 to 24 plants with a yield of between 35 and 100 grams per plant. The iGrow-box Senior for example contains 2 x 400w (or 600w) lamps, and will be delivered as a self-build kit and is very simple to just click together; with 30 minutes work, it should be ready for use. The user can choose him- or her-self between the 400w or 600w lamp option to work with, and whether he (or she) wants to work with a hydroponic or a bio-system for growing.

The best news from the iGrow cabinet however is stashed in a panel in the box, namely a fire safety system that meets all the requirements of the strict (Dutch) TNO standards. We quote from the brochure, "In order to suffocate a fire should it start, the cabinets have been fitted with an aerosol extinguishing system. The Aerosol fire extinguisher does not try to smother fire by removing oxygen or through cooling, but uses a molecular chemical reaction to end a fire without affecting oxygen levels. This aerosol is composed of potassium mixed with small quantities of gas particles. Not only water and carbon dioxide are formed during a fire, but unstable radicals also appear. The Aerosol fire extinguisher works by releasing potassium particles that connect to the unstable radicals transforming them into more stable elements. In this way the fire is safely and swiftly extinguished."

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'Moving Forward'

Atami opens branches in Australia and Central America



From left to right: Grant Mahy (Atami-Australia author of the 'Integral Hydroponics' book), Phons from Canfilter and Erwin from Atami send one more up in smoke. During the latest Highlife Fair in Utrecht the Atami stand once again attracted a lot of visitor traffic. As has become custom, you might add, because this company based in the Dutch town of Rosmalen has for years now been an important player on the national and international cannabis market. But one personality was missing from the Atami stand; where was Erwin Rosario, one of the most authoritative figureheads of the Atami team? We tracked down Erwin in Mexico, and asked him a few questions.

SSUK: Erwin, where were you? We missed you at the Fair.

Erwin: "Yes, I was sad to have missed it. Personally, I find the Highlife Fair one of the nicest trade fairs in the world. But there was work to be done over in the Western hemisphere. My job at Atami is the development of markets and products. That means doing a lot of travelling and a lot of research."

Basically, you were too busy. What were you up to for Atami?

"We had just established a new market in the Caribbean Islands and Central America. Which is pretty funny, since this is where I originally come from and only now is the market being exploited. At the same time we are busy processing organically produced composts here."

Tell me, how many regions of the world are you active in now?

"Actually, in all five regions of the world now. But we do not always use the names Atami and B'cuzz. We also have various joint ventures with the larger multi-nationals. In this way we can spread our risk while at the same time expanding our share of the nutrients market."

You now have a branch in Australia yet another new one in Curacao. How has it been going with them?

"I travelled Down Under with Phons from Canfilter. Shortly after that I established along with Grant Mahy, the author of the bestseller 'Integral Hydroponics,' Atami Australia. Atami Australia distributes B'cuzz products throughout Oz, and in the western part of Australia we also distribute Canfilters and Canfans. Atami Trading handles the distribution of our products in the Caribbean region and Central America."

To turn briefly to your products, you have just come out with Cotex, and there is a rumour buzzing around about a new and revolutionary nutrient line. Can you tell us something about this?

"For years now customers have been clamouring for us to make a coco grow block. Now we have managed to produce one. *Cotex* is our new coco baby. It has been available since the beginning of this year in more than 45 countries around the world. To develop is to live, in my opinion. You must be able to distinguish yourself in the market place. And as for our ever-growing distribution network, keeping transport costs down is an absolute must. You'll be hearing about our revolutionary nutrient line more in the future.."

To finish, have you anything to add?

"The growing industry is literally growing like wildfire. The way I see it, the only way to continue to maintain a leading role is to keep growing and to keep innovating. We have very gradually transformed ourselves from a start-up company into a 'grow concern concept'. Let's keep the Grow alive!"

Hemp Wear

As spring is finally here and summer fast approaches, the guys at THTC. hit the spot with some new editions for the season, to their existing range of beautifully made and designed t-shirts, hoodies, caps and other accessories. Creating high quality, "tough hemp clothes for the urban environment", all THTC. garments are 100% organic, made from a unique blend of 55% organic hemp that comes from hundred's of family owned farms across China and 45% certified organic cotton. Established five years ago, in order to "produce ecologically and ethically produced clothing without compromising style", the company has gone from strength to strength, achieving as many sales in the first three months of this year than the whole of last year. Founding member, Gav Lawson, describes the original motivation as being to ... "explore, develop and promote the potential of the hemp plant and so we got into clothing to do this." With lightweight hoodies, five new men's screen-printed designs and a limited run of fitted women's t-shirts being added to an already impressive range of designs and styles, THTC are all set to be keeping things cool and funky this summer. Popular with all sorts of freethinking, socially aware people, musical artists such as Rodney P., MC Navigator, MC Trip, Goldie Looking Chain, Dynamite MC., Morcheeba, Skinny Man., Mr. Scruff and The Music are all donning THTC. togs. The company is has also provided merchandising for outfits such as Asian Dub Foundation, Renegade Hardware and Harmless Recordings as well as for organizations including a subsidiary of the N.H.S., Amsterdam's Cannabis College and Globalise Resistance who are involved with protests. Unaffected by the current hypocritical and confusing situation regarding the legality of cannabis itself in the U.K., THTC. are spreading their wings around the world with customers from as far a field as Greece, Iceland, Holland, Mexico and Romania. They are hoping to soon obtain licensing for the brand in Japan, Australia and America. Whilst raising awareness regarding this incredibly environmentally friendly and beneficial plant,



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the rockwool. This couples the

capillary action of the cube

Place the cube into the tray

and once the tray is full, foliar feed and place tray into

to the stem.

the propagator.

Stock Plant:

In order to successfully clone, it is essential that the stock/mother plant is in peak condition and free from any type of infection e.g. insect, bacterial etc. The most cost effective way of eliminating

effective way of eliminating unwanted living organisms, is to sterilise the growing environment with a watered down bleach solution.

It is advisable to use a growing method that does not have a re-circulation aspect to it, "Flow to Waste" and "Pot & Soil" for example. These methods both give more control over the actual EC & pH levels supplied to your plant. They also have the added advantage of continually being able to flush toxins and chemical build up from within the root zone.

Environment is also an important factor when maintaining a stock plant for cuttings. Humidity should be within 40-60% and the temperature kept between 80-85°F, for optimum growing conditions. Providing ventilation is adequate and the above temperature can be maintained CO2 is not necessary. Take cuttings once a week or every other week, while foliar feeding with H&G Magic Green after each period to add extra vitality. Insecticide should also be applied on a weekly basis to prevent any possibility of infection.

Soaking the Rockwool

Before taking clones from the stock plant, the rock wool cubes must be prepared 24hours in advance. Mix up 10L of water with H&G Hydro A&B to an EC of 1.2mS/cm2 and pH 5.5, using H&G pH- Growth containing Saltpetre. Completely submerge the cubes and saturate for 24 hours, this is essential for capillary action. Remove the cube and place on an inclined surface for draining, once drained the cube is ready to be placed in the cube tray. DO NOT squeeze the cube at any stage.

Taking the cuttings

Once you have a mature stock plant it is best to remove large sections at a time comprising 10 to 15 cuttings. A sterile scalpel or blade must be used for each session of removing cuttings. Growth sites must be left on the mother plant for the development of future cuttings. Place the removed sections into a vase of tepid water at a pH of 6.3. Cuttings should be between 10-15cm in length. Use a dish containing 4-5mm of water to submerge the stem of the cutting in while cutting away from the branch section. Using a scalpel make a clean cut through the stem at an angle of 30-40°. Then strip a narrow section from the outer skin of the stem at the base of the cutting; this should be no longer than 6-7mm. This aids in the fast development of roots. Strip any foliage from the lower sections of the cutting leaving only the larger leaves and small growth shoots at the top. Each clone should be the same length and consist of the same amount of foliage; larger leaves have to be trimmed to 4-5cm.

Once this procedure is complete then rooting hormone can be applied. Do not apply too much and clean the stems cross-section before placing in the rockwool cube. Place the cutting into the hole at the centre of the cube. Once the stem base has reached the bottom of the hole carefully push it a further 7-10mm into

Advertorial

Back To Basics: 7 Days to success: Cloning with Rockwool:

Environmental conditions:

For the first three days 90-95% humidity is required to prevent the clones from wilting. Temperatures between 24-27°C should be maintained at all times for rapid trouble free root production. Foliar feed once a day with a chemical nutrition at half strength to prevent deficiencies from developing. You may add Superthrive or similar products if you wish.

Superthrive or similar products if you wish.

After 3 days has passed open one or two of the vents and after four or five days open all of the vents. This slowly acclimatises the clone to the atmosphere outside the propagator and encourages the development of roots. Start to check for the first sign of roots after the day five, this may be indicated by a reduction in the weight of the cube. To replenish the cube with nutrient enriched water, levels as before, place it in a shallow container and let the cube take water from its base through capillary action.

Lighting Conditions

Metal Halide or high frequency fluorescents, PL860s, lamps should be used for the first week. A 400W metal Halide should be hung at a distance of 1.25m from the clones over a floor area of 2m2. High frequency fluorescent lighting should be hung at a distance of 30-40cm and can effectively cover an area of 0.5m2. Clones do not require strong light; high intensity light can be detrimental. However as soon as the cutting can cope with strong lighting conditions it should be given it.

Transplantation

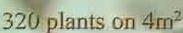
Once roots are visible mix up 10L of water with H&G Hydro A&B and 1ml/L of Action Upstart Stimulator to an EC of 1.2mS/cm2 at pH 5.5. Submerge the cubes containing the root system until completely saturated. Immediately after this mix up enough water with H&G Hydro A&B and H&G Root Excelurator 0.3ml/L to soak the 7.5cm propagation blocks and saturate for 24 hours. After the saturation process is complete place the cube into the block as soon as you remove it from the soaking container. The clone is now ready for high intensity lighting conditions. Continue foliar feeding daily; now with H&G Root Excelurator and A&B. Slowly reduce the distance of the lamp to the clone over the next two to three days until you are 50-60cm above it. Roots will reach the bottom of the block with 24 to 48 hours.



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By Weckels, the grow specialist from Atami

Double Diamonds

In this month's article we're going to be looking at some glittering diamonds. Double Diamonds to be precise. It is quite clear where this extremely potent weed variety gets her name from: the wealth of crystals that reward the attentive grower at the end of the grow cycle like the proverbial pot of gold at the end of the rainbow!

Double Diamond is mostly grown in the Eastern half of the Netherlands. Places like Enschede, Hengelo and Zwolle are bursting at the seems with these renowned plants. Why exactly Double Diamond plants should be so popular to grow here remains to this day a mystery. In all probability it was an enthusiastic breeder who was the brain behind this pearl of a plant, since many a grower has wondered to himself, quite rightly, just how this single plant could have so many good characteristics. Especially in the period between 1996 and 2000 this cannabis plant variety was extensively grown thanks to her nice looking buds and relatively short blooming period. These characteristics made Double Diamond well loved by grower and smoker alike and have led to the many fields (small and large) established with these mysterious plants.

Indica

If we were to subdivide Double Diamond a little, then we would categorise her as a member of the Indica family of varieties. The Indicas are well known as real indoor plants, given that they remain nicely compact as so take pots are the ideal size since they take up very little space and yet the plant still has plenty of room to develop to its potential. When growing a shortblooming variety like Double Diamond indoors. I always opt for one of the lightly-fertilised soil mixtures. Most importantly of all, the added nutrients must be rapidly available for take up by the plant, otherwise they might as well not have been added at all! We can spend as much time and attention on getting a perfect soil mix as we like, but if takes at least two months before the biological soil life can make the additives available to the Double Diamond, then your crop is going to be practically harvested and the fertiliser will not even have had a chance to do its work.

This is one of the reasons why most growers choose to add a liquid nutrient (fertiliser) to their feed water, because this is directly available to the plant. These are also often the growers who provide their soil mixes with as little solid fertiliser as possible, because once they have a 'poor' soil mix (a soil mix with little fertiliser mixed into it) can give the plant much more liquid nutrient with its feed water, without overfertilising the plant. One fertiliser that be

If we were to subdivide Double Diamond a little, then we would categorise her as a member of the Indica family of varieties

up little space when they are grown. As balcony plants the Indica-varieties are also well-loved by the outdoor grower, given that their restricted stature is subject to less stress from wind gusts than a lanky Sativa flopping around all over your balcony. Because Double Diamond has become mostly popular as an indoor plant though, let us leave the outdoor growing of this variety provisionally for what it is, and turn to looking at the ideal circumstances for growing it under artificial light.

Double Diamond produces a considerable number of flower heads during the bloom period, and in addition it is a plant that grows and blooms with relative ease. Thanks especially to the fact that Double Diamond is a reasonably easy plant, it makes it a little easier for us as growers to decide on a suitable substrate for growing it on. I can report that the growing experience with this variety when grown on stone wool and coco are good, although good harvest can also be scored from growing on soil.

Worm castings

When we have decided to set to work in soil, then we are best off using pots with a volume of about 4.5 litres. These

mixed in with the soil mix as well, even when using liquid nutrients, is worm manure or castings. This manure contains a more or less equal concentration of important fertiliser substances and so helps to provide a stable growing base. In addition to worm castings we also (always) add chalk or calcium (in the form of seaweed extract) and perlite to the lightly-fertilised soil mixture.

Calcium will contribute considerably to making the nutrients even more easily taken up by the plant, and it will also help maintain a neutral pH-value and protect against drawbacks like the acidification of the soil base. Perlite is known by almost every grower and is absolutely unmissable from the soil mix, keeping the soil mix aerated and so as welcoming to the marihuana plant as possible.

Root system

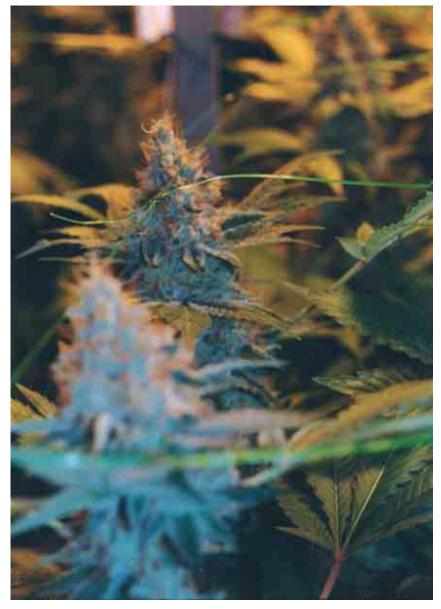
When we as growers choose to raise really short-blooming varieties like Double Diamond on soil mixes that are richly provided with solid fertilisers, without also adding liquid fertiliser to the feed water, it is possible provided that we make up the soil mix well in advance of it being grown on. When in addition to the worm castings, the calcium (in the form of seaweed extract)



Double Diamond produces buds as lovely as diamonds! The buds are submerged under a thick layer of THC!

and the perlite also want to add fertilisers such as blood meal, wood ash, compost, bat droppings and suchlike to our soil mix, we can best do so a few months in advance. You can make up big bags of the stuff months in advance and store them (for example in a shed), in so doing giving the soil life all the time it needs to develop an optimum activity. A plant like Double Diamond will not be able to contain her happiness when she finds herself growing up in such a food-rich paradise. We only need to make sure that

we fill the pots to a maximum of threequarters full with this richly-fertilised earth; the top layer must remain wellaerated and above all nutrient-poor, since the young plants must first develop a decent root system in order to experience the later benefits. If we don't do this it will take a lot longer for the clones or young seedlings to really get growing, and in the worst case they can even die because the young roots (in their earliest stage of development) simply can't handle such a richly-fertilised soil. >>



Make well sure that the plastic net does not cut too much into the buds, as these can be severely damaged if you don't.

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Snitch Culture

So there's another "grass a dealer" campaign kicked off here in the past month. This one is accompanied by a bunch of adverts on bus shelters and stuff. One of them shows an old dear peering out of her front door. Her face is frightened. You know the kind of thing I mean.

Anyhow, the posters say something like "drug dealers don't care where their money comes from: report a dealer today".

And as an added sweetener, it looks like there's a reward to be had if there's a successful prosecution. We've been here before, and the last time there was a big "shop a dealer" campaign, it was run by the local tabloid and they also offered a reward for every bust that was made. The paper was amazed that loads and loads of the calls they got were either bogus (made by kids fucking about or people with nothing better to do with their time) or malicious (made by neighbours pissed off by the racket coming from the student flat 24/7, or snidey maggots stirring the shit and settling scores).

On the plus side, these stupid campaigns seem to have a pretty short life expectancy as there's a legal problem around tip offs made by the fucking ingrates who want the anonymity but expect the cash as well. You'd think common sense would kick in, wouldn't you?

I reckon the idea is that we're supposed to believe that old ladies live in fear of their lives because cannabis users, DESPERATE for their next bit of blow are causing a wave of anarchy and crime on our streets. Aye, right: that's cannabis users for you.

But you got to ask yourself, apart from the obvious, what's wrong with this picture? Dealers are responsible for some twat going and battering some old biddy for her pension money? I don't fucking think so.

Think about it: some guy goes straight from work to the pub on a Friday lunchtime where he gets totally fucking leathered on booze. Then he jumps into his car to drive home and ploughs into a load of school kids crossing a road at a red light. Whose fault is it? The barman who served this prick the beer? The brewery that makes the beer? The farm where the barley or hops or whatever the fuck it is beer's made from is grown? No danger. Fact: the fault lies with the pissed up moron who drank the beer knowing they were going to be heading home in charge of a lethal fucking weapon.

This stuff comes round over and over again, and I gotta say it really gets on my fucking tits. Suddenly dope dealers supposed to be responsible for where their

customers get the money from to buy some product. I can only speak for my own punters, but most of them get their money from – wait for it – going to work the same as everyone else. Where the fuck does this idea that everyone who uses a controlled drug funds their pleasure either by crime or unemployment benefits come from? Vicious propaganda and downright fucking lies is what it is, readers.

I reckon that most of my clients these days have legit (which is to say, they pay income tax) jobs. In fact, I think that they all have jobs of one sort or another and that's where the money for their dope comes from, and not an old dear's purse: leave that sort of behaviour to the junkies, eh?

Of course, there is another group of people who use dope, and who actually use LOADS and LOADS of it and are without any obvious source of income: the ones who grow it.

Later,

Joe Blow

horribly_stoned_boy@hotmail.com

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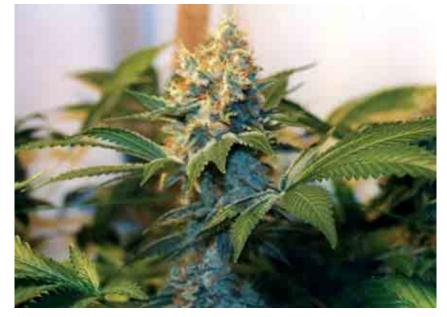
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Stench

>> Once the Double Diamond plants have developed into sturdy young adults (and that can happen in a surprisingly short time) in our carefully nurtured soil mix, we set the plants into bloom. For use after a week or two of blooming. there are growers who swear by fertilisers like fish emulsion. Although I honestly must admit that this fertiliser does indeed work extremely well during the bloom period (provided we do not administer too much), you have to decide for yourself where your limits as a grower really stand. The stench is so absolutely unbearable that many a grower finds that having applied this fertiliser (often mixed with water) to the soil base of his or her plants, he is forced to crawl immediately from his growing space half-stunned with revulsion. Things like this always have to be balanced, pros and cons, given that the chance is considerable that your surrounding neighbourhood will conclude not that you are harbouring a cannabis plantation, but thanks to the bodily stench, that a mass grave has been opened up on your property. In short: be aware of what you might be getting vourself into!



The net makes sure that the buds are kept apart from each other. This is something you really need with a big-yielder like Double Diamond!

Double Diamond produces a considerable number of flower heads during the bloom period, and in addition it is a plant that grows and blooms with relative ease.

Light

Double Diamond will develop her flower heads step-by-step during blossoming. In the beginning, small buds develop all over the plant; Double Diamond produces a considerable quantity of flower heads. In addition, her tight leaf coverage ensures an optimal uptake of light, and thanks in part to this the plant can grow a nice quantity of buds. Unfortunately this thick foliage can also frequently mean the buds on the lowermost side branches get insufficient light. So keep this in mind and remove the leaves that are holding out the most light. There are also growers (among them myself) who remove the budding shoots from the lowest side branches completely, well in advance of the plant beginning its bloom. Now the plant can devote all her energy to the strongly developed growth shoots (that are mostly to be found in the uppermost sections of the plant), which have been provided with an abundance of (artificial) light. It is these well-developed growth shoots that will deliver well-developed buds during the blooming period, thereby saving us a pile of trimming work in the process, given that we will no longer be burdened with having to remove loads of poorly-developed little flower heads!

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The Emperor's New Clothes

Interview with a British Drug researcher By Joe Kane

"Harry" has been a drug researcher for nearly 20 years. In the course of his career he's been closely involved with projects covering the more traditional drugs (such as cannabis, mushrooms, cocaine and heroin) through to the newer players (such as Ketamine, GHB, 2-CB and Ecstasy). In that time, he's been witness to some monumental changes in the drug arena: specifically, the emergence of the dance/drug scene, which Harry regards as "the most important cultural phenomenon since Punk Rock". Soft Secrets UK spoke to this openminded British scientist

SS: Would you like to tell us what your views on drug use

Harry: The fact is that probably moreor-less everyone in the country uses some sort of intoxicant. The problems stem from the legality of one's intoxicant of choice. There's a problem of definition from the outset, however. What is it that people mean when they talk about drugs? I mean, alcohol is a powerful drug, as is caffeine. Then of course there are the millions of tranquillizers, antidepressants and painkillers prescribed by the medical people every year. And we mustn't forget all the substances that can be bought over the counter in pharmacies. You may not get a high off aspirin, for example, but too many of them can kill you, making it a dangerous drug, but nobody really worries too much about that. So yes, I think definition is very important, basic even, and I don't think it's something that everyone agrees on. If we're talking about any compound that produces a change in mood, then practically anything could be seen as a drug in that sense. Tea, coffee, nicotine, essential oils, you name it. In the minds of the population at large, I think drugs equal substances used for enjoyment - as opposed to being used in medical treatment – or substances used which haven't been prescribed by a doctor. It's all very woolly, but it reflects the confusion surrounding this. The media have to take responsibility for a lot of this in my view, as do politicians. My own view is that we can't carry on demonising drug users forever, and at some point something is going to have to change.

Legalisation?

Legalisation wouldn't be my ideal choice, frankly. But the problem with decriminalisation is that it leaves so many grey areas and room for different interpretations. With legalisation at least everyone knows what's what. Like the laws controlling alcohol, I suppose. So we'd have laws covering age, outlets, purity and strength, driving while intoxicated and the various public nuisance and anti-social behaviour laws. I think those would just about cover any eventualities.

What does being a drug researcher involve then?

That's a debateable question! There are a whole lot of researchers who profess to be trying to predict behaviour, predict outcomes and all that sort of thing. Personally, I'm increasingly thinking that kind of work is a waste of time. I used to think there was something in it, but as the years have gone by and these people

more available and they're cheaper than ever. It's quite ludicrous when you think about it. And all the time we've got these supposed experts who continue to spout the "government drug policy is working" line when it patently isn't. I have to admit that I often wonder whether these people are so naïve that they actually believe what they're saying is true, or that they think people are so stupid that they'll swallow any old rubbish. Or then

It's utterly clear and obvious to anyone with two eyes and a brain that British drug policy isn't working, but for reasons that are totally beyond me the government continue to waste billions of pounds every year on a problem that resolutely refuses to go away.

have continued to get it consistently wrong, I've started to wonder. For the last few years I've been coming round to regarding a lot of statistical modelling in the drugs field at least, as voodoo science. For myself, I regard the important part of the job as keeping an eye on what's going on, monitoring new trends, the emergence of new drugs, new drug scenes...all that kind of thing. And of course, it's essential that drug-related deaths and batches of very pure or impure drugs are investigated so that warnings can be put out and accurate drug safety materials can be devised – although there's an argument to be made for legalisation when purity and strength are the issues. It's about keeping people, and that's to say the drug using and non-drug using communities informed of what's going on. What the job isn't is manufacturing scare stories and perpetuating myths, though I'm ashamed to say that this does happen.

Presumably, you've got some rather strong views on "The War on Drugs". Would you care to share them with our

Well, of course it's a total nonsense. As I've already said, I've worked in this field for a long time and I'm still astonished at the level of continued denial and stupidity on the part of successive governments. Really, in any other area of social policy, if something isn't working then attempts are made

again, maybe some people want or need it to be true and so they just uncritically accept this - let's call it what it is - lie. These Puritans have decided on behalf of the nation as a whole that a drug free society - as in illicit drugs - is the ideal for everyone. To my mind a drug free society is about as feasible as a paper free toilet when the realities of the situation are considered. As I said before, there are too many grey areas as to what drugs are and aren't for it to work. I think these people have a fundamental problem with other people enjoying themselves.

You called it a lie. That's rather a strong word!

I suppose so, but what else could it be called? When someone tells you something as fact that's totally at odds with what they know to be true then it's a lie. For example, one of the aims of drug policy in the UK has been to reduce the demand for drugs. We're told that this aim is being achieved at the same time as we're being told that drugs are cheaper than ever. Now, the drug market is the same as any other in that it responds to demand for a product, so if there's an opening or an opportunity to be had in a particular market then you can bet someone will be there to fill that gap. It's just basic economics. So when we're being told that demand for drugs is being cut and in the same breath we're being told that drugs are cheaper than ever, someone has to be telling untruths

To my mind a drug free society is about as feasible as a paper free toilet when the realities of the situation are considered.

to improve it. With drugs, it's like the Emperor's New Clothes; it's utterly clear and obvious to anyone with two eyes and a brain that British drug policy isn't working, but for reasons that are totally beyond me the government continue to waste billions of pounds every year on a problem that resolutely refuses to go away. Not only that, in spite of every effort made to achieve the contrary. demand for drugs is running higher than ever which in turn means there are

You'd have trouble getting a politician to own up to that one.

Sure you would, but that's their bread and butter if you like. In the main they trade in lies, half-truths and vagueness. You don't often hear those people who are in the know – such as the police – saying stuff like that. But that's another story, as for a Chief Constable or whatever to be honest about the issues around drugs

would be tantamount to career suicide and therefore it very rarely happens. Getting their views on it when they've retired, of course, is an altogether different matter. Then again, we've also got the various UK equivalents of the American Drug Enforcement Agency. The people who run these agencies tend to be a weird mix of former policemen-turned-politicians and so also have a tendency to put a highly positive spin on what they do, so you get statements like "We are winning the war on drugs" when they're clearly not. Less informed or less critical people have a tendency to accept statements like this at face value based purely on the fact that they come from the mouth of some top dog from drug enforcement appearing on television and wearing a natty uniform. "Why would they lie?" is the usual argument. "Because they get a budget of millions of tax pounds every year to fritter away" is the reply. Sometimes I really do despair of people!

So you think it's all about budgets and money?

Up to a point. Certainly there's a lot of money available to researchers, for example, if they're doing "good"

How do you mean?

If they're doing research that supports, backs up and validates conventional and/or prevailing wisdom on drug issues then there is always money. If, on the other hand a researcher wants to investigate what would be regarded as a more heretical area, such as whether or not crack cocaine is anything other than inevitably destructive and addictive, then you've got a problem as far as funding goes. A lot of people use drugs, and in the main, those people use drugs purely and simply because they enjoy them. For all but a very small minority, drug use will never really be an issue and in a lot - the majority, in fact - of cases people just seem to "age out" of it. So it always seems to me that one very important facet of drug research should be to investigate the factors influencing safe and nonproblematic use of drugs.

Not an attitude that's shared by the money people, then?

You could say that! There's an official mindset regarding drugs, and that is that they're a problem. People may start out enjoying them but addiction, miserv and death lurk just around the corner It's a very medieval, "evil spirit" way of looking at the world, I always think: drugs as spirits that possess the human soul, if you like. It's almost like the power of rational thought is left at the door when politicians start talking about drug use.

I think a lot of tokers in particular must think that. You wonder if the politicians actually believe it themselves.

Don't you just? You know, if they do believe it, then you have to ask what kind of people we have running the country. If they don't believe it, then someone has to start asking why they perpetuate it. Everyone knows that most of the anti-

cannabis legalisation arguments are patent nonsense, yet the politicians persist with these myths, terrified of being seen to be "soft" on drugs. It just seems to have become ingrained in the consciousness and it's quite absurd. Generally with the drug laws, I find myself wondering who benefits from them. Dealers, particularly the big time dealers certainly do. Organised crime benefits and so do the officials who take their bribes. But also it means, particularly in America, massive funding for the military and the police in the war on drugs. Vast amounts of money are spent by the American government trying to stem the flow of different substances, and it's still got the highest drug consumption in the world. Clearly, keeping drugs illegal benefits big business capitalism and organised crime, assuming the two aren't the same thing. The fact is that practically every one of the arguments made against the use of illegal or controlled substances - the detrimental effect on physical and mental health, for example, or the costs in terms of policing can realistically and arguably with more justification be made against alcohol, which is freely available. Tobacco is even more freely available, and everyone is aware of the health risks associated with

You mentioned cannabis "myths".

Yes, certainly. It amazes me that even now, in the 21st century, that there's still a belief that cannabis is a gateway drug. And claims like that are legitimised by people who really should know better. The thinking goes something like this: pretty much every problematic drug user, you know yourself the kind of user I'm talking about, uses or has used cannabis therefore there's a connection between cannabis use and the use of, say, heroin or crack. If these people hadn't used cannabis they wouldn't have become problematic druggies. In actual fact, millions of people in this country use cannabis on a

legalised. The messages are mixed and it's all very confusing. And the confusion can be geographical as well.

How do you mean?

Being busted in London with a quarter ounce in your pocket is probably going to get you no more than a caution. But then again, it might get you a fine and therefore a criminal record. It really

Generally with the drug laws, I find myself wondering who benefits from them. Dealers, particularly the big time dealers certainly do. Organised crime benefits and so do the officials who take their bribes. But also it means, particularly in America, massive funding for the military and the police in the war on drugs.

pretty regular basis and never really go beyond that, other than the recreational use of substances such as Ecstasy and amphetamine. And you tend to find that for a lot of people even occasional use of these begins to dwindle as they get older. Cannabis seems to be the one that people stick with for the longest time.

What do you think the future holds for drugs and drug users?

You know, that's a really tough question. It's so difficult to say what may or may not happen because there's simply no consistency in the approach of any government. Cannabis, for example, has been reclassified in the UK, but not decriminalised, and certainly not

comes down to the disposition of the arresting policeman at the time the arrest is actually made. And on the other hand, if you get busted in a rural part of the country then there's the potential for it to become a real problem for you. I mean, we all know of cases where a life has been ruined over the possession of a few grams of grass. The situation really needs to be properly clarified, certainly so the police know where they stand. What I'd like to see in the future is a grown up, serious debate about drugs and drug use. Unfortunately, we've got such a credulous and gullible population that I'm not exactly filled with optimism on this. Again, the media and the politicians. actually, if and when corporate capitalism wakens up to the fact that there are

billions to be made from this particular consumer group, then we might see a shift and a positive change. Think of what could be positively achieved with all the money that's currently being wasted on this

But you do think there will be changes in the future?

Well, certainly. Things change all the time. I'd expect there to be a new drug or group of drugs to hit the scene in the next five years or so. Don't ask me to predict what sort of thing it might be because I've no idea. The Dance Culture has been going strong now for a long time and shows no sign of slowing, so I'd think any new drugs will have an affiliation with that scene. I'm not sure we'll see any great moves towards decriminalisation or anything like that in the next few years. though one can live in hope. I think that huge changes will come, but they just won't all come at once. It'll be a slow process, but it will eventually happen.

We're done unless you've any last thoughts.

A friend of mine thinks that one day in the future people will look back at these times and wonder what all the fuss was about, and laugh that people were put in prison for choosing to alter their consciousness in ways proscribed by the law. They'll be amazed at the fact that persecutions took place for choosing to smoke one plant over another. Now that's optimistic, and I really hope he's right.

Reefer Madness

Lock three men in a room, make them smoke cannabis, and then try to provoke them into being hostile. Thirty years ago a team of American doctors actually conducted this daring experiment. They then described it in a report called Marijuana and Hostility in a Small-Group Setting. The conventional wisdom at the time said that cannabis would make people less hostile, that it would tend to quieten aggressive behaviour even in people who tended to be pugnacious. Such was the widespread belief among cannabis smokers, and also among people who knew cannabis smokers, which included a large proportion of the American population. But conventional wisdom is not always right. Several aggressive political figures voiced with certainty that cannabis had pernicious, vicious effects, and that directly or indirectly its use led to hostility, violence and worse. Several medical eminences agreed. This experiment was an attempt to settle the question.

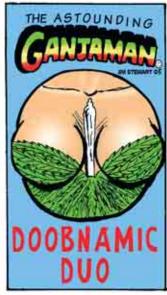
Carl Salzman and Richard Shader were co-directors of the Psychopharmacology Research Laboratory at Harvard Medical School in Boston. Together with a colleague, Bessel A van der Kolk, they recruited 60 brave volunteers, all healthy men between the ages of 21 and 30, all with prior experience of smoking cannabis. The men were divided into groups of three. Half the groups would be smoking real cannabis. The others would smoke placebos.

The doctors asked each group to perform a series of actions. First, the group met for 10 minutes, looking at a card with a picture on it and trying to concoct a consensus description of the picture. Then each individual thoroughly smoked one cigarette. The cigarette in some groups did, and in other groups did not, contain THC, the most famous psychoactive constituent chemical in cannabis.

Each group was then told, with cold hauteur, that its picture description was "inadequate". This, the doctors explain in their report, "was conceived of as an experimental frustration stimulus". The group then tried to reach consensus on a new, better description of the picture.

The results were largely as expected. Upon being frustrated, the general hostility levels of the non-cannabis smokers went up, and those of the cannabis smokers went down. But there was one, quite specific, surprise. The doctors' report puts it plainly: "Marijuana produced a small but statistically significant increase in sarcastic communications." Cannabis-enhanced sarcasm may seem a wispy thing to notice or worry about. But to public policymakers charged with leading the large, sometimes fractious American populace, it seems to have seemed a danger. This apprehension may not exist in the UK, where public politicians hone and pride themselves on an ability to ignore sarcasm.

Date: 29/03/2005 / Writer: Marc Abrahams / Source: The Guardian













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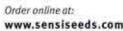
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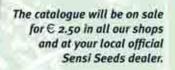
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EPOR

Trimming weed: By Jan Sennema

Are machines taking over?

Typical Dutch forms of cottage industry - such as shelling prawns and peeling flower bulbs - have, with the expansion of the growing of Nederweed, been joined by a new small-scale manual task: the trimming of cannabis buds. Trimming, also known as manicuring, is the general term for the processing of the product before it is dried out. The task of the trimmer is to remove branches and large leaves and to then style the buds into the neat and crystal-dusted buds that we know from the coffee shop. Until quite recently this was an activity that was done with classic hand scissors. But, as has been the case with so many manual skills, mechanisation has struck a blow to tradition. The fully handoperated scissors are being replaced by mechanical trimming shears and cutting machines like the Kermit. The Aardvark and the Canna Cutter. Soft Secrets trains the spotlight on a little-known aspect of the cannabis economy.





Trimming the old fashioned way

As many old-timers will testify, back in

'the day' trimming was above all a happy activity, one in which groups of family and friends would relax in a festive atmosphere while preparing the freshly gathered harvest for drying. A little music, a joint or two, just shooting the breeze... But since the stakes of the game were raised - I'm talking about the steady increase in scale of growing operations and the increased detection efforts of the upholders of the law - this bucolic picture has slowly changed.

It is not only the time-is-money principle that is responsible for this. The trimmer forms a indispensable link in the production of weed and hash, but at the same time he is also a huge security risk. Growers are completely at the mercy of loose-lipped trimmers, and the trimmers of course are fully aware of this. That's why you always see adverts in the (Dutch)

trade press placed by trimmers offering their services the word 'discretion' so prominently displayed. Because when you're bringing in a harvest worth tens of thousands of Euros, the last thing you want is to bring into the tent as a trimmer is an incorrigible blabbermouth or a vengeful troublemaker. In order to minimise the risks involved, sometimes growers will go to the lengths of taking their trimmers to the site in a bus with the windows blackedout - since what you don't know, you can't gossip about.

Trimmers often do their work in regular teams who stay together, on location, sometimes they work in mobile trimming rooms, such as old buses with no windows in them. There are also independent trimmers who work in a fixed location to which growers bring their raw product for processing. There are few 'incidents', as trust in one's fellow man tends to be a little lower among growers than among the general population.

Frank has been in the cannabis scene for years now, mostly as a grower and as a middleman. To earn a bit extra on the side he offers out his services as a trimmer. To help him he has acquired a trimming machine which he takes to his various work locations. "The time of the trimming scissors is over," states Frank. "With the trimming machine I can handle about 160 plants in three hours. If you want to reproduce that speed using traditional shears, you would need three or four trimmers working together. Then they all want something different to eat and drink: it all adds up to a load of hassle that you can do without.'

He reckons the trend is for growers to make decreasing use of an old-fashioned trimming team made up of friends and acquaintances. Frank reckons that: "Trimmers will always be a risk for growers, but if you only use one of them, then that risk remains limited. Many growers nowadays work together to spread their risk by sharing the costs of setting up a growing space. That they then work as in the old days – by setting a pair of

this is an unnecessary precaution, since trimmers, despite the large profits that are being made, are often not paid too well, the inclination towards loyalty to the grower can be limited. The harvested plants are often packed in boxes for transport to the trimming location, especially by the larger operations, sometimes they are placed in buckets of water to prevent their premature drying out. For a space with 20 to 30 lamps the harvest can be processed by six trimmers working with scissors in two to three days. Usually one trimmer removes the largest leaves and cuts the stems into manageable lengths that can then be more easily manicured by the more experienced trimmers. Plants are usually trimmed while wet, since it can be harder to trim a neat bud with dried plants. At the end of the

Although trimmers are pretty low down in the cannabis hierarchy, they do have more power than you might assume at first glance.

housewives to trim the lot – is becoming decreasingly common. If you have two or three regular trimmers at your disposal who you can really trust, then these risks can be kept well in hand. The fewer people who know about your operation the better." Frank asks 100 Euros per hour, versus 5, 10 occasionally as high as 20 Euros for an individual trimmer using scissors. According to him, the trim machine is not only considerably faster than old-fashioned scissors, but it also allows for much more precise manicuring. The drawback is the noise the machine makes (thanks to the necessary vacuum cleaner suction), but that can be overcome by choosing a trimming room in which a bit of noise will not be noticed. Others choose to wear ear plugs, attach the vacuum suction to a long hose and put it in an separate room, or make sure it is placed in a sound-proofed box. Although small grow operations tend to have the growing space and the trimming room under the same roof, among larger growers the trimming room is generally at another location. This is because although the transport of many kilos of fresh hemp to the trimming room is not without risk thanks to the powerful stench given off, the risk is still always preferable to allowing the trimming team to become aware of the growing location. And don't assume that

day it is the method used for drying which determines in which way the trimming will be done: those who choose to let the branches dry out upside down leave the buds on the branches, while those who use a drying cupboard tend to remove the buds completely in order to get a more economical distribution of them over the sieves in the drying room. This room, where the trimmed material begins its last phase before distribution, is then set up in the same building.

Earning a crust

As always, when a new technology reduces the role of the human by reducing work costs, the introduction of mechanical trimming tools has been met with resistance by those who see their ability to earn a crust threatened: the trimmers. And although trimmers are pretty low down in the cannabis hierarchy, they do have more power than you might assume at first glance. Henri has been trimming for years, but has had to give up recently thanks to RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury). He was part of a steady team of trimmers who worked for two employers. They all used the old-fashioned scissors. According to a number of people who we spoke to in making this article, many growers know



Trimming tackle at the Interpolm grow shop (Amsterdam): in the background is a box with rubber gloves and cleaning materials for shears and hands, in the foreground (left) pruning shears for thicker branches, to the right of which are regular shears.

absolutely nothing about how to trim. And some trimmers take grateful advantage of that knowledge. "The man who we worked for once brought a trim machine in with him," says Henri. "He had hired it from a grow shop. 'Give this a try' he says. Well, of course we did not like the look of this, but fair enough, if the boss we've got to do it, then we were willing to give it a whirl. Naturally, we raked away with the thing. The buds we ended up with of course looked like shit and when the boss saw this, he had immediately had his fill with trimming machines." Another retarding factor in the mass switch over to mechanical trimming has been the clients themselves. As every grow shop can testify, growers are often quite conservative



No bolshiness, no gossiping: Kermit at work

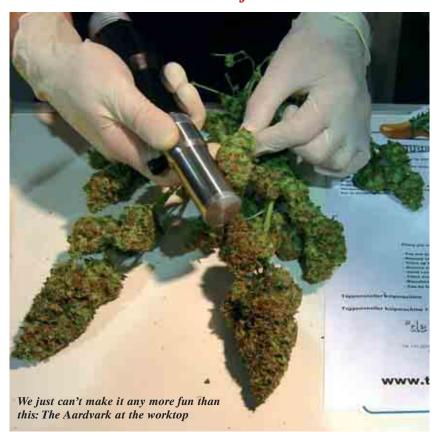
and do not find it easy to switch over to new methods of doing things. That applies to the tried and trusted growing techniques, but also for the manner in which the end product is trimmed. Despite the mechanical revolution it is still widely the case that growers get themselves a pair of friendly ladies and set them down at the trimming table. It is also increasingly popular (in Holland at least) to make up a trimming gang from foreigners working here illegally. Poles especially are popular, even if they do need to have a sharp eye kept on them thanks to the huge temptation that they are exposed to in the presence of the green gold. The advantage is the low wages that such workers are content with. When the decision has been taken to step over to mechanical trimming, then the client is generally sneakily aiming to avoid paying the same rate per trimmed weight as he did with the old-fashioned hand trimming, or to pay by the kilo rather than by the hour. At least he also gets to enjoy the significant shortening of the time it takes for him to get the trimming phase done and behind him.

Ergonomics

Many growers prefer to use people as trimmers who personally do not smoke, so as to minimise the temptation to them to slip a few buds into their bags. A drawback to this practice is that non-smoking trimmers react badly to the sometimes overwhelming powerful aroma of fresh buds. You can even get stoned from it, according to the stories. This is bollocks, according to the earlier quoted Frank. "You simply cannot get stoned from the aroma of the weed; you have to have THC in your blood supply, otherwise you will not notice any effect. And this just doesn't happen through your nose." Nevertheless, there is frequently a (portable) carbon filter-fitted air extractor installed in the trimming room – though not primarily for the benefit of the trimmers. The most important reason for this is to keep the location secret, because it happens quite



Making the same monotonous movements with the same hand, hour after hour, not infrequently produces pains – and these can lead to the eventual burnout of the trimmer.



frequently that growing activities are discovered at the very last stage thanks to the smell. Other aids found in the trimming room include rubber gloves, which prevent trimmers' fingers becoming all gooey with sticky hairs in just a few minutes, trimming overalls and various cleaning fluids for the removal of said sticky stuff. As well as the economic aspect of mechanical trimming there is also a strong argument in favour of trimming machines: the ergonomics. Trimming with the traditional scissors is still generally considered to be the most accurate trimming technique, but has the drawback that it takes longer and trimmers need regular breaks from it. More importantly for the trimmer (and eventually for the

client) is the heavy strain on the muscles and tendons of the hand. Making the same monotonous movements with the same hand, hour after hour, not infrequently produces pains – and these can lead to the eventual burnout of the trimmer. Thanks to the variety of movements that using trim machines make possible, this risk is reduced with their use.

Alternatives

Already by the beginning of the 1990s the first trim machines had appeared on the market. The Canadian *Power Clipper* was in all probability the first, a by present standards rather primitive and rather dangerous tool that was imported

from Canada by the Pollinator Company. Switzerland made a play for the market with the Stripper and the Hanf Turbo Cleaner. All these machines made use of a vacuum cleaner that served to draw the leaf material towards the blade and then remove the trimmed waste and trap it somehow for eventual making into hashish. In the meantime there have been a number of alternatives made available, and these have often elaborated on the principles used in these first trimming machines. Glawill produces the Kermit trim machine, that's available in two versions, the first with a single cutting head, the second equipped with two. 'Kermit keeps on trimming, he doesn't smoke, moan or chatter!', says the company in its promotional material. Housed in a robust metal casing is a shaft inside of which is a rotating drill. Via the opening in the shaft the bud is drawn along the drill, on which the rough covering leaves are snipped off and the connected vacuum cleaner sucks away the leaf waste. This can be used later for making skuff or water hash. By varying the suction power, even the smallest buds can be processed. For anyone not producing on an industrial scale but who has lost a brother to the soul-destroying hand trimming, there is the chance to rent a Kermit (or another trim machine) from their grow shop. Not infrequently this is turned into a purchase after the positive experience. The gizmo functions best, according to the makers, with fresh - therefore wet - material. Hans from Glawill says: "In Switzerland they leave the plants to hang for two or three days before they set to work with the trim machine, but you shouldn't leave them to dry for any longer than that. Working with dried plants, you tend to suck away too many resin glands, and you therefore lose some of the potency of your weed." The eye-catching design of the Canna Cutter has further advantages: the threelegged apparatus makes less noise than the machines that are connected up to a vacuum cleaner. What's more, it can more or less be used independently without it being necessary for a trimmer to be stood behind it the whole time. He can then be busy with the rough trim work and throwing the prepared buds into the drum, whereupon the Canna Cutter quickly and automatically does its trimming job. The apparatus is fitted with a rotating knife that is under a grid. The distance between the grid and the knife is precisely the same as the distance the leaves stick



The top model from Canna Cutter







Hand-trimmed bud with trim waste



Ladies' hands trim the finest



Bonsai Hero and Testarossa

To trim or not to trim?

Trimming is not always necessary straight after the harvest. For those growers who just raise small quantities for their own consumption, it is perhaps even better to not do so. Instead, hand the whole plant upside down in a drying space and just clean up buds as and when you want them. Do make sure that the plants are not touching each other and that there is enough ventilation, otherwise mould can easily take hold. In this way you can store your buds for longer because the leaves have not been damaged and the resinous bits actually improve due to their exposure to light and oxygen, which according to connoisseurs improves the flavour of the weed.

out from the bud. Around the grid is an open drum with a Plexiglas lid. Since the whole thing vibrates, the pre-trimmed buds bobble around over each other, so that all the buds get a turn having their rough leaves removed. The waste is left behind in a tub under the machine. The Canna Cutter is available in two models. The Aardvark is also a machine that makes use of a vacuum cleaner. With this apparatus, with which according to the distributor 'trimming is once again FUN,' liveliness is the key word. The cutting head with a built-in motor is housed in a separate handle that can be fixed directly to the vacuum cleaner hose. The current is supplied via an adaptor. Thanks to the loose cutting head there is no fixed place where the buds have to be inserted, and this gives the trimmer a greater degree of freedom of movement and allows more flexible movements to be used for the manicuring. Here again, the trimmer can vary the suction power in order to be able to carefully trim even the smallest buds. The trim waste is sucked away and caught in the vacuum cleaner's bag. Napoleon stays closer to the oldfashioned scissors with its two models of electric trimming shears: the Testarossa, designed for small-scale hobby growers, and the Bonsai Hero, that with its Swiss

precision motor is manufactured to indestructible, industrial-quality. The most important advantages of electric trimming shears are their cheaper price, the greater precision with which they can be wielded (comparable to that of hand scissors) and the care with which the delicate, pollen-rich material can be processed. Users praise the moderate decibel production, thanks to which if necessary they can even be used in the evenings in a domestic home. What is noticeable is the flexibility of Napoleon's products: they can be use a whole range of energy sources, including a set of penlight batteries for when you're engaged in a little guerrilla trimming out in the woods. Starting with something new is always difficult, and that goes for trim machines too. No-one should expect to be working at his best after just five minutes if he has just made acquaintance with the trimming machine. But the phenomenal speed with which an experienced (!) machine trimmer can finish the harvest off does mean they stand head and shoulders above the old methods. Exactly which trimming machine should earn your preference really depends on a number of factors. Besides the price sticker and the noise volume, other factors include the speed

of the trimming work, the quality of the end product and the usability of the trim waste that is produced. Or of course a combination of these. An important question to ask can be whether the existing trimming team can be convinced that it can get on with working with a trim machine, or whether they will be so against it you need to find yourself a new team. Even the plant being grown can be factored in to your eventual choice: Haze varieties, with their often capricious buds are a bit more difficult to trim than commercial varieties with more regularly-

shaped, 'beefy' buds.
"I advise people always to go to a grow shop and hire every model of trimmer they stock for a whole weekend and do a comparative test on them," says Napoleon. Look at the quality of the trimmed buds, smoke some end product and see that not too much foliage sits in your trim waste, and also don't forget to check how much pollen is left on the buds after they have been trimmed. If you use the same variety of plant, then it will very quickly become clear which choice is best for you."

Wet or dry trimming?

If you do use a trim machine, you are best off using it on *wet* weed. Using simple electrical shears you can trim wet or dry, though most growers do prefer to trim wet with these too. The advantage of trimming dry is that the buds keep their shape better if they have been thoroughly dried out. The drawback is that the resin glands are more easily shaken free from dry material than from wet plants. Before starting to trim you should remove the large finger leaves, and trim the buds as neatly as you can. You can safely leave bits of the small shoot leaves (partly)

Info on The Aardvark:

intact, since these are usually covered in resin.

Hydroponic Wholesale, Unit 16, Derby Trading Estate, Stores Road, Derby DE21 4BE, Tel. +44 (0) 133 220 8090, Fax. +44 (0) 133 285 1640 Web site: www.toppensneller.com

Info on the Canna Cutter:

Indoor Garden Trading, Rietbaan 11, 2908 LP Capelle a/d IJssel Tel: +31 (0) 10 209 96 65, Fax: +31 (0) 10 209 73 09 Web site: www.indoorgardentradingbv.com

Info on the Kermit:

Glawill Commerce, Postbus 6116, 5700 EV Helmond, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 (0) 492 592 058, Fax: +31 (0) 492 592 055
Web site: www.glawill.com

Info on Napoleon: www.bonsaihero.com









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Raising Giants Part 2

Professional irrigation systems for outdoor growing



Here are the three must-haves in a row. From left to right: a submersion pump, a circulation pump, and a heating element.

As a follow-up to the previous article on how to raise giants cannabis plants, in this issue I'm going to talk about the use of professional irrigation systems when growing outdoors. This article will look at which systems we can choose from to best suit our needs, and how we install one. In doing so, unnecessarily hauling buckets of water around can be banished to the past as watering your plants can be done automatically. What's more, it is not always possible to visit one's giant plants every day (especially during the summer) to give them enough water by hand. Professional irrigation systems can take a whole load of work off our hands, while increasing our chances of successfully raising giants by leaps and bounds.

Before we go charging off and buying an irrigation system willy-nilly though, it is worth spending some time considering a few factors. It is important to consider where you will be growing, what the opportunities there are regarding water supply, and of course whether you have sufficient readies (left over after your other growing purchases) to invest in such a professional irrigation system. These systems do require a fair investment and this is why they are generally the preserve of the more fanatical growers. But once you consider its cost over the longer term, then such an investment begins to look more reasonable for the more casual grower too. What is frequently seen in indoor growing as an absolute necessity for the provision of feed water can also be used very productively in outdoor growing, as long as we do not lose sight of the specific circumstances of growing outdoors. If we take a look at the professional irrigation systems that are most frequently used in indoor growing, then these are undoubtedly the dripper systems. A few growers continue to happily water indoors with a watering can, and a few choose to grow exclusively in water. In addition to these are the ebb-and-flood systems, which actually can only be used successfully for indoor growing. As for growing giant plants in water-only (with added nutrients), this system is not recommended for outdoor growing, and so it is the first system to be dropped from our consideration. This is because

Once everything has been considered, there are two irrigation systems that

Spray-based irrigation

there are two irrigation systems that can be seriously considered for outdoor growing, and these are the dripper systems and systems which use small nozzles to spray the soil medium with water. The drawback with using dripper systems is that given the large surface area of your tubs, you will need many meters of hosepipe in order to make all the soil moist with the (feed) water. We have to encourage the plant roots to make use of the whole tub, given that the roots are what will be supplying the plants with all their important nutrients. The ease of use of a spray-based irrigation system for water distribution comes from the fact that you can cover a greater area with less equipment. This advantage makes the irrigation systems using spray nozzles somewhat cheaper, and partly due to that they are my personal preference. Broadly speaking, the irrigation system works as follows: a large rain butt serves as a water reservoir and so is filled to the brim with feed water. In this rain butt a submersion pump is lowered, and this in turn is attached to a large. stiff hosepipe. The submersion pump pumps the water upwards to this large



I usually hang the junction box up in a large bush or from a tree. Once this has been wrapped in another plastic bag it is completely protected from damp and rain.

We have to encourage the plant roots to make use of the whole tub, given that the roots are what will be supplying the plants with all their important nutrients

it is a fairly complicated system, given that the water must be kept in motion all the time, and the fact that this water does not form a buffer against temperature variations. Add to this the fact that wind gusts and downpours of rain put a lot of pressure on giant plants, which cannot be adequately anchored when they are only growing in water as a substrate.

Once we have plugged the two plugs into

each other, we wrap the point with plastic.

In this way we help prevent short circuiting.

via smaller tubes to the spray heads. These spray heads accordingly set to work spreading the feed water over the desired surface area. I just mentioned the large, stiff garden hose, and I want to emphasise that this really must be stiff (I could safely say 'rock hard'), so that no kink can form in it when there is no pressure inside it. So just to

By Weckels, the growing specialist from Atami

be absolutely clear: this must not be a normal garden hose. To come back to the rain butt we are using as a water reservoir, this should have a decent volume, since it will have to store enough water to provide for the plant(s) for a minimum of four to five days. Do the sums and you will soon see that a vat with 300-litre volume is not excessive. It may sound a lot, but the giant plants will easily be using (once they have grown to height of more than two metres and have developed a decent girth), in a warm, sunny spot 100 litres of water per day! You can imagine that if you were to use a smaller rain butt as a water reservoir, you still need to provide your plants with water on a daily basis, so you are going to have to re-fill your rain butt on nearly daily basis too. As for the submersion pump, this will need a good-sized capacity (say, 350 Watts), given that the pump will first have to elevate the water, in order for it to then flow from the large, stiff hose to the smaller side hoses, via the more supple tubes to the spray heads and thence spread on the soil in your tubs. What's more, I would always go for a submersion pump that is equipped with a circuit breaker.

Circulation pump

A circuit breaker is actually nothing more than a sensor that (in our case) instructs the submersion pump to switch itself off when it is no longer in contact with water. The sensor is situated just above the pump and floats or falls depending on the water level. When this falls to the point that



Here we can see the submersion pump sitting in the rain butt. The sensor normally floats up and down with the level of the water. I have fixed the sensor a little below this with a brick. In this way the submersion pump can continue to pump for a little longer before it cuts out.

the submersion pump no longer has enough water to pump, the breaker cuts the power to the pump so that it does not overheat. If we were to use a pump with no circuit breaker, then the pump would just continue to operate even once there was no more water left in the rain butt, and the chances of it burning itself out are high. In addition to the submersion pump there is also another small pump needed in the rain butt, namely a circulation pump. This

small pump with a capacity of barely 15 watts makes sure that the feed water (water with liquid nutrients dissolved in it) continuously circulates. This is absolutely vital because liquid fertilisers can concentrate themselves at the bottom of the rain butt when the water is not kept circulated, because they tend to sink. Now if the submersion pump is switched on, its first sucks will be of water with much too high a concentration of nutrients in it. The poisoning of your marihuana plants will be the result. Using a small circulation pump also has the great advantage that it adds a lot of oxygen to the feed water in the rain butt (the water reservoir). Oxygen has a very beneficial influence on the root development, and as a consequence, on the development of the whole plant. In addition to that is the fact that no soil life will flourish without the presence of oxygen-rich water. Given this, the populations of friendly bacteria will develop optimally and thereby make your nutrients more readily accessible for the plant.

Warming element

For the those who are really fanatical about creating the very best growing conditions for the marihuana plant, we can even use a third instrument to help make the plant feels as at home as possible. I'm talking about using a warming element with a temperature regulator incorporated in it and using this to lightly warm the feed water and thereby bring it to its optimum temperature. It is a fact that the uptake of liquid nutrients by the plant



Just below the rim of the rain butt we drill a hole. Through this can run all the electric cables to the submersion pump and the circulation pump, without the lid of the rain butt having to be removed.

only on for two hours you will save a heap of juice, while your feed water will still be at a good temperature when the submersion pump is switched on. As for the little circulation pump, this can simply be plugged in without the need for an intermediary timer. The circulation pump uses so little energy that it is comparable to a lowenergy light bulb. Furthermore, the capacity of the circulation pump is so low that the device needs a bit of time to get the water and nutrients (in the rain butt) moving and mixing together. As I said earlier, the circulation pump also ensures that plenty of oxygen is dissolved in the feed water, and this effect will be greater the longer the circulation pump is left running. Given



The stiff (black) hose runs through the side of the rain butt to the mega-tub. We fasten the stiff hose with ty-rips to the mega-tub.



The small hoses that lead to the spray heads are mounted onto the stiff hosed with special attachment nipples.

in order for the soil base to get a good soaking. Having said that, I should immediately add that I am talking about the needs of plants of about a metre high. If you were to give a young seedling in her first stage of life such an amount, she will see this as a signal to not bother developing her roots any further. After all, she has all the water she needs already; why go off in search of more by laying down more roots? This is why is still best to give the early seedling only a little water by hand, every other day. In this way you will stimulate the plant to develop more roots (and send them off in search of more water), so that in a short space of time she will have a welldeveloped root system. Only then do we consider switching on the timer and



In this picture we can see the sprinkler system once again, this time in close up. The tangle of hoses and spray heads ensures an optimal (feed) water supply.

letting the submersion pump run for 15 minute intervals. What we can do before the plant is ready for such volumes of water though is to have the irrigation system in place and ready to run, so that we set to work immediately as soon as the plant is ready for it.

Lid

But before we run out and start installing our irrigation system, we first have to dig a large hole in which to stand the rain tub. By doing this you make the rain butt less noticeable and there will be more room left for your marihuana plants to grow. At a distance from the tub in which your plan is growing of about two metres we dig

a hole deep enough that all but about the top 20 cms of the tub disappears into the ground. I leave 20 cms of the tub showing above ground level so that sand and soil do not so easily get swept into the tub when it is being refilled. We also need to ensure that the butt has a lid to cover its top surface, so that no animals and/or even people (such as children) can fall in. It is worth keeping such things in mind, given that safety cannot afford to be ignored. The rain butt has a considerable depth (93 cm) and so represents a real drowning risk if we don't take care to secure it. Especially during the dry summer months, such water reserves can be irresistible to nearly all animal life. Another of the advantages of closing off the top of your rain butt is to prevent rubbish such as dead leaves and suchlike getting into your irrigation system via the water reserve and clogging it up. A lid also prevents (sun) light shining into your feed water. Light breaks down some of the dissolved liquid nutrients and thus it can do a considerable amount of damage to your feed water. The sun's rays also create rapid algal growth, and this too is something we want to avoid at all costs.

Contact Box

Once the rain butt is firmly in the ground and we have gathered all the other materials for our irrigation system. we can get to work. First of all we measure the distance from the rain butt to the power socket (or whatever form of energy you are using). From the socket I run an extension cable to the closest plant (or you can stick a pole in the ground to represent where it will be). Then I connect the end of the extension cable (the end by the plant or pole) to a junction box, one that is splash proof. Splash proof, though, means that water can still get through to the socket. That is the reason why I also wrap the splash-proofed junction box in a plastic bag as well. This will give it a much better protection against water and damp and keep our chances of a short circuit to a minimum. There are also special sleeves for sale, usually at places like building materials shops, that slip over both plugs. Things like this are only to the better in terms of surviving our damp climate. From out of the contact box there are also



In this picture you can clearly see how the professional water system looks at the end.

progresses much more easily when they are given in lightly warmed water. The root system will develop much more quickly and furthermore, more feed water will be taken up when we warm the water in the rain butt a little. The ideal water temperature is around 21 °C. The big advantage of giving your plants warmed feed water is that especially during the cold autumn - they are given a little bit of extra support. It is often the most pampered plants that reward their boss (the grower) the most, as measured in welldeveloped flower heads. But before we go plugging the water heating element straight into the socket, we need to be aware of the fact that such a gizmo can use an inordinate amount of energy. The solution to this problem is to use a timer switch so that the heater is only on two hours in advance of using the water. When the heating element is

that we do not want to make the soil base in which the (giant) marihuana plant is growing wet the whole day with feed water the whole day through, we only allow the submersion pump to operate on a timer. When setting this, choose an early morning time point, because the plant then has plenty of time to quench its thirst before the first rays of morning sun start falling on it. Furthermore, watering in the early morning is a good way of reducing the evaporation of your (costly) feed water by the sun's rays.

Timers

I usually set my timers for a 15 minute burst beginning around 7.00 AM. I have found that 15 minutes is a good amount of time for the submersion pump to run



extension cables running directly to the rain butt, where they provide the submersion pump, the circulation pump and the warming element, if you have one, with power. Between the junction box and the extension cable that runs to the submersion pump, we also introduce the timer that will be controlling the turning on and off of the submersion pump according to our settings. To say a little about timers; there are in principle two sorts, namely those with an electronic display and those where we have to press small pins in. These last ones are not only cheaper, but are also more suitable for outdoor use, since such timers are less sensitive to damp conditions (which it will surely experience a lot of being outdoors). To protect the junction box and the timer even more against the frequently damp outside air we can wrap them both again in plastic. This will prolong the life of the timer and also benefit the whole irrigation system.

Wiring

To return again to the rain butt, we also bore a hole in the side just below the rim. Through this hole comes the electricity cables that lead to among others the submersion pump. The higher you drill the hole the better, since there can be more feed water in the vat without it overflowing through the hole you drilled. Furthermore, doing this also prevents sand being scuffed up through the hole into the rain vat. It is not all for nothing that we raised the



Believe it or not, this mega-plant had until half way through the summer months grown no more than two and a half metres high. But we are hoping for a good autumn!

This is a picture of one of the spray heads. When its tip is twisted we can alter the reach of the spray.



If we make sure our plants are in a lightrich spot, and water them with the aid of a professional irrigation system, they shoot up like veritable triffids.

rim of the butt above ground level after all. The plugs that are attached to the various pumps and warming element are threaded through the hole we bored to the outside of the butt and plugged into the junction box and/or the timer, if you're using one. The cable of the circulation pump is often very short and so you will usually need an extension cable between it and the junction box



The same goes for this lady. After a few months of growing and with a good helping of light-hours, she'll reach a

as well. This meeting of two plugs is also wrapped in plastic, to protect the connection from the damp. The cable that is fixed to the submersion pump is usually long enough (usually about 10 metres) and so can be connected directly to the timer. For the wiring of the irrigation system, a warm, sunny day is ideal. This is because the sun warms the black pipes (through which the feed water will later flow), and this makes the stiff hose especially more supple and therefore more easy to connect up to the submersion pump. If we are not lucky with the weather, you can also heat the tube a little, for example with a cigarette lighter. In this way you can make the connection of the pipe to the pump a bit easier. It is not just to make it annoying that connecting the stiff hose to the submersion pump is so difficult; there is going to be considerable pressure on the hose and so this needs to have as tight a connection with the submersion pump as possible. The first time especially that you wire up an irrigation system you will be at first be absolutely convinced that the hose and the connection point of the submersion pump are not going to fit together. But after a bit of wringing and squeezing, the various bits will all fit. Once the stiff hose is firmly secured to the submersion pump, we lay the hose over tub, so that it can't thrash around all over the place when (later) pressure is introduced into it. Once the stiff hose is well and truly secured, we prick through its side with a bradawl made specially for this purpose (and which is included as standard with any irrigation system) and make holes in the sides of the stiff hose. We make a hole every 10 cms. or so. Into these holes we stick specially made fastening nipples, in which small sections of supple hosepipe will be mounted. At the ends of each of these small, supple pipes a spray head will be attached. Under the spray head is a sort of 'tent peg', with which the spray head can easily be stuck into the tub's soil. Place the spray heads as far apart as they will go, so that they cover as great a surface area as possible with (feed) water. We can also, by twisting the top of the spray, adjust the size of the water stream and thereby increase the reach of the spray. After a bit of time you will notice that the spray heads are perhaps not spraying as well as they were at first. This is often caused by scale accumulating in the spray head nozzles and the small pipes that feed them. To alleviate this problem it is necessary to flush the whole irrigation system regularly with an enzyme solution. This will prevent scale (produced from a build up of salts) and keep all nozzles and tubes

The big advantage of giving your plants warmed feed water is that – especially during the cold autumn – they are given a little bit of extra support

the whole width of the tub. Now we cut the hose through at its tip (cutting crossways) with a sharp knife and stick into this end a specially-developed stopper. The end of the stiff pipe (with the stopper or cork in it) is laid on the other side of the tub, sitting on the tub's edge. The stiff hose therefore now sits over the tub and runs from one edge and over the other, through the hole in the rain butt and to the submersion pump. Next we drill two holes into both sides of the growing tub, through which we thread the ty-rips (plastic adjustable straps). Now we use the tyrips to fasten the hose to the side of the

running freely. When you are getting together all your materials, including the mega-tubs and the large rain butt and suchlike, it is really important to bear in mind that will probably need to hire (and so book in advance) some sort of delivery van. The tubs are way too big for the average car, so using your regular jalopy is out of the question. If you're lucky, you can get all the big stuff delivered to your (or a friend's) house. That will save you a whole bunch of hauling around, and will be worth any extra costs involved.

Good luck!



The Early Pearl two weeks before she was harvested. Plants that have been optimally cared for by their growers and have been more than enough water at their disposal are almost guaranteed to give you an incredible result!



Ladies of such gigantic proportions get through a vast amount of feed water, and happily they produce a correspondingly huge number of flower heads.





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Importer to the 'North Korea of Europe' Part 13

Berny was a regular guy from a small Dutch town who on his 18th birthday decided to go and live with his father in Sweden. At first Berny ran a tattoo shop in Stockholm, but when due to an accident this came to an end, he was forced to look for another way of earning a living. Berny became involved in the hash trade and imported stuff from the Netherlands for the Swedish market. Until he was stitched up by his partners and was sentenced to a 10-year stretch. Berny is just back in the Netherlands, after having spent nearly seven years in a Swedish cell. Berny, now 33, talks exclusively to Soft Secrets about his experiences.

By Charlie Stone

Soft Secrets: Berny, how did you become involved in the hash trade?

Berny: I was a smoker myself from the age of 12, and I had always messed around in the scene on a small-scale. When I lived in Sweden I was regularly being asked in my tattoo shop whether I could sort something out. Then one day an acquaintance of mine in Holland phoned me to see if I was interested in a shipment of hash on credit. I was interested - very- because I had just

from the Netherlands". According to the story the THC level in the plants was so high that it was even more serious than heroin. That gives you some idea of the tone of story over there.

Do all Swedes think like that?

The smokers are of course a lot more relaxed, but are still all paranoid about "hash psychosis". That is a psychosis that all hash smokers will sooner or later experience, according to Swedish

As a smoker in Sweden nearly everyone sees you in the same light as a junky. Hash and marihuana are on the same level as heroin and cocaine

had an accident; I'd been at a party and fallen out of a window, breaking my neck. Fortunately there was no permanent damage, but physically I was in a bad shape. I could no longer sit down for any period of time, and this made working in the tattoo shop impossible. So the offer was really welcome.

What is the status of stoner culture in Sweden?

It is completely underground. As a smoker in Sweden nearly everyone sees you in the same light as a junky. Hash and marihuana are on the same level as heroin and cocaine. But I was selling in Stockholm between 50 and 100 kilos of the stuff a month, and I was not the only one shifting such weights. From that you can deduce that there is a considerable amount being smoked there by people.

Did you sell the stuff directly to consumers or to middlemen?

Only to middlemen. I dealt exclusively in hash, because weed is simply not available in Sweden. I think in all the years I lived there I was only ever offered it once, and that was in prison.

How come weed is so difficult to get hold of there?

It is just too expensive. Nearly noone grows at home; it is just too dangerous and the punishment that you get if caught is enormous: you are immediately branded as a dangerous drugs criminal. And thanks to its bulk, weed is not a popular product for smuggling. I mean, Swedish smokers would really like to get hold of some Skunk, but it is terribly difficult to get vour hands on. I recently read an article there about Skunk, "the new hard drug

researchers anyway. I have never witnessed it myself, but it something that smokers there firmly believe in. A homeless drifter in Sweden if he needs a bed for the night only has to turn up at a police station and say that he's suffering from hash psychosis. He'll immediately be whisked off to a clinic. Only negative stuff is ever printed about weed and hash in Sweden: if you're lucky it will just drive you mad; if you're unlucky it will kill you.

Are the authorities stricter in Sweden towards hash smokers than towards alcoholics?

Yes, much stricter. Sweden is dying of alcoholism, but alcoholics are socially acceptable. At my trial the prosecutor had calculated exactly how many car radios would have to be stolen to pay for all the hashish I had imported. It is that kind of climate you end up in.

Do the Dutch have an especially bad name in Sweden thanks to the tolerance policy pursued in the Netherlands?

Absolutely. If a Dutch guy is picked up for a drugs offence, you can be certain he's going to get the kitchen sink thrown at him when he comes to trial. I'm talking about an automatic 10year sentence. I do not know any Dutch person who has been given a sentence any less than this.

How big was that first shipment you received on credit?

It was 50 kilos of Moroccan. And that was worth quite a bit. You can get a good 25-35,000 Kroner for a kilo, which is about 4,000 Euros. The first load was in actual fact the only one that I picked up myself. Something had gone wrong during the transport,

so that I had to go and get the lorry myself. But the problem was: I had no driving licence. I had already sold 20 kilos in advance, so I was kind of compelled to go and fetch the lorry from Denmark. I was hyper-nervous, but arrived without any hiccups in Malmo, Sweden. On the road to Stockholm I found myself in a really heavy snow storm. Because I had the stuff on me I simply kept driving. Only later did I see that I had completely bald summer tyres on the vehicle. It is nothing short of a small wonder that I made it on that first trip. It was the first, only and last time that I played the role of courier myself.

The stuff was normally always delivered to a certain hotel by a courier. He would leave the lorry behind in a car park where one of my people would pick it up the next day. In this way the couriers would never clap eyes on each other. The courier who made the first trip had made a fatal mistake; he always signed himself into the hotel under his own name. When I was picked up, he was also picked up, and the police immediately made their way to the hotel. What did they do then? They looked up how many times he had spent a night there and calculated from that how much stuff had been moved. 'Look, he was here 16 times, which means 16 times 50 kilos, or 800 kilos,' they said.

For how long did your line from the Netherlands work?

It was probably a good three years. I personally went to the Netherlands or Denmark once a month to pay the

Weren't you afraid of being caught in the spotlight?

Well, if you get involved in such ventures, then you must know that you do have a good chance of being caught. If you are not prepared to take the punishment should things go wrong, then you had better not start at all. I was very aware when I first began to deal that the likelihood that I would get caught was very high. I had calculated that I would get six years tops, and so it didn't seem so had and the risk was

What had happened to you?

It all started because of money - a large sum (40,000 Euros) that I had loaned to someone who was unable to pay it back. I did not make it a problem because I could use his name for various things - I bought a night-club and a boat and put both in his name. Later it turned out that this guy was apparently terrified of me and so had gone to the police and tipped them off about my drug activities and in this way he had hoped to be rid of me. The police started to follow me and tapped my phone. They had realised we were doing something with cars but as yet there were no drugs in sight and therefore no evidence. Sometime later I received a call letting me know the next shipment was on its way, and so I contacted my usual courier. Unfortunately he had recently been stopped for speeding and his van had been full of hash, which fortunately had not been discovered. But the experience had left him unnerved and so he refused to do it. Now I was worried because I had a van waiting in a car park loaded with 50 kilos of hash and there was no way I would fetch it myself. But that was a huge mistake! I phoned somebody else who owed me a lot of money and told him to fetch the van. The police recorded that conversation, and used it to prove to the Swedish Justice later that I was the ringleader.

The new driver had fetched the keys from me and the police noted that too. Then he went to fetch the van As soon as he had started it up and was preparing to drive off, the police stopped him. I was still ignorant of these events and had planned to spend the afternoon on my boat with my then very pregnant Swedish wife. I still have not managed to do that as the police came to get me just as we set off. They blocked us off and after some shouting, loads of cop cars and even more cop guns, I was dragged from my car and arrested.

Was your wife aware of your

She had her suspicions, but she had never had anything to do with it. After I was arrested, she wanted to have nothing more to do with me; she never even came to see me in prison.

Only negative stuff is ever printed about weed and hash in Sweden: if you're lucky it will just drive you mad; if you're unlucky it will kill you.

worth taking. I appointed a Swedish friend of mine to take over should anything happen to me. Unfortunately, he was arrested at the same time as me. They had absolutely no evidence against him but in Sweden they have the right to hold you only on suspicion - for months if they choose. I myself was in pre-arrest for 18 months. The friend who was arrested with me could not keep his mouth shut and started telling them about everything that we had been involved with.

What did they charge you with?

The only thing I was told that evening was that I was under suspicion of largescale drug dealing. I thought it wiser not to share anything and so did nothing to assist in the investigation. During all those months in pre-arrest I had about five brief hearings. I said very little then too because it seemed anything I said was already too much. At one stage a detective from the Netherlands arrived and wanted to talk to me about my

Dutch connections. They were not sure where the stuff had originated from, as it could have been the Netherlands, Germany or Belgium. He asked me if I thought it fair that I should go down for ten years whilst my supplier was left untouched. I told the cop he was wasting his time with me, and I really meant it too.

From the way I understand it they had very little actual evidence against you?

It doesn't take much in Sweden! Only in Sweden can someone be detained for something they *might* have done. Hard evidence is not a necessity any more. Anyway, they had 48 kilos of hash found in the van, so in their eyes I was guilty.

Why did your accomplices make such damning statements against you?

You receive a substantial shortening of your term if you co-operate fully with the authorities. The driver from that night had confessed his part immediately and then embroidered by stating I had threatened him with a pistol. The police were very happy to hear that as it meant

had to appear brought along his invalid father in a wheelchair. During the trial the old man got so emotionally involved that he fell from his wheelchair. It created a huge fuss in court; people crying and shouting and all fingers pointing at me. I was the cause of all the trouble. That did not exactly help my case. The parents of the other courier gave their son a shining testimonial about what a fine lad he had been until he had met me. I mean – the guy was 24!

And your whole organisation was finished as a consequence?

Yes, totally. My trial caused an outcry throughout Sweden, so I was in a bad situation. Something I will never forgive myself is allowing the wrong sort of people to work for me. I am ashamed of my character assessment skills and not only because of all the trouble it caused me, but also for the trouble it caused for the others.

How long did your trial last?

The first trial lasted 30 days, while the appeal took only five days.

Sweden is dying of alcoholism, but alcoholics are socially acceptable.

they could hold me up as some sort of 'master criminal'. Another Swedish guy confessed to having helped me once to unload a car of 30 kilos, and that amount was duly added on to the first 50 from the van. And then there were a few more confessions like that. The prosecutor simply added everything together without actual evidence and then they added another five kilos a trip extra - just to be sure they hadn't missed anything . Just like that.

What was the trial like?

It was no joke. As a Dutch guy, I was already guilty. One of the couriers who

What was your lawyer's strategy?

He told me to just shut up and not say a word throughout the entire trial. He said it was my only chance.

Did it occur to you that had you been arrested in the Netherlands under the same circumstances and given the same facts, you probably would have received a much lighter centence?

I probably would not have been tried at all. The Swedish police only had circumstantial evidence and so I was convicted on the basis of vague accusations and no real hard evidence. The only thing they really had was the 48 kilos from the van and the fact that I am Dutch. I received a more severe sentence than my Swedish colleague

would have nothing to do with me, so I have never even seen my child. The Swedish Justice system ensured that I lost all my custody rights and so I cannot do anything about it now.

'Look, he was here 16 times, which means 16 times 50 kilos, or 800 kilos,' they said

did (the one who should have taken over from me), who only got three years. At the trial I was sentenced to nine years for 600 kilos, and on appeal this became ten years for 143 kilos.

Did you lodge the appeal yourself?

No, the public prosecutor insisted on it. He was pushing for 14 years.

What is the maximum sentence for such a crime?

Officially you should be released after serving half your time. But that does not happen if the crime is drugs-related, and especially not if the guilty one is Dutch. All my requests to be able to sit out my sentence in a Dutch prison were refused because I had not co-operated during the investigation. Plus you can acquire additional time as penalties whilst serving your term. If you are caught using drugs inside, they stick another five days on just like that."

Did you receive any help from the Dutch embassy in Sweden?

Yes, but hardly any. They probably had contact with me about five times in all those years I was inside. The stock reply to any request I made was to state that there was nothing I could do about it or that there was nothing they could do. Even once I had been released and had been relieved of everything I had once owned, their help was still minimal. All I was left with was a pair of jeans and three T-shirts. My house, my boat, my cars – all gone. My wife

What do you think of the penalty you paid now that you've been through it?

On one hand is was very heavy to bear, because I had only been in jail for three months when I received a letter from my ex-wife's lawyer. Divorce and loss of all and any custody rights. Then I had a heavy comedown. Soon after that, my father died and because he lived in Sweden I was allowed to go to the church service but not to the wake or the funeral. Plus when I attended the church service it was in handcuffs and ankle chains accompanied by heavily armed cops. Police cars were parked outside - they even had dogs. It was unreal, especially when you consider at that time I had already been incarcerated for three years. That sort of shit was the heaviest to bear.

Something else that weighs heavily on me is the level of hypocrisy in Sweden. When I was finally released I was immediately deported. I was escorted to the airport under the supervision of two armed cops, and while we were standing around waiting, one proudly starts informing me about the party he had attended the week before and how he had purchased 80 litres of illegal homebrew from an acquaintance. Homebrew there is poison - anywhere between 30-80% proof. Personally, I find one bottle of that stuff more deadly than 100 kilos of hash. So I said that to that cop. He looked at me completely perplexed, shrugged and just said: "But it's alcohol - everybody drinks alcohol!"

No retreat on cannabis

If ever a government had an early warning of one front it needs to defend in this election campaign, it is Labour's downgrading of cannabis. On the eve of ministers reclassifying cannabis from category B to the less harmful category C about 14 months ago, the ever-opportunistic Michael Howard declared a Conservative government would reverse it. He condemned the government's drugs strategy as "absurd", which serious policy-makers thought "shameless". Now, 14 months on, ministers are behaving "absurdly", not by referring new evidence about the drug to the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, but with their failure to set out the robust reasons behind their decision last year.

Charles Clarke, the home secretary, asked the advisory council to say whether it would change their mind as a result of "emerging evidence" of a link between cannabis consumption and deteriorating mental health. It is unlikely that they will. The advisory council - along with the Royal College of Psychiatrists' working party and a Police Foundation's independent committee of inquiry - were all aware of the risks that cannabis posed to people vulnerable to mental illness when they made their recommendations to reclassify.

But certainly the two studies specifically mentioned by Mr Clarke should be referred to the council. The New Zealand study, according to Mr Clarke, "considered how regular cannabis use increased the risk of developing psychotic symptoms later in life". The conclusion of the Dutch study, published in the British Medical Journal three months ago, repeats findings of earlier research that "cannabis use moderately increases the risks of psychotic symptoms in young people but has a much stronger effect in those with evidence of predisposition for psychosis".

Much fuss has been aired in the red-top papers about these two studies, but with few quotes from the researchers. Yet the professor who led the New Zealand

project told the New Zealand Herald: "These are not huge increases in risk and nor should they be, because cannabis is by no means the only thing that will determine if you suffer these symptoms." Professor Jim van Os, one of the authors of the Dutch study, was even more robust. He told the Guardian that the fact that cannabis could trigger psychosis in a small minority of people was a good reason to legalise it, not ban it. This would allow governments to promote advice and information and control more dangerous forms like skunk. Packets could carry how much THC, the most dangerous compound, the drug contained, along with how much CBD, the compound believed to provide beneficial effects.

Dame Ruth Runciman, who chaired the influential Police Foundation study, rightly reminded ministers that even with its downgrading, cannabis still carried one of the the highest penalties compared with the rest of Europe: up to two years in prison for possession and 14 years for trafficking. She went on: "A law which is credible to young people is more valuable to education than a law palpably at odds with their experience."

What was missing from the minister's response was a public reminder of why the drug was reclassified. It followed expert advice from professionals - medics, pharmacologists, police officers - not red-top papers. It freed a wide swathe of police officers to pursue serious drug barons, rather than trivial offenders. No wonder polls show 60% believe the drug should be decriminalised. If ministers needed to add a political message, they could have asked Mr Howard why he wanted to wage war on 50% of young people, ensure tens of thousands of them be given criminal records and some prison sentences, for an activity that more than 2 million of them engage in quite safely during the year.

Date: 22/03/2005 Source: The Guardian



Urban Garden Barnsley

Hi everybody its Ian here again from Urban Garden I would just like to thank everybody for their calls and emails on the last issues advertorial on the Eco System. The Eco System is a revolution growing pod which will alter the way in which people grow, it is small neat and compact and can easily be assembled in an hour. Since the last issues of Soft Secrets hit the streets we have been inundated with calls on the Eco System. Our display area has been swamped with people looking how it works and are amazed at how compact it is. It only cost a pound a day to run the system and in reality it's like running sixteen six hundred watt lights over four square meters, that's why the results we are hearing about are so amazing. We are currently working with Ikon International on a MKII version which with the help of everybody's feed back will be more adaptable for

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SONO

BCUZZ MAXIBRIGHTO EcpSystem smaller spaces and more users friendly. The base will split into two pieces so we can fit it through loft spaces and there will be a six inch inlet for better cooling of the glass tube. By the time this issue hits then streets with should have adjustable wheels on the underneath of the unit to allow ducting to fit underneath the glass tube. The dripper delivery system will be slight different with better dripper and feed pipe. The system will also be used more of a run to waste unit as we all know running a recalculating system through rock wool slabs is not ideal. The system we have now can easily be made into a run to waste unit with a much larger tank so the unit can be left for a number of days without worrying about the conductivity and ph levels getting to high. We will keep you all informed on the progress on the unit and the feed back we are getting is truly welcomed. To see a working models pop in to one of our shops and meet our welcoming and friendly staff. We have been two of the largest retail outlets in Yorkshire with over 8 thousand sq feet of space to stock everything you'll ever need. We also have a thousand sq foot of display area with all our products on show sosoyou can spend all the time in the world picking the best products for your needs .We are main stockist of NFT, Autopots, Multiflow and the Eco system we stock every nutrient know to man and have eighty years combined experience in

the hydro game we only sell product we have tried and tested and pride ourselves with our none bias opinions on all our system unlike a lot of other shops which will just sell you the most expensive products, We give a 100% money back guarantee if you find anything we sell which is not up to its job.

Yours faithfully

Ian





Discount Hydroponics, Hastings



Bob set up Discount Hydroponics more than 10 years ago, making it certainly the first grow shop in Hastings, and probably the whole of East Sussex. He puts the success he has enjoyed down to the business essentials: keep the customer happy, have a good stock, sell for good prices. "If you're not happy with anything, for any reason, just bring it back," says Bob. "I'm in this business for the long term."

The shop has generous guarantees of a year on ballasts, and even more rarely, bulbs. The result has been a steady growth of long-term repeat customers from all over the region, and as far away as Sheffield.

As in other parts of the country, Bob is seeing a noticeable switch back to growing

in soil. It's down to the renewed interest in organic growing, and the availability of the new improved soils the Dutch are making these days, he reckons. "Hydro can look a bit technical," he says. "Plus I suspect some people just can't get their heads around it; it takes a bit of discipline."

The 30-foot square shop has another 30-foot display area inside, while the nearby warehouse makes sure that all Discount's 800 items are in stock. What more can we say about this grow shop pioneer? They have been selling their own range of 50:50 coco-perlite mix for ten years. They will deliver anywhere in the UK. The shop is in the centre of Hastings, ten minutes from the station and there's parking for five cars outside.

Discount Hydroponics, 21 Brook Street, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 1SF,

Tel: +44 (0) 1424 428 186

Website: www.discount-hydro.co.uk

Open: 9.00-5.00, Mon-Sat.

Green Spirit, Sheffield



Smokey Sam's head shop in Castle Market has now been trading for 18 months and has proven very popular with the people of Sheffield and the surrounding area. We then felt our natural progression was in the world of hydroponics, so Green Spirit was established almost next door to Smokey's in Autumn last year, and is already a hit with the area's growers.

Green Spirit has a qualified horticulturist trained in high-yield vegetable production, offering friendly expert advice for both the novice and professional grower alike. The shop stocks a wide range of hydro supplies, nutrients, grow systems and grow kits for a very reasonable price.

We aim to cater for all your growing needs by supplying the best products at the best prices from our extensive stocks. Products by major suppliers such as Maxibrite, House and Garden, Canna, Hesi, Vitalink, Ozymagic and many more. Also available to buy or hire are leaf trimming devices, including the Aardvark, and other products like the Pollinator and bubble bags.

Castle Market is in the heart of the city with easy access by car or public transport, and we are open 6 days/week including Saturdays. We also offer telephone support for anyone needing technical advice. We also boast a free and discrete delivery service anywhere in Sheffield and Rotherham, and who knows, with a wink and a smile we may even deliver elsewhere.

And don't forget that there's a 10% discount from Smokey Sam's Head Shop with any purchase from Green Spirit Grow Shop. Keep hope in the dope! Chris and Sam.

Green Spirit Hydroponics, Unit 186, Castle Market, Sheffield S1 2AF, Tel: +44 (0) 7746169187

Open: 9.00-5.00 Mon-Wed; 11.00-3.00 Thur; 9.00-5.00 Fri, Sat.

Tangy Gifts, Bristol



Sandeep had been selling head shop and ethnic jewellery wholesale for several years before opening his own retail outlet in 1995. The result – Tangy Gifts – is a genuine community resource for the multicultural residents of Easton in Bristol. "When starting out I tried to get inspiration from the head shops of Holland," he says. This inspiration has produced a small but well-stocked shop at which you can get hold of every

conceivable smoking device and accessory, from bongs to stash boxes, brushes and cleaning fluids. There is also a wide range of smart products, from salvia to herbal Viagra.

Tangy stocks books on entheogens, the history of drugs, growing techniques and various drugs outreach leaflets, making the Sandeep and his staff of five something of a local source of unbiased but responsible advice and information from. "We take our responsibilities seriously, like making sure we only sell to adults, and adults who can handle it," says Sandeep. "Customers come here to have a natter; they feel safe and trust me, as I've been here for ten years."

These customers come from all walks of life, he says; black, white, lots of students, but professionals too. Tangy has import offices all over the planet – India, the US, the Netherlands and the Far East. They still do wholesale – check out their website or phone and ask for a catalogue.

Tangy Gifts, 286-288 Stapleton Road, Bristol BS5 0NW, Tel: +44 (0) 1179 512 202, Website: www.tangygifts.co.uk

Open: 9.00-6.00 Mon-Sat.

Hydroponic Centre, Portsmouth

When Fehd took over the failing hydro supplies shop of a friend who was leaving the country, he had a lot of work cut out to restore the customer base. But with a background in sales, he applied regular business practices – good pricing, strenuous efforts on the after sales service, and friendly, helpful advice with no high-pressure selling

"I got into this business almost by accident really, but bringing a high level of professionalism to the task has certainly done the trick," says Fehd. Just over a year after starting out, business is booming thanks to solid word-of-mouth recommendations. A lot of the custom is local, with a sizable proportion from outside the region. "We also offer mail order, full e-commerce capabilities on the new website, and can arrange out-of-hours appointments."

The huge shop -9,000 square feet of retail space and another 3,000 of storage - caters for the hydro grower, organic soil lovers and coco fans alike. There are five systems

set up, two of them running, and a newly-finished demonstration grow room. "We essentially aim to let our customers give us the dimensions of their growing space and we will come with a tailor-made solution to maximize that space for them," says Fehd.

Besides a full range of grow media, nutrients, etc., the centre has launched its own range Solartech Lighting, with high energy-efficiency and based on 80-Watt tubes, they are particularly suited to propagation and mother plants. Look for a full product description in the next issue....

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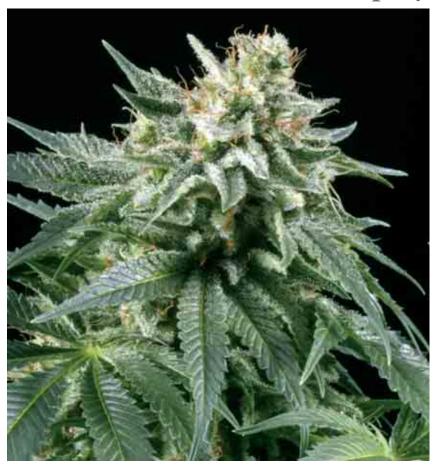
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Highlife Cup Winners:

Great White Shark

from the Greenhouse Seed Company



This fully-deserving overall winner of the Highlife Cup 2005 vanquished the competition with the same ruthlessness as it's namesake from the tropical oceans devours surfers, drowners and car number plates. Although Greenhouse founder Arjan pronounced himself amazed at the choice of White Shark – he had more fancied his new Haze sensation Arjan's Haze would be the one to take the honours—it is still no small wonder that the members of the jury fell *en masse* for this white bruiser. And you can feel free to take that literally, because the effect of this variety was described by American connoisseurs as 'couch-lock', or an almost paralysing body-stoned. A weed in short that should be smoked with utmost respect, especially if you are not *au fait* with the more potent weeds. White Shark is also an interesting proposition for growers: it is easy to grow and very hardy...

All refined dope lovers are in agreement that the Great White Shark delivers a very tasty product, with its fruity, slightly skunky flavour that is suggestive of grapefruit with a light, acidic aftertaste. The high is as mentioned, very strong and reminds some of a good White Widow. And to add a little soft secret: White Shark is also a blinder for making ice hash from.

The ancestors of this white giant are from in Brazil and Southern India, but there are also a fair few Super Skunk genes in this creation. As you would expect from one of the top breeders like Greenhouse, the Great White seeds have an extremely good - 100% - germination percentage. Also the uniformity of the adult plants raised from seed is excellent, and that is always a plus for growers who are used to growing from clones, but who still like to give seeds a whirl once in a while. Thanks to her very powerful growth during the vegetative stage the harvest is very quick and spectacularly green, but at the end of the day not especially long. White Shark is also very well suited to cloning; the clones taken from her root unusually quickly and develops new





leaves just as rapidly. The plants can be grown outdoors successfully, but you will need a little luck with our Autumn climate. Growers in the US report that a plant of around 1.20 metres after 8-10 weeks of bloom delivers around 125-150 grams of dry buds. These buds are heavy and compact and appear to be practically emitting light thanks to the richness of the psychoactive hairs that are all over them.

White out!



Conscious Consumers?

By LazyStrain

More recently, I've been thinking about the dope people are smoking in the UK; (more to the point about the smoke they're exhaling). The conclusive question I came to is this; 'How many people in the UK can source the cannabis they smoke?' I mean are cannabis smokers conscious consumers or not?

Most experienced smokers can tell if they are smoking 'good shit' or 'bad shit', commercial or homegrown. If dopes fresh, mistreated or over-fertilised. Some may even discus the origin of a particular 'strain' or 'species'. However, in reality many people end up smoking 'Skunk'. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. I mean who'd of thought that so many individuals would choose to apply the euphemism 'Skunk' to all and everything they smoke? On the down side however, it is extremely discouraging to think that many people within the UK know very little about the particular types of cannabis they decide to inhale.

This is where that liberal city of Amsterdam comes into it's own. This is true liberty from a stoner's perspective. Wander along any straat in central Amsterdam, ask a local where the local coffeeshop is located (remembering your alstublieft and Dank U), and minutes later your idling over a menu. The word menu, like most things English, is in fact French. I love this word. Menu infers choice. It means you can choose to smoke your preferred strain of cannabis, whilst remaining free from cultural constraint. Within the United Kingdom people are not permitted such privileges and so cannabis prohibition manifests for itself a sense of uncertainty.

In the past, people in the UK had a better understanding about the cannabis they where smoking. During the 1980's & 90's many people were still consuming imported hashish and marijuana; Afghani, Lebanese, Nepalese, Manali, Moroccan (insert your own soap-bar joke), Colombian, Jamaican, Malawi and Thai. Sure enough securing a nice piece of sinsemilla was a mission unto itself. Yet without any degree of certainty, people could approximate roughly what they were smoking and where in the world it came from.

Nowadays things are very different in the UK. The subconscious consumer need simply press the green button on his/her mobile phone. The conversation to which usually runs as follows-

- "Can you meet me?"
- "How much you want?"
- "An eighth."
- "Meet me in ten minutes."

And it is as basic as that! These days, there is at least one skunk-dealer to every neighbourhood in the UK; each selling eighth bags of sinsemilla 'Skunk'. Admittedly, the numbers of consumers has increased ten-fold over the past 10 years, so not surprisingly the availability of cannabis has equally increased alongside levels of consumption, (as have reflective prices). However it could be argued that contemporary methods of consumption are gradually diluting many consumer ethics. Namely the type and quality of cannabis products, now freely available, no longer fit into any particular social or geographical bracket. People just smoke 'Skunk'. The origin and treatment of which often remains unknown. My point being that, consumers within the UK must take the lion's share of the blame for this process of cultural opacity. As our sense of cultural identity becomes frosted, so does our knowledge and understanding about the culture that we all share as cannabis consumers. This is perhaps the reason why home growing has become such a popular pastime in recent years. Not just here in the UK, yet across the whole of Europe conscious consumers are turning to self-sufficient methods of production as a means sustaining the type and quality of cannabis to which they have become accustomed. In this real sense, the own-grower has the upper hand since she/he may choose to grow and consume cannabis products direct from their source of origin. When consumers firstly acknowledge, and then reject, several seemingly cognitive perceptions within mainstream society, they enter a world of choice. In other words, they are free to create their own coffeeshop style menus. Unlike the sub-conscious consumers within society who are quite contented to purchase 'Skunk' (and always shall be), the home grower, either rightly or wrongly, makes a conscious decision whether to grow a variety of 'Skunk' or one of the many other varieties of cannabis now available. To this end, it is refreshing to think that many people are regaining their consciousness. They are beginning to question the very roots of cannabis culture, which shall inevitably call for change.



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Mixing Fertilizers

Always read the entire label, and follow the directions. To mix, dissolve the powder and the crystals into a little warm water, and make sure it is totally dissolved before adding the balance of the tepid water. This will ensure that the fertilizer and the water mix evenly. Liquid fertilizers can be mixed directly with water.

Containers have very little growing medium in which to hold the nutrients. and toxic salt buildup may become a problem. Follow dosage instructions to the letter. Adding too much fertilizer will not make the plants grow faster. It could change the chemical balance of the soil, supply too much of a nutrient, or lock in other nutrients making them unavailable to the plant.



Measuring - Always use an accurate measuring container.

Fertilizer Application

Some varieties can take high doses of nutrients, and other strains grow best with a minimum of supplemental fertilizer. See the chart below for recommendations on fertilizing a few varieties. Many fertilizer programs are augmented with different additives that expedite nutrient uptake.

Determine if the plants need to be fertilized: make a visual inspection, take an N-P-K soil test, or experiment on test plants. No matter which method is used, remember, plants in small containers use available nutrients quickly and need frequent fertilizing, while plants in large planters have more soil, supply more nutrients, and can go longer between fertilizing



Pale green leaves signify this plant is low on nitrogen and needs to be fed with an all purpose fertilizer.

Visual Inspection – If the plants are growing well and have deep green, healthy leaves, they are probably getting all necessary nutrients. The moment growth slows or the leaves begin to turn pale green, it is time to fertilize. Do not confuse yellow leaves caused by a lack of light with vellow leaves caused by a nutrient deficiency.

Taking an N-P-K soil test will reveal exactly how much of each major nutrient is available to the plant. The test kits mix a soil sample with a chemical. After the soil settles, a color reading is taken from the liquid and matched to a color chart. The appropriate percent of fertilizer is then added. This method is exact but more trouble than it is worth.

Experimenting on two or three test plants is the best way to gain experience and develop horticultural skills. Clones are perfect for this type of experiment. Give the test plants some fertilizer, and see if they green up and grow faster. You should notice a change within 3 to 4 days. If it is good for one, it should be good for all.

Now, it has been determined that the plants need fertilizer. How much? The answer is simple. Mix the fertilizer as per the instructions and water as normal, or dilute the fertilizer and apply it more often. Many liquid fertilizers are diluted already. Consider using more concentrated fertilizers whenever possible. Remember, small plants use much less fertilizer than large ones. Fertilize early in the day, so plants have all day to absorb and process the fertilizer.

It is difficult to explain how often to apply all fertilizers in a few sentences. We know that large plants use more nutrients than small plants. The more often the fertilizer is applied, the less concentrated it should be. Frequency of fertilization and dosage are two of the most widely disagreed upon subjects among growers. Indoor containerized marijuana can be pushed to incredible lengths. Some strains will absorb amazing amounts of fertilizer and grow well. Lots of growers add as much as one tablespoon per gallon of PetersTM (20-20-20) with each watering. This works best with growing mediums that drain readily and are easy to leach. Other growers use only rich, organic potting soil. No supplemental fertilizer is applied until a super bloom formula is needed for flowering.

Fertilizing plants in the ground is much easier than fertilizing containerized plants. In the soil outdoors, the roots can find many nutrients in the soil, and fertilization is not as critical. There are several ways to apply chemical fertilizer. You can top-dress a garden bed by applying the fertilizer evenly over the entire area. You can side-dress plants by applying the fertilizer around the bases of the plants. You can foliar-feed plants by spraying a liquid fertilizer solution on the foliage. The method you choose will depend upon the kind of fertilizer, the needs of the plants, and the convenience of a chosen method.

When using synthetic fertilizers, it is extremely important to read the label carefully, and follow the directions. The initials "WIN" and "WSN" that you may see on the label stand for water-insoluble nitrogen and water-soluble nitrogen. WIN dissolves readily, and it is considered a fast-release nitrogen source. WSN does not dissolve easily. It is often an organic form of nitrogen and is considered a slow-release nitrogen source.

Use a siphon applicator—found at most nurseries-to mix soluble fertilizers with water. The applicator is simply attached to the faucet with the siphon submerged in the concentrated fertilizer solution with the hose attached to the other end. Often, applicators are set at a ratio of 1 to 15. This means that for every 1 unit of liquid concentrate fertilizer, 15 units of water will be mixed with it. Sufficient water flow is necessary for the suction to work properly. Misting nozzles restrict this flow. When the water is turned on, the fertilizer is siphoned into the system and flows out the hose. The fertilizer is generally applied with each watering, since a small percentage of fertilizer is

A garbage can with a garden-hose fitting attached at the bottom that is set 3-4 feet (90-120 cm) off the floor will act as a gravity-flow source for the fertilizer solution. The container is filled with water and fertilizer.

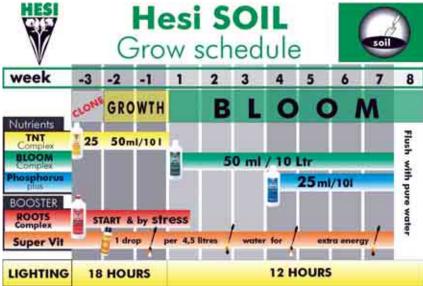


All of the leaves in this photo came from the same plant. All leaves show signs of

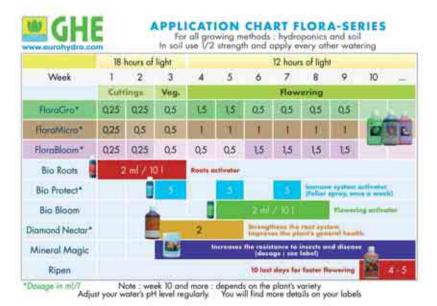
When it comes to fertilization, experience with specific varieties and growing systems will tell growers more than anything else. There are hundreds of N-P-K mixes, and they all work! When choosing a fertilizer, make sure to read the entire label and know what the fertilizer claims it can do. Do not be afraid to ask the retail clerk questions or to contact the manufacturer with questions.

Once you have an idea of how often to fertilize, put the garden on a regular feeding schedule. A schedule usually works very well, but it must be combined with a vigilant, caring eye that looks for over-fertilization and signs of nutrient deficiency.

Leach soil with 1-2 gallons (4-8 liters) of mild nutrient solution per gallon of soil every month. This is the best form of preventive maintenance against toxic salt buildup in the soil.



Fertilizer schedule from HESI



Fertilizer schedule from GHE



Spray foliage from underneath so that the spray is able to penetrate the stomata located on the leaf's underside.

Foliar Feeding

Foliar feeding means to spray the nutrients or bio-stimulants onto the foliage to augment available nutrients, vitamins, hormones, etc. Cannabis foliage absorption via the stomata is limited, and the timing is crucial to achieving the best coverage and absorption. Foliar sprays enter a plant when the stomata are open. The best times to spray are when the stomata are open as widely as possible. However, stomata are constantly balancing humidity, CO2 levels, temperature, and light levels, all of which signal stomata to open or close.

The waxy (cuticle) surface coating (cystolith hairs and resin) on cannabis foliage makes them very poor water absorbers. This barrier wards off pest and disease attacks, but it also slows the penetration of sprays.

Young leaves are more permeable than older leaves. Nutrients and additives penetrate immature leaves faster than tougher, older leaves, and they are easier to damage with strong sprays.

Stomata openings on the cannabis plant are on the bottom of the leaf's surface, so sprays must be applied upwards. Foliar feed the cannabis plants only when

specific deficiency symptoms manifest. Foliar feeding is a quick fix only and is easy to overdo. High levels of nutrients in the foliage stop the roots from taking in more; this is confusing for the plant. Foliar sprays are cumulative and build up in the foliage. Never spray more than once every 10 days, and keep the spray concentration to less than 500 ppm or with an EC of less than 1.0.

Stomata close when there is:

Too much CO2 Low humidity Roots are dry

Stomata open when there is:

High light Low CO2 High humidity

Spreader-Stickers

Smart growers use a surfactant, surfaceactive substance, or (adjuvant) helping by supplementing to increase effectiveness of foliar fertilization.

Spreaders (wetting agents) reduce the surface tension of sprays and keep them from beading up and rolling off the foliage. Big, bulbous drops on the leaves



Leaves and stalks have waxy, cystolith hairs – that act like feathers on a duck – and shed water.

How to get the most out of your spray

- 1. Spray the bottom of the leaves. Spray with a fine mist, and do not create droplets on the leaves. Fine mist is electrically attracted by the foliage. Even young marijuana plants have waxy hairs that impair liquid penetration.
- 2. Do not spray plants that are hot or when the atmosphere is too dry. Spray in low light, either before the lights go off or just as they are coming on. If spraying in hot conditions, first spray everything with plain water until the temperatures of the room and foliage drop, before applying the real spray. Spraying when the plant foliage is hot causes the spray to crystallize on the surface, and it stops the penetration. Spraying with water 10 minutes afterward often increases the penetration. Mobile nutrients move freely within a plant. Immobile nutrients move slowly, but once deposited, they stay.
- 3. Apply mobile nutrients sparingly. Immobile nutrients—sulfur, boron, copper, iron, manganese, molybdenum, sulfur, and zinc—often require two or three applications. Calcium and boron are poor candidates for foliar feeding because they translocate poorly. But urea nitrogen applied as a spray in high humidity, penetrates almost instantly into leaves. Be careful when spraying urea-based fertilizers, and keep them diluted. Urea also carries other nutrients into the plant and works well for a base to the mix. Foliar feeding should turn the plant around in less than a week. A second spray could be necessary at the week's end to ensure the cure sticks.
- 4. Boron, calcium, and iron move slowly during flowering. A supplemental foliar dose often speeds the growth when it slows. A foliar spray of potassium can also help flowering, especially if the temperatures dip below $10^{\circ}\mathrm{C}$ or above $25^{\circ}\mathrm{C}$.
- 5. Always spray new growth. The thin, waxy layer and a few trichomes allow for good penetration.
- 6. Measure the pH of the spray, and keep it between 7 and 8.5. Potassium phosphate (K2HPO4) becomes phytotoxic below pH 4 and above 8.5. Stomata are signaled to close within these pH ranges.
- 7. Use a surficant with all sprays, and apply these as per the instructions on the label.
- 8. Add the proper amount of surficant so droplets do not form on the leaves. Once formed, the droplets roll off the foliage, rendering it ineffective.
- 9. Stop the application before the droplets form on the leaves. Make a test spray on a mirror to ensure the spray is even and does not form droplets that roll off the mirror.
- 10. Spray with as fine of a mist as possible to minimize the size of the drop.

mean you need to use a spreader. Flat drops that slide off the foliage mean there is too much spreader. There are *nonionic*, *antionic*, and *cationic* spreaders. The nonionic spreaders that do not ionize in water are the most common, and they do not react with most pesticides. Antionic and cationic spreaders are not used often.

Stickers keep the spray adhered to the leaf after spraying so that it does not wash off when it rains or when dew forms. Stickers not only increase adhesion, they slow evaporation, and impart a waterproof coating. Some stickers are spreaders, too. Spreader-stickers allow the stomata on the leaves to be penetrated.

Extender (stabilizing agents) protects applied sprays against UV radiation and heat that degrade the sprays.

Liquid and powder soaps and detergents act as surfactants, too. But, they are not nearly as effective as horticultural surficants. Biodegradable surfactants disappear the fastest. Silicone surficants are also mild insecticides that work to impair pest functions.

Foliar spray concentration is cumulative. Nutrients delivered via the foliage can cause a buildup of salts in and around the leaves. This is similar to the way the salts accumulate in the soil.

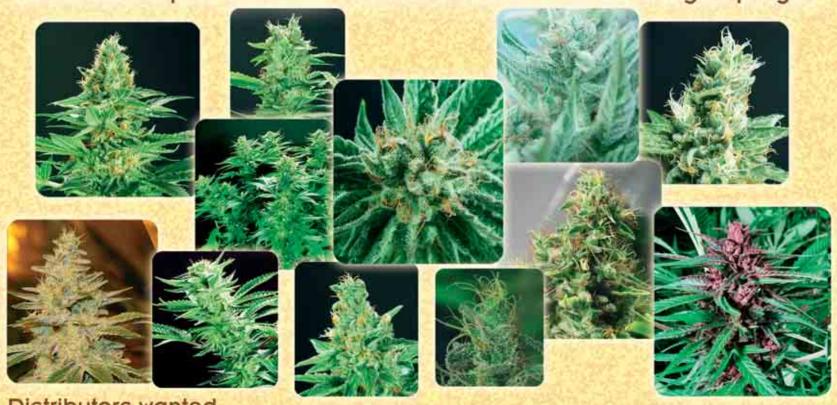


Without a spreader-sticker sprays often bead up and roll off the foliage which makes them ineffective.

Jorge Cervantes is the author of the ALL NEW Indoor Marijuana Horticulture: The Indoor Bible, with 200 ALL NEW color photos, Marijuana Indoors: Five Easy Gardens, Marijuana Outdoors: Guerrilla Growing and Jorge's Rx, and is contributor to 12 European magazines in 6 languages. Jorge's books are published in Dutch, English, French, German and Spanish. Visit his website at www.marijuanagrowing.com







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Coffee shop Down Town, Leeuwarden (Holland)





Leeuwarden is a city that the local council in recent years seems to have done its best to rip the heart out of. Even the new mayor had

to admit after an evening tour of the local pubs that the inner city was a rather dull state of affairs

But those who leave the large shopping streets behind will find a different, more picturesque side to the city. The Wortelhaven is such a district. Once a rather dull enclave in the hands of shopkeepers and other small businesses, it has become something of a Mecca for trendy Leeuwarden folk.

Down Town is situated right opposite a main road heading towards the centre. You can park your car directly outside the place, which is handy for the take-away custom. In heavier years Down Town was in the Hoogstraat, disguised as a music shop. "Actually, we were then already a coffee shop, but the local council was hostile to the open sale of our products," says owner Kristien. "We sold weed and world music,.

The building had previously been a cheese shop, but Kristien completely remodelled the stock room and shop as a spacious coffee shop. The old wooden beams have been restored in all their glory, and the interior clearly shows that a lot of thought has gone into it. Lots of wood, with borders of rusty iron and harmonious lighting give the joint the allure of a modern grand café. So it is not so strange that so many smokers make

their way here. The price of the drinks will also have some effect: nearly everything costs just a Euro, and for half that you can get a bowl of soup. The service is attentive and the espresso outstanding.

Behind the bar works Patrick, who has his hands full serving the many customers there for take away service, while keeping the dozen or so sit down guests happy. Grabbing a moment between these two demanding activities, he says that Down Town also has a cultural function: many beginning – and sometimes, established – DJs regularly play in the shop. The many flyers on the bar strengthen the impression that Down Town is aimed at the stoner who also enjoys a bit of culture.

Of course there are the unavoidable pool tables, but when it's party time these are shoved to the side of the room. Stairs lead upstairs to a professional internet café that is especially busy in the summer when it is used by guests from a nearby hotel (that has obviously got no sense for a gap in the market). For just a single Euro you can make use of a plasma-screened PC for an hour.

The menu is more extensive than average. There are more than 20 varieties of hash and weed on offer. What really jumps off the page is the generous attention paid to the - in the Netherlands at least - almost forgotten black, sticky varieties such as Thai and Manali. A wide range of pre-rolled joints is also available. The real killer of these is the K2 joint, just half of which will be enough to keep you high for the whole evening.

Down Town is a shining point of light in Leeuwarden, and if the mayor decides to make another tour of the town's nightlife and wanders into this place, he will be forced to change his opinion of his city.

Coffeeshop Down Town, Wortelhaven 85, 8911 GL Leeuwarden, Holland Tel:+31 (0) 58 213 4945

Web site: www.downtownkoffie.nl

Urban Garden Hydroponics, South Yorkshire



Urban Garden first opened its doors back in the 1999 and successfully built it's business around the everincreasing hydro industry. Ian, the original owner, first set out to have a shop 'run by the boys, for the boys', as the services he got from the local grow shops just did not do the industry justice. Bad advice, high prices and poor locations were the main reasons for opening a hydro store. Ian: "We started of in a small

unit with no space and only enough stock to fill very small orders but as the industry grew we quickly out-grew our small space and had to move across the road into the one we are in today. We now have over 8,000 square feet of storage space with two retail shops in Barnsley and Sheffield with another two outlets planned for this year, one in Wakefield and another just outside Rotherham. We are now the main stockist of Maxibrite and Canatronic lighting and control gear, Phat filters, NFT multiflow and autopots grow

systems with the amazing Eco System heading our range. We stock every nutrient known to man with a warehouse dedicated to grow mediums. Our promise is that if we don't have it in stock we will get it for you the next day with 25% off the retail price. We offer a free local delivery service and will meet you where ever you like. We are now the UK distributors of the amazing Bono Stimulants, which will be coming to a grow shop near you soon. Ask for it by name!"

Urban Garden Barnsley: Unit 17, Courtyard 2, Wentworth Road, Mapplewell S75 6DT

Tel: +44 (0) 1226 384 040

Open:

10.00-6.00 Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri; 10.00-8.00 Wed; 10.00-5.30 Sat; 10.30-4.00 Sun

Urban Garden Sheffield: Unit 40, Century Street Industrial Est. Clement Street, Attercliffe, Sheffield, S9 5DX Tel: +44 (0) 1142 443 447 Open: 10.00-5.30 Mon-Fri; 10.00-4.00 Sat.

Web site: www.urban-garden.co.uk

NL: Towns want to legalise cannabis

TWO southern Dutch towns have called for the legalisation, under strict conditions, of cannabis production to thwart criminal gangs operating on the border with Belgium and Germany.

Christian Democrat mayor Gerd Leers of Maastricht, one of the towns calling for legalisation, will defend his plan in the European parliament in a special session dedicated to drugs policies in the European Union.

"I think that a regulated production (of cannabis) would drive out a lot of the criminal activity," Mr Leers said.

As the mayor of Maastricht, close to both Germany and Belgium, Mr Leers is confronted each year with 1.5 million so-called drugs tourists attracted by the famed Dutch cannabis cafes known as coffee-shops.

A typically Dutch invention, these special cafes are authorized to sell up to five grams of cannabis to people over 18.

Since 1976 the Netherlands have made a distinction between soft drugs and hard drugs.

For soft drugs, like cannabis, the consumption and sale in the special coffee-shops is decriminalized.

Hard drugs like cocaine and heroin remain strictly illegal.

"The drugs policy is very schizophrenic because although it is legal for coffeeshops to sell cannabis, the production is illegal. It is like telling a baker that he can sell bread but is not allowed to buy flour," Mr Leers said.

The influx of foreign drugs tourists to Maastricht, mostly from France and Belgium, causes a lot of local residents to set up lucrative illegal cannabis plantations in their basement or attic.

"Tens of thousands of families at the bottom of the social scale come into contact with criminal behaviour this way," according to the mayor.

Despite a police crackdown on illegal plantations in the last months in Maastricht, the problems continue.

That is why Leers calls for the legalisation of the production of cannabis to better control and regulate the supply chain of coffee-shops to fight against illegal plantations and illegal trade in soft drugs. He says he hopes that regulating the production will also make it financially less attractive to start a cannabis plantation.

Toine Greser, the mayor of nearby Heerlen, has proposed that the Dutch state regulates cannabis production much like it regulates the casinos in the Netherlands.

 $Date: 20/04/2005 \ / \ Source: The \ Australian$

Mutate and survive

By Kaz Peer

Creating some of the most outlandish spectacles and shows on earth from scrap metal and recycled materials, for more than twenty years now, visionary artist and instigator of the Mutoid Waste Company, Joe Rush is as fresh and brimming with innovative, original and inspired energy as ever. His fine eye for detail and crazy antic imagination has spawned phenomenon's such as the awesome Car Henge at the Glastonbury Festival, Tank Henge, which took place opposite the Reichstag in Berlin as well as countless mutations and sculptures, including the infamous Skull Bus and the ludicrously mutated pink Mig fighter jets, taken from the disbanded East German army. Although working in an unorthodox way, with his love of life and humanity, paramount only to his artistic talent and skill, Joe Rush is one of the most outstanding artists of the day. Soft Secrets UK spoke to Joe about his passion.





SSUK: You have gained certain notoriety from the Mutoid Waste Company. When did this start and how did it come about?

J.R.: The Mutoid Waste started around Shepherds Bush, on the Portobello Road in 1984 It came about when I started creating sculptures that were influenced by 2000 AD. comics and being a punk rocker. I was working in the film studios and was picking up all my artistic techniques there and put the two things together. The Mutoid Waste actually started when we decided it was easier to take the sculptures to see people than it was getting people to come and see the sculptures. So we started wearing them and building them on to bikes and driving them down Portobello Road and that's basically what became The Mutoid Waste Company. We were just a bunch of extreme exhibitionists taking things out to brighten up the streets.

How has what you are doing now developed on from those early Mutoid days?

Well, not much really, it's just more so. Obviously I've learned more skills, I'm better at mechanics, better at welding. There are new materials, what was waste then and waste now is not the same, this is always changing and so my work evolves because of the materials that we use.

Is the basic motivation and inspiration the same as in the early days?

Yes. The motivation has always been the fun of making it and the fun of showing it to people and also the fun of doing shows, parades and parties. The motivation is basically the pleasure of doing it and showing it.

It seems that you challenge preconceptions and restrictions within our society as well as stimulating people's imaginations. Is this the case?

Rather than actually challenging restrictions I think it's more a case of showing people possibilities and allowing them to make their own conclusions about their own life. We're not about knocking

anyone else's life, we just like to show people here's another way you can live this life, this is how we do it with pleasure and satisfaction.

On the subject of restrictions, how do you feel about the current situation in the U.K. regarding the legality of cannabis? Do you see it as a health issue and a human rights issue?

I don't think it ever has been a health issue. From my understanding of the whole cannabis story it's been an issue about the weed itself, and not even the fact that weed can get you high, which I don't really think is a problem, I think the long term problem is about the versatility of the hemp plant and the threat that it presents to the petrol-chemical and plastic industries. I feel that the outlawing of it relates to that and the issue of money.

Do you think that cannabis should be legal?

You know what, I think that a lot of the stimulation that people have had to experiment in life has come because they've wanted to have a smoke and



Pitae Ship, Nothing Hill

they've been told not to. So when they, by being disobedient, have had a smoke and realised there is absolutely nothing wrong with it, it stimulates the thinking process and it can also stimulate the questioning process. It can also bring a lot of alternative types of people together who may not ordinarily be together. I remember when I first started smoking when I was a little punk rocker; I had to go to all these squats with all these hippies, bikers and all sorts of weird things going on. So, from the point of view of getting people together and getting people thinking, I think it's better that it's not legal, I think that they've actually done themselves a disservice.

Unlike most artists, many of your projects are inextricably linked with music and musicians. Has this stemmed from your early days as a punk rocker?

Yeah, you know, I've always been a rock and roller; I've always liked the whole

thing and motorbikes. I think that one of the problems with the art world is that it tries to separate all the pieces, all the creative outputs and make out that they are all different. In fact, what it is, it's a main creative energy and people just interpret it because they work in different ways. Some people are attuned visually, some people have got lovely vocal chords, and some have got very active hands.

Your shows always include music, for instance the L.S. Diezel sound. This does seem to be an integral part.

Yeah, absolutely, but so is the dancing, so is some of the characters, so is the clothes. It's just really whatever floats your boat, whatever way you want to express yourself. It all goes into the mix, the idea is that there's something for everybody in it.

Tell me about some of your favourite shows and people that you've worked with.

I love doing Glastonbury; I always do different parades, areas and sculpture parks. I love Notting Hill Carnival, probably more than any event that I've ever been involved in. I build a big static sound system and help with Gaz's Rockin Blues and we play old ska and reggae tunes for a few days and it's just absolutely brilliant. We have different themes; last year we had a huge pirate ship and we all dressed as pirates. Then there are all the great parties that we've had out in Europe with different travelling groups and different tribes.

You have worked on a show with George Clinton of Funkadelic. That must have been pretty far out?



Taxi Dinosaur

That was lovely, he is lovely. He came over to our tree, which is all made out of exhaust pipes and asked if we could set fire to it and get smoke coming out of the pipes, which we did for him, and he said "if you free your mind, your ass will follow". He loved it. He could see, in the same way that Joe Strummer could see, that it's the same creative impulse that we use in a visual sense rather than a musical sense.

What kind of environment do you most like working in?

Scrap yards! Well, anywhere where there's loads of scrap and metal and waste.

In loving memory of the twins, Barry and Carl and their spirit.





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Growing for Dummies Part 9

The last weeks of blooming By



Some Orange Bud buds nearly fully developed after five weeks of bloom

After weeks of mounting excitement the long-awaited moment – the harvest – is finally within arm's reach. The plants have grown incredibly quickly through their first three weeks of blossoming and have undergone a real transformation, after which began the slow formation of the buds. Ever-increasing numbers of white hairs appeared and formed the basis of the eventual buds, over which we have been drooling in anticipation. After five weeks of blossoming there should now be hard, THC-dripping buds found on your plants, that are still growing and expanding but which have now put the larger part of their development behind them.

The blossoming plants should still be lovely and green, and the THC production firing on all cylinders. The leaves around the buds will become stickier and stickier and the many THC-rich resin glands produced on them will later be used for making a nice lump of hash with. So at the harvest that is just around the corner we will have the leaves that we have trimmed from around the buds, and also the larger leaves that contain THC, both of which we will lay to one side to dry out well. We will then also have to decide whether we want to make water hash or skuff. There will be more about this in a future article.

In any case, as long as you have not given your plants an overdose of fertiliser then the very sight of your garden should by now be enough to get your mouth watering. It should look marvellous under the strong HPS illumination, which makes the numerous THC glands on your buds and leaves dance and glint in the light. Because blossoming plants have additional demands for phosphorus and calcium, we give them plagron pk 13-14 as an extra stimulation of the development of their blossoming. These substances are found in every basic nutrient mix, but in lower volumes, and with pk 13-14 we can make up the shortfall. The buds will be harder



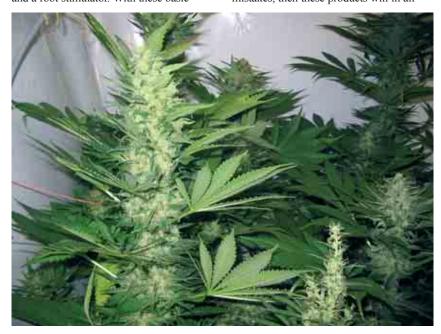
A White Pearl that after 6 weeks of blossoming is still hard at work

and more compact as a result. If you are a newbie to growing, you are best to begin with the basic package of fertilisers, which consists of base fertiliser containing all NPKs (nitrogen, phosphorus and calcium-containing compounds), plus a pk 13-14 and a root stimulator. With these basic



Close-up of an Orange Bud bud after 6 weeks of bloom

any sense to add these relatively more expensive products immediately because they only help as long as everything has proceeded smoothly during the grow. Since you as a relative newcomer will undoubtedly have made a number of mistakes, then these products will in all



Since every seed is unique there can be considerable difference between individual plants grown together in terms of size, smell and taste.

products you will be more than able to grow yourself a great harvest.

likelihood be overkill and unlikely to have much added value. Once you have worked

As long as you have not given your plants an overdose of fertiliser then the very sight of your garden should by now be enough to get your mouth watering

If you've got the bit between your teeth and it looks as if your harvest is going to turn out to be mostly problem—free, then you can apply a number of additional products such as a bloom stimulator and/or boosters and enzymes. It does not make

through your main mistakes then these products do indeed offer something of value to your eventual harvest. Enzymes take care of removing old root remains and reduce the salt accumulation in your medium that comes from giving them additional nutrients. Once you have been using the same bottle of nutrient for a while you will notice the top develops a white, crystalline deposit on it. These are the salts I'm referring to. By using organic nutrients such as plagron you can also reduce the accumulation of salts, since these contain considerably lower levels than the bio-mineral nutrients.

On pots and uniformity

The size of pots that we have been using is dependent on the number of plants that we are growing and the number of weeks growth that we gave them. These factors are connected to each other. If we have a larger number of plants to pack in then we need to use smaller pots and give the plants less time in growth. For example, if we have 16 plants in one square metre and give them a grow period of between 5 and 9 days, then the plants will be happy with 5 litre pots. If we were to reduce that number to 10 plants and give them a grow period of 10-14 days then the plants will need 7-11 litre pots. So the fewer the plants we grow, the larger the pots we will use and the longer time in growth we will give them. The yield you end up with is more or less the same whichever method you use. The only difference is in the amount of time we need in total to get our harvest. So someone with 16 plants and using the popular bloom period of 8 weeks will take about two months and five days from start to finish. If you have 10 plants then it will take you about two months and two weeks. In other words, you will take longer to get the same yield.

Commercial growers in particular find it important to get to harvest in as short a period of time as possible. That is why they often stick 20 plants in a square metre and give them only 1-3 days' growth depending on the medium that they are using. In this way they can harvest every two months if they use a variety that does the business in 8 weeks. In general, plants with more of a Sativa influence in them take longer to bloom than those dominated by Indica genes. So you see that you can be guided in your original selection of plants as much by the blossoming period as by the eventual effect of the dried smokeable material. If you prefer a more 'up' high than a heavier, bodily stoned, then it is advisable to plump for a Sativa cross that takes a little longer to bloom, say between 8-10 weeks. Even so, you must always take account when growing from seed that every plant is unique and there will always be early-blooming, medium long-blooming and late-blooming individuals in your selection. If you read somewhere that a particular variety is 'very uniform' this means that there will be little difference in the time to harvest between the adult plants. So you can expect 80% of the plants to end up with the same growing time, and when a variety has less

uniformity there will be larger differences between the plants in their blooming period as grown up plants. This is also an important factor you should take into account when choosing a particular variety.

Ventilation

All the nutrients and water that you give your plants during their blooming period have to go somewhere. The water is evaporated from the leaves of your plants and then floats freely in your growing room. Since at the beginning of the blooming the plants still had little vegetation and were rather small, then little moisture was released into the air by the plants. Thanks to this, the air moisture was if anything too low rather than too high. Because our green plants grow more rapidly in a moister climate than in the dry heat produced by the HPS lamps, you can ensure a faster development and growth in the first week(s) by allowing the air moisture to rise. The easiest way to achieve



This Orange Bud is obviously ripe, as is clearly visible from the coloured hairs.

this without buying an air humidifier is to attach a dimmer switch to your ventilator. With a dimmer you can vary the speed of the air extraction. Connecting a dimmer is handy because with it you can better influence the climate. What's more, a ventilator without a dimmer always operates at full speed and this is not always needed, and not only wastes electricity but also creates more noise than is strictly necessary. It is not actually the ventilator itself that creates the noise but the stream of air that comes out of it. So you are better off having a dimmer during the first weeks; it will allow the pump to not only operate more softly, it will suck away less moist air, thereby keeping the air moisture content higher and allowing your seedlings to develop more quickly.

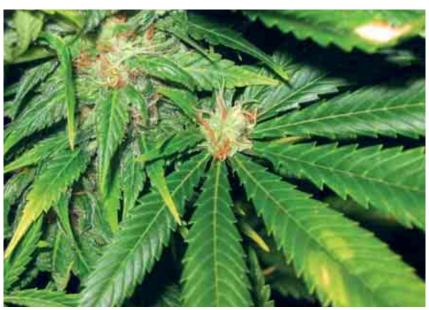
As soon as the plants become bigger you can afford to let the pump do a bit more work, as the plants are producing ever greater quantities of moisture, and you need to make sure that the humidity does not start to creep up too high once the formation of the buds is well and truly underway, around the fourth week of blossoming. Too high a humidity can lead to the rock hard buds beginning to develop mould during their last few weeks of growth. When the humidity is too high there is a greater chance of damp getting

inside the bud structure, which continues to grow around it, trapping the moisture. This trapped moisture can incubate moulds. Varieties of weed that develop especially hard buds have a greater chance There are various ways of reducing the noise. First and foremost you have the aforementioned dimmer, since a ventilator that is not running at full speed makes less noise. So try and run yours at about 75-

If you are growing hydroponically then don't cease feeding until the last five days, as the yellowing process will happen very quickly if you are growing in water only

of developing mould than buds with a more airy structure, thanks to the latter not trapping moisture in them so easily. Once you have discovered mould in a bud then it is as good as lost, since the mould has been active inside before it became visible on the outside of the bud. When you have a lovely-developed bud and then a strange yellow-coloured leaf sticks out the middle of it - even though you have definitely been giving her enough nutrients - then you are best off pulling it softly out. If the leaf comes free easily, then the bud

80%. That is why it is always best to go for a ventilator with too great a capacity rather than too little. A large ventilator running at half speed makes less noise than a small ventilator running flat out. If this does not help sufficiently, then you can have the ventilator built into an insulated box. Just attaching a length of hose to the ventilator already reduces the sound considerably because the sound is not immediately dispersed but runs first along the hose, by which it is reduced in volume. Should these efforts still not give you the



Sometimes you will also encounter freaks with abnormalities among your plants, such as this bud that is blossoming away on a large leaf

is infected. So make sure that you have a good ventilator in action during the last weeks. It is an investment when you are just starting out, but is a 'must' if you want to make sure that your harvest comes off without a hitch. Not only does the ventilator ensure that the warm, damp air is removed, but it also makes sure that fresh, CO2-rich air is sucked into the space in which your plants are hard at work. They will need this fresh air to keep growing and blooming at an optimum rate. Try and make sure that during the last few weeks of blooming the air moisture is kept below 50%.

Of course, you can grow in a cupboard without a ventilator by keeping the door ajar, but then will not get optimal results. If you are going to do something, you are better off making sure you do it well. The dimmer in combination with the ventilator will enable you to master the environment better, and an outstanding climate increases your yield and the quality of your eventual harvest.

Keeping the noise down

For those of you who have your growing space set up in the vicinity of a bedroom, then there can be a problem of complaints about the noise made by the ventilator.

results you wish, then you can fit a sound muffler to your ventilator. This looks something like a carbon filter; a metal tube that you fix to your ventilator so that the sound produced must first pass through the tube, where it is reduced. Then simply fit a normal hose to the muffler and you'll find the noise has largely been filtered out.

The last weeks of blooming

The majority of the bud development will have happened by the 6th week if we are growing a medium long-blooming variety. In the last two weeks the buds will be mostly ripening and not growing further in size to any great extent. The buds that were chock full of bone-white hairs will now begin to turn slowly brown. Depending on which variety you are using and the climate of the space, this ripening can take a variable amount of time to finish. Once some 80% of the little hairs have turned brown then it is time for digging those clippers out the cupboard and preparing for harvest

Of course you can also influence the sort of high you get from your cannabis by harvesting your buds a little earlier or later. The longer you wait to harvest, the 'stonier' the cannabis will be; if you harvest it a little earlier then you will get

more of a 'head high'. So you can make your mind up according to your own personal preference. Since we usually aim for some sort of golden 'middle way,' we will go for harvest when 80% of the hairs are brown. Do not forget that sometimes white hairs can turned brown by influencing the climate or messing with the humidity. It does not automatically mean that the plant is sure to ripen once you get a few brown hairs. A bud that has died off or that has been infected by mould will also develop brown hairs. Harvesting is not an exact science but in short, if you have a mostly brown hairs and a few of the lowest buds still have white hairs, you can safely go ahead and start chopping. You have to look at the plant as a whole when you are doing your 80% calculations. In order to experience the varieties of high you can achieve, you might want to harvest at staged intervals, and once they are dried take each sample for a test smoke

As the end approaches nearer you will find that one variety holds on to its nutrients more than the other. So for example a K2 will hold on to its nutrients longer, which means you have to stop feeding it in the last week and a half. The plants will remain a crisp green despite doing this, the hairs will continue to darken in colour, and the buds will slowly ripen, taking on a marvellous appearance with their wonderful layer of THC sprinkled all over them. Since there is still a lot of nutrition left over in the medium (exactly how much depends on the medium you are using) and the leaves also contain considerable nutrients within them, we stop feeding them for the last 1.5-2 weeks of bloom. If you are growing hydroponically then don't cease feeding until the last five days, as the yellowing process will happen very quickly if you are growing in water only. In soil-filled pots, or on coco and suchlike there is still quite a lot of nutrient left in that needs to be used up. What happens when you stop feeding your plants is that they will take up and use all remaining available nutrients from the pots or medium, and once this has been done they will suck their leaves dry to get the nutrients out of these too. In other word, even after stopping with feeding the plant still has more than enough nutrients. You can still apply bloom stimulator given that this is not a nutrient substance. The leaves will slowly turn yellow and this is a sign that there is very little nutrient remaining in your buds by harvest time. In this way you also save a few weeks or days of nutrient expenses. Yellowing is therefore a good thing because having excess nutrients in them will add nothing to your buds. Eventually you will be able to remove some of the larger leaves from your plants in the last week or few days before the harvest, which will save you some trimming and will also allow more light down to the lowest buds and give them a better chance of adding some last minute weight before coming under the shears. This done, it leaves little else to do in the last few weeks but to savour the results of the source of your excitement..

Next time, more about the harvest - leaving you time to get your shears sharpened!





Incidentally its poisonous image is not entirely undeserved. The fungus contains small quantities of Muscarine, a substance that causes foaming at the mouth. And although the fungus is most directly recognisable by its red and white spotted cap, in some places deadly varieties do exist which are virtually identical to this more benign type.

Despite all that, in Scandinavia there is a recipe known to some that goes as follows:

"Slice the Fly Agaric into pieces, placing them in a pan in a shallow layer of boiling water. Allow them to cook, then pour off the water and cook the mushroom pieces further in fresh water for ten more minutes. Then pour this water off. Now fry up the pieces in a mixture of butter and oil."

This recipe is psychoactive, but not dangerous. It took around a century and a half before this phenomenon became more widely known.

Drunken Flies

The term Muscaria is derived from Musca domestica, which is Latin for housefly. The name Fly Agaric originated with the use of the fungus as a means for exterminating the pesky bluebottle or biting fly. For that purpose, break the cap into pieces and soak it in water or milk with honey. The flies drink it up and then they die.

In 1793 however, the French biologist Paulet discovered something odd. Having left some caps on a windowsill to dry, without the milk or sugar, after a while there were also flies lying nearby, but those lying there were merely hamstrung. A considerable number of the flies continued zooming around the room. Laying down more dry caps didn't help; only the caps soaked in water brought the lot of them down like a load of lead balloons.

In 1960 did some researchers from the natural history museum in Paris proposed that the flies Paulet observed were not dead at all, but drunk. Roger Heim, the director of the museum, had previously soaked the very same Psilocybe mexicana shroomies from which Albert Hoffman had isolated Psilocybin in 1958, and then subjected the flies' behaviour to an extensive study.

Those flies appeared to lick the caps. A quarter of an hour later they began to tremble and stagger. Ultimately they rolled on their backs with their legs in the air. Heim: "A magnifying glass showed that their legs kept moving. The flies didn't respond when tickled with a pencil, but after up to 48 hours had passed, they roused themselves. At first they could only walk, but later they were flying again."

Cook with the Fly Agaric!

One mushroom that is often reputed to be poisonous is the Fly Agaric: Amanita Muscaria. Actually, this is not quite accurate as Fly Agaric, alias Soma, is one of the oldest known psychoactive drugs in Eurasia; older even than alcohol.

By Rene Rikkelman

The explanation for Paulet's observation that just a limited percentage of the flies had "died" from the caps is that those flies were still sleeping-off their stupor. The rest were flying around dizzily before they ventured another taste. But when the caps were soaked first, the flies drank themselves to death.

Warty Dwarf Acid

Three research teams, one English, one Japanese and a Swiss team worked on identifying the active ingredient. The Japanese won the race in 1964 and they needed to come up with a name for their discovery. The term Ibotenic acid derived from the Japanese name for Amaniet: ibo-tengu-take (Ibo= "with warts", "tengu"= dwarf and "take"= mushroom).

A year later a second drug was developed and was named Muscimol. Both extracts are highly water-soluble; when dissolved Ibotenic acid changes into Muscimol. The metabolic effect of Muscimol is ten times as strong as that of the earlier derivative.

The three properties of water solubility and the fact that Ibotenic acid breaks down to Muscimol and then becomes ten times as potent, explains why the flies Paulet observed were killed by the caps which had been soaked and why the Scandinavian Fly Agaric recipe is not dangerous. The flies drinking it had taken in a dose ten times as strong as the flies eating it.

Double boiling and pouring off the water from the fungi rinses most of the active ingredients away. What is left over is for the most part lost during the final frying of the fruit in oil. A microscopically tiny bit is left over. In minuscule quantities Ibotenic acid is a patented flavour enhancer.

Vomiting

Users know about the Fly Agaric principally because of its psychoactive properties. Commonly the mushrooms are consumed raw. It's a bit of an enigma as to why people would want to do this, since for both flies and people, raw fungus often causes vomiting. For flies, regurgitation is a normal part of their digestive process. For us, vomiting is an inevitable side effect caused by the presence of quantities of (drunken) larvae upon the Fly Agaric. A "normal" dose lies between 100 and 150 grams or so of fresh fungus, containing approximately 60-90 milligrams of Ibotenic acid (or ten times less Muscimol.) The effect is known to be similar to Psilocybin in duration but totally different in character. After about half an hour you feel something happening and after one hour the effect peaks. After four to maximum ten hours it's all over.

Lucid Dreams

Ibotenic acid and Muscimol especially, act upon brain cells which are sensitive to the brain hormone gamma-amino butter acid or GABA. In this respect they can be grouped with drugs such as alcohol, Valium and GHB. These substances must never be used in combination with each other, because mixing them intensifies the effects considerably. That is known as the "1+1=5 effect", and such mixing can

be dangerous. Users find the high from GABA-active substances to be quite pleasant overall because they induce a state akin to a "half sleep". Lucid or conscious dreaming; a manageable, half-conscious dream state can ensue.

This is particularly so with the combination of Ibotenic acid and Muscimol because Ibotine acid primarily works on brain centres which in turn deaden other areas of the brain. In so doing the drug seems to act as a stimulant. Muscimol works very well as a real anaesthetic, but people tend to feel more vigorous and alert as it comes on stronger. The combination of Ibotenic acid and Muscimol induces an alternately stimulating and anaesthetising impact, producing the state of lucid dreaming, without either losing consciousness or fully awakening.

Smoking

In 1996 the American ethnobotanist Jonathan Ott, wrote about a smokable Fly Agaric extract, in his book, Pharmacophilia. According to Ott, people in the Afghani Shetul valley speak of an ancient smokable medicine prepared from Fly Agaric under the name tshashm baskon (eye-opener). Ott makes mention in two further publications of a similar medicine from the Mexican states of Pueblo and Chiapas.

Due to the high water-solubility of the extracts, it is fairly simple to concoct such remedies: dissolve them in vodka, filter the liquid, drop it on something smokable, let it dry and fill up a pipe. But I would never smoke it unless I've made it myself!



Balenescu Quartet

'Maria T' (Mute Records)



This absolutely beautiful, passionate and powerful album is the latest composition of Alexander Balanescu played by the

Balanescu quartet consisting of violin, viola, cello and percussion.

Deeply moving, melancholic yet uplifting, the music is firmly rooted in Balanescu's Romanian origins, evoking the spirit of one of his earliest musical influences, the glamorous and iconic folk-singer and actress Maria Tanase (1913-63).

Although based in Romanian culture, the music has universality as it reaches into and reflects the darkest parts of the human psyche in order, through empathetic love, to spread some light. Thus making the very struggle to survive more possible.

With an eclectic range of influences extending into jazz and electronic as well as classical, Balanescu's "intention was not to make transcriptions or arrangements of the ethnic material" rather "to develop a new personal language, but always remain true to the spirit of the original source material." In some songs he uses the actual, incredibly stirring and emotionally profound vocals of Maria Tanase herself, as if the connective bridge over the years and between her and us, cannot be cemented without her oral presence. An intriguing character, her "bittersweet message about the transcendence of daily suffering by ordinary people" has been wholly encapsulated into this music.

Previous collaborators with the Balanescu Quartet have included Michael Nyman, Ornette Coleman, Peter Greenaway, David Byrne, Spiritualized, Kate Bush and Kraftwerk.

'Maria T' is nothing short of totally magnificent!

Tripswitch 'circuit breaker' (L.S.D.)



your listening pleasure by the Liquid Sound Design label comes this dose of ambient lushness and luxury from

Freshly laid for

Nick Brennan a.k.a. Tripswitch.

With a substantial musical history and love of partying, stemming from the ecstatic, life (planet) changing heights and ideals of early acid house, this is Nick's first solo album venture.

Rich and melodious, provocative instrumentation and keen rhythm's create a fluffy yet compelling sonic flight. In 'roll your own', effected up

By Kaz Peet A STONED SELECTION

slide guitar invokes the feeling of those tripped out halcyon times, where real or imaginary palm leaves blowing on some beach or from a vast jungle, clear all mind fog like a jasmine scented summer breeze.

Full of psychedelic infused atmosphere, played at sunrise or sunset, this album is sure to keep you well chilled with your head and your heart, blissfully, irresistibly, groovy.

Look out for Tripswitch performing live sets at this year's Sonica Festival (Italy), Omni (Spain) and Glade Festival in the U.K.

Dubdadda

'Lo-Fi Pon De Hi-Fi' (dub hooligan)



Always avin' it large inna tuff and heavy stylee when playing live at underground gigs and parties, Dubdadda lose

no weight when it comes to recorded material. 'Lo-Fi Pon De Hi-Fi' is actually Manchester Moss Side's Johno a.k.a. Dubdadda's first solo album after years of tirelessly championing reggae music and gaining much respect on the sound-system, underground and festival scenes. He has an ongoing collaborative relationship with Zion Train and the Universal Egg stable and has worked with the likes of Gregory Issacs, Alton Ellis, Beanie man, Tippa Irie and UB40.

Fusing old school dub style, techniques and roots vocals with modern sounds and technology gives this outfit their sound and meets with the approval of the reggae puritans as well as enthusing the subversives and turning on da party people. Classic dub effects such as echo and delay, reverb and rim shots pervade the album along with uplifting lyrics and vocal inserts and a conscious vibe, which cannot fail to spread a little more love and light in the world.

Ras Michael and the sons of Negus

Kibir-Am-Lak' (Greensleeves)



Greensleeves label continues the good work of increasing the availability of JA. reggae music by the rerelease of three

more albums. The classic seventies roots sound of Ras Michael, along with Augustus Pablo – 'Blowing With The

Wind' and Shabba Ranks – 'Golden Touch.

'Kibir-Am-Lak' has a very pleasant and uplifting feel in its giving praise to Jah with roots rockin' riddims, flute and horns instrumentation and sharp percussion. In 'If They Only Knew', grounation style gospel vocals and drums recall the spirit of slaves singing for their freedom as we are invited to open our hearts to peace and love and step inside Zion with Jah Rastafari. One Love. One Heart.

Meat Katie 'Fabric Live' (Fabric Records)



The Fabric
Live series, in
which DJ.'s
that play at the
club are given
a free hand to
come up with
whatever kind
of live mix

they like, this time showcases Meat Katie. Coming from a less than ideal background, Meat Katie is totally self-made with a strong personal D.I.Y. philosophy. She has a varied taste in music, preferring to play tunes she actually really likes rather than sticking to a designated genre and this is obviously reflected in this mix as it traverses from breaks into house, electro and techno.

The album features several tracks from the artist's own label, Lot 49, which she has recently set up as her first completely solo label project.

Compilation Counter Culture 2004 (Rough Trade)



Nearly 30 years after the opening of the first Rough Trade shop on Kensington Park Road in West London, these early

instigators of the production and distribution of independent music continue to flourish with shops around the world playing a vital role in the independent music scene. Selected and compiled by the staff, "Counter Culture 2004' brings together some of Rough Trade shops' biggest sellers, personal favourites and hidden gems from 2004.

This forty-nine track strong double CD. pack is an extremely eclectic mixture of the old and the new, the joyous and the blue, with the obscure lying alongside best sellers. Candi Staton with 'You Don't Love Me No More'

and The Cryin' Shames with 'Please Stay' mingle with bands such as Coil, Sonic Youth, Liars and Cornershop. A personal favourite, for this listener, is 2 Lone Swordsmen aka. Andrew Weatherall's electro style version of Throbbing Gristle's very brilliant tune, 'United'.

Thoroughly entertaining and full of class, this album provides a variedly extensive window into some of the more interesting and creative music being made.

Luciano

'Hail The Comforter' (Jet Star)



Luciano, the Messenger, returns to shake down Babylon with this mighty bunch of hot new roots reggae tunes.

The title track, versioned over the 'Hand Cart Boy' riddim, reveals the very core of Luciano's own beliefs. "Steeped in spirituality and divine inspiration, 'Hail The Comforter' is a celebration of Haile Selassie and all that he means to the Rastafarian race." His deeply toned, protective and sexy voice shines out like a guiding star throughout the album as he points out life's inequalities, offering Jah Love as the solution.

Outstanding tracks are a blistering deejay version of 'Crafty' renamed 'Too Greedy' with a tuff ragga chat line from Anthony B. and 'Herb Minister' giving praise to sensimelia and Rastaman's love of blazing it.

'Hail The Comforter' looks set to be one of the finest roots reggae releases in 2005.

Harmonica 33 'Music for Film, Television & Radio Volume One' (Warp)



This atmospheric and groovy piece of ambient electronica is the latest works from Mark Pritchard and Dave

Brinkworth who together form Harmonica 33.Reminiscent of the sixties theme tune sound along the lines of John Barry but with a touch of pimp and a weird edge, the album consists of sixteen highly listenable compositions.

The strength of the album lies in the fact that although they wanted to recall particular sounds and feelings from the past, nothing is sampled. Everything is freshly recreated with most things being played live and any programmed sounds sent back into the live room through a miked up speaker.

A gamut of sound and instrumentation, simple yet almost epic like melodies and precise, attention building timing, have resulted in the creation of this quite remarkable, offbeat little number.



Cannabis: Another Expert Writes By Dr. John Dee

Sometimes the outright stupidity and ignorance of the intelligentsia utterly amazes me. You know the type: supposedly highly intelligent people handing down proclamations from their ivory towers, when in reality they haven't got the first clue about how people live. Or, as my associate Joe Kane would put it, people who are so clever they couldn't find their own arse in a dark room.

And so it is with Professor Neil McKeganey of the prestigious University of Glasgow. Recently (13/03) Prof McKeganey wrote an article for "The Herald" newspaper about cannabis, or rather, about "the damage cannabis does to society". Yes, it starts like that and then it's downhill all the way.

Professor McKeganey says: "Cannabis is just as dangerous as heroin and cocaine"

We say: "Ill-informed people are more dangerous than heroin and cocaine"

Professor McKeganey says: "Crack the nut of cannabis and you crack the nut of illegal drug use" We say: "Crack the nut of ignorance...
" In spite of what a number of people probably think, I don't really regard myself as pro-drugs. I'm not really bothered what people do as long as they in turn

don't bother or harm other people. What I am though, is anti-piffle, and Professor McKeganey's recent edicts rate as some of the worst piffle I've come across in quite some time. It certainly is enough to make one wonder whether some of these people get their professorships and degrees and what have you off the back of breakfast cereal packets.

It's called "The Gateway Theory". Most of us are wearily familiar with it. But for the record, one more time...the assumption is that cannabis becomes a gateway to supposedly more harmful substances. In very rough terms, it goes like this: cannabis leads to speed leads to acid leads to ecstasy leads to cocaine leads to heroin leads to misery and/or death. The drugs in the middle can be changed, but cannabis is always at the start and heroin or cocaine always at the

What we're talking about here is anti-drug rhetoric that's so old, so tired and so past its sell by date that even the man originally responsible for manufacturing it, Harry Anslinger - US proto-drug Tsar, scourge of American stoners in the mid-20th century - decided he was maybe taking things a bit far and dropped it for fear of undermining his own credibility. And that was something like a half a century ago.

And yet it comes around to haunt us once again. How many times are we going to have to listen to this pseudoscientific nonsense? It's bad enough coming, parrot fashion, from the mouths of minor politicos trying to make a name for themselves. It's less of a surprise that it comes from semi-educated tabloid journalists. But this is from a supposed expert in the field of drug use, and it's been published in a supposedly prestigious newspaper. And it's utterly shameful

Frankly, we don't know who to be more appalled by: McKeganey for the promotion of untruths, half truths and discredited drug "theories", or The Herald for actually publishing them (what a waste of trees!).

And the really frustrating thing is that there are a number of serious points to be made about the risks surrounding cannabis use. Regular readers of this column will be aware of at least some of them: the effects of smoking it for one thing, and the effects on mental health for another. But these are public health concerns, and what this McKeganey creature is doing is trying to make it political (there's considerably more research grant money to be had by going down this route, you understand).

We would suggest that Professor McKeganey and his like keep their collective mouths shut until they know what they're talking about. I suspect we're in for a long wait. But a prolonged period of silence from him would be most welcome.

As ever, any comments relating to this column or to anything else can be sent to me at: dimethyltryptamine777@hotmail.com

'Chaos' Warning Over Cannabis Law

Any move to change the cannabis laws again would create chaos for police and the public, the Government is warned today.

Police and experts spoke out as Home Secretary Charles Clarke asked an independent advisory group to consider whether cannabis should be reclassified after growing evidence emerged of its link to mental illness.

Mr Clarke's move came just over a year after his predecessor David Blunkett downgraded the drug from class B to class C and ordered police not to routinely arrest adults found smoking it.

But today senior police officers and the architect of the original downgrading warned that another change in its status would only add to existing confusion. Since downgrading the drug, the Government has faced persistent warnings that the law is little understood and that police struggle to understand how to enforce it.

Rick Naylor, president of the Superintendents' Association, said: "There is a danger it could lead to confusion again because we are now used to a new way of doing things.

"Since the declassification, cops on the street have been dealing with cannabis in a very quick and efficient way.

"If we are going to start arresting people again it is going to mean us altering our focus, because all the time that has been saved from dealing with cannabis since

the declassification would change.

"We would have to ... find extra resources because that police time has been used on other things."

He said the reclassification had freed time for the police to deal with "more serious things".

Lady Runciman, chairwoman of the Police Foundation inquiry whose report originally called for cannabis to be downgraded, said the public would also be confused.

Mr Clarke asked the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs to review the reclassification of cannabis in the light of new research suggesting it could be more harmful than previously thought. But this was "entirely unnecessary", Lady Runciman said. "I think it adds to the great confusion created by the original move [to reclassify] which was entirely sensible," she added.

British law on cannabis is already among the most stringent in Europe, she pointed out.

Recent studies have linked cannabis with increased mental health problems and has stepped up pressure on the Government to re-examine the classification.

The change last year means cannabis is no longer a routinely arrestable offence and it has increased police discretion on how to handle people caught in possession of the drug.

Date: 21/03/2005 / Source: Evening Standard, London















The Greenhouse Effect, Milton Keynes



Adam set up The Greenhouse Effect partly out of dissatisfaction with the levels of advice he was being offered elsewhere. "I found shops to be immensely unwilling to share information and advice. We were all novices once and need all the help we can get, but too many people were keener on selling something rather than fixing your problem.

Thus motivated, he set up The Greenhouse Effect, a 2000 square-

foot retail outlet in a rural location outside Milton Keynes, just off Junctions 13 and 14. The size allows nine fully-functional grow systems to be set up in the shop in a dedicated 400-square-foot grow space.

The staff of four all practice the company belief in good, knowledgeable service to match the broad range of stock, from nutrients to additives, relay systems and environmental control, grow media and propagating systems.

The limited company has just released its first own product - the world's first dissolved oxygen system, their own patented variation of deep water culture. "We launched it to an immediate full order book and it has just gone on from there in leaps and bounds," says Adam.

The Greenhouse Effect offers a full mail order service, accepts all major credit cards, and will deliver. The shop can be kept open after hours by appointment, and parking facilities are excellent.

The Greenhouse Effect, Unit 3 Eagle Farm, Cranfield Road, Wavendon, Milton Keynes MK17 8AU Tel: +44 (0) 1908 585 283

Website: www.thegreenhouseffect.co.uk

Open: 10.00 – 5.30 Mon-Fri; 10.00 – 4.00 Sat.

Hydrochronic, **Torquay**



Established in early 2002 in 1000 square-feet of shop space (with an additional massive storage space) on an arterial road by John Hydrochronic has established itself as the leading source of professional advice and grow equipment in the South West. The shop also does wholesale business in top brands such as House & Garden and Eutech instruments. Hydrochronic is seriously well thought out: "We spent two years

researching the whole field before we even opened." says John. "We were not impressed with the competitors on the market, and we specialize in professionalgrade gear and advice. I have to say, it has been easy for us."

John is a former acoustic and fluid dynamic engineer with 15 years' experience in the business before setting up his own shop. Thanks to the founder's engineering background, the shop can offer high grade advice on all ventilation, vibration and noise issues. In fact they are specialists in ventilation and believe they are the cheapest for this gear in the UK. They are also very knowledgeable about drip irrigation.

"We're just here to improve people's growing methods," says John. "If you have any questions regarding ventilation, noise, vibration or drip irrigation, we're your place. Hydrochronic will deliver anywhere in the UK and the website, best viewed with broadband, offers full e-commerce.

Hydrochronic, Unit 2, 119-121 Teignmouth Road, Torquay, Devon TQ1 4HA Tel: +44 (0) 1803 323 366

Web site: www.hydrochronic.co.uk

Open: 10.00-6.00, Mon-Fri; 10.00-5.00 Sat.

Garden of Eden, Barnsley

Brothers-in-law and partners Julian and Neil opened Garden of Eden in August 2004 on a new industrial estate on the outskirts of Barnsley, and they're still in the process of creating a paradise for growers. With 2000 square feet on one floor to play with and the same amount again under conversion, the stock at Eden is genuinely massive.

Their motivation for being in this business is simple: "We reckon all people who want to grow should be able to without prosecution," says Julian. "We don't bullshit our customers, and it pays off. They keep coming back."

The ten-metre long glass counter is the centrepiece of the shop style Julian describes as "part Mediterranean bar, part Brazilian beach hut. Lots of wood panelling (all done

The guys have 16 systems constructed in the shop demonstrating everything from NFT to aeroponics in action, a huge range of nutrients – including their own 'secret mix', a large range of pots of all sizes, irrigation systems and tanks, seeds, everything the amateur or

professional might want for climate control, meters, scales, fans and filters, propagation systems. There is also head gear on sale - Julian used to sell them before he got into the growing business. Blunts, grinders and bongs - "nothing cheesey though," points out

"We aim to let you buy what you want, when you want. Hence our 'open all hours' policy," says Julian. "I reckon 90% of our customers have a full time job, and they're just not catered for by 9-5 opening hours." The shop is discreetly located, two miles from the M1's Junction 38.

Garden of Eden, Unit 4, Zenith Park Network Centre, Whaley Road, Barugh Green, Barnsley S75 1HT, Tel: +44 (0) 1226 729 560

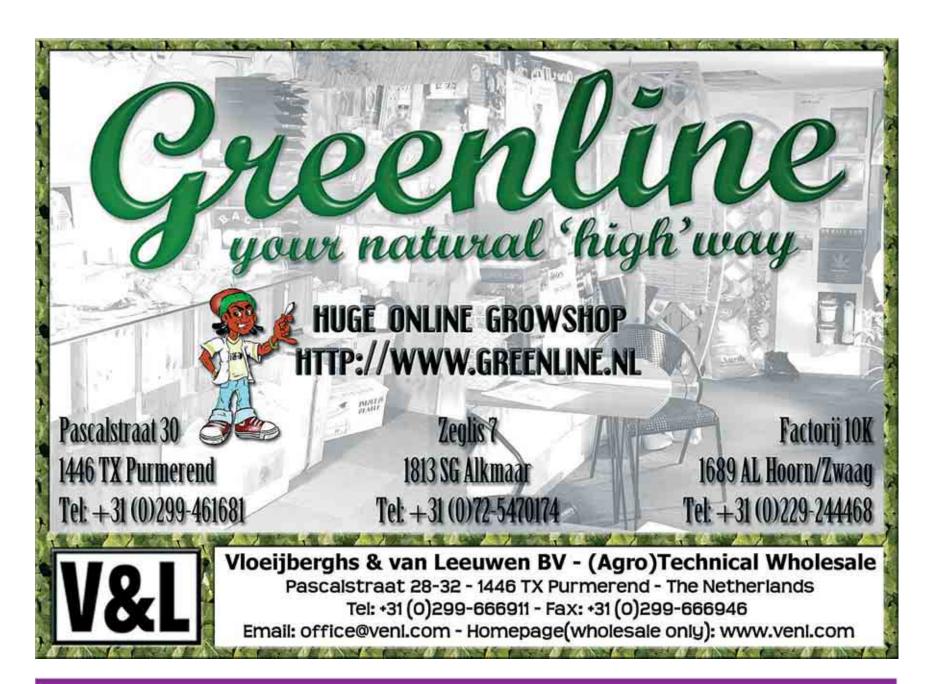
9.00-7.00 Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri; 9.00-9.00 Wed; 9.00-5.00 Sat; 10.00-5.00 Sun.













Brazilian outdoor grower Dreadz By Bart B.

All-year harvest in sub-tropical paradise

The Brazilian grower Dreadz has been growing cannabis for six years already. In 1998 he germinated his first seedlings from seeds rescued from some tightly-packed Paraguayan weed. Since then, Dreadz has refined his growing technique and has been getting increasingly good yields. In his series of interviews with foreign growers, Bart B. talks this time to Dreadz from sunny São Paulo, in Brazil.



Paraguayan Sativas grow like crazy in sub-tropical São Paulo

Dreadz: "That first seed, I stuck it a centimetre deep into the soil of a small pot with a lamp meant for keeping reptiles warm above it. The seeds germinated within three days. The lamp turned out to be unsuitable for growing plants under. The plants were very long and thin and died a week later. At that time I did not know how easy it was to grow outside. Since then, I mostly grow outside.

"In the place where I live, in São Paulo in the southwest of Brazil, there is a flood of low quality weed. The tightly-pressed weed that's full of seed. The first time I came into contact with cannabis, and I saw that it had seeds in it, then something clicked inside me. I just had to try and grow some myself. I think that if you smoke weed, the question is not: why do you grow it, but: why don't you grow it? Just by looking at that pressed weed I could see that it had not been well grown and handled. I wanted to see with my own eyes this plant that has caused so much controversy all over the world, growing

I have tried my hand at more than 20 varieties, including of course the popular ones like White Widow, Blueberry, Northern Lights, AK 47, Hindu Kush and Bubblegum. The first variety I chose had to be very potent and well-known, but after a while I decided to look around for varieties I personally enjoy, and not ones that have just recommended by others as a top sort.

At the moment I have great expectations of the pure Thais I am growing at the moment. Naturally I am still growing all kinds of varieties in order to make my decisions, but I already can tell I'm a confirmed Sativa-lover, especially when they have been grown organically, outdoors. I do already have personal favourites, but I will still be continuing my search through as many varieties as possible. Just because I love growing so much, but also I want to experience the variety of different characteristics of each plant, with their different colours, smells and shapes."

Over the years I have tried my hand at more than 20 varieties, including of course the popular ones like White Widow, Blueberry, Northern Lights, AK 47, Hindu Kush and Bubblegum.

in front of me. At first I was just curious, but from the moment I had seen the first seedling exploding, shooting out her first seven leafy fingers, I was in love with this plant. I can guarantee to you that I will be growing it to the end of my days, and I will fight with all my might to make sure that one day this can be legal.

"After I had been growing for a while, I got more into it, I used the Internet and books to get more into growing cannabis. Now I grow the best cannabis I have ever seen (and everyone who has smoked it has agreed with me), and I can no longer imagine having to go back to buying my smoking material. Over the years

Immense weed fields

"Brazil is a huge country with great differences in climate, from tropical to dry deserts. The bit in which I live has a sub-tropical climate, which means it is mostly around 25 degrees Celcius all year round. It rains a lot in the Summer, but we have dry Winters. The commercially produced weed in Brazil is nearly all outdoor grown, produced on large farms. The weed is really not much good, it is badly harvested – just dried out in the sun - and the males have not been removed. The main region in which it is grown is in the North-East, especially in the state of



This Mexican Lemon looks gorgeous



These bricks vaguely resemble weed. Mmm, tasty, this super-packed Paraguayan cannabis. Not.

Pernambuco, where it grows in immense fields, as far as the eye can see. There is a region there that is called 'Poligono da Maconha', which means something like 'Cannabis Zone'. This region stretches right into neighbouring states, where cannabis is grown next to fields of sugar. These weed fields are owned by very rich families, sometimes politicians, and they are very seldom troubled by the police. This cannabis is not actually sold in São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro, but mainly in (North-eastern state of) Bahia up to the North of the country. In the South-East of Bahia weed is grown next to cocoa plantations. Many cocoa farmers began growing cannabis to earn themselves a bit of extra cash, but the production is not as much as in the northern regions.

Brazilian cannabis is mostly of a loose structure, while the cannabis from Paraguay comes in hard, tightly-pressed bricks. As well as these weeds there are also hash balls coming out of Paraguay. How the hash is made there, I don't know. Most likely by rubbing the buds with their hands in order to collect up the crystals, or else they have removed the crystals from the weed before it was packed tightly. In the better quality weed bricks it is still possible to find hash crystals pressed

together. The cannabis from Paraguay is a little better than the Brazilian. In the larger cities you can sometimes get hold of European buds, and these cost about 350 dollars for 25 grams. This quality cannabis is not found very often. And even if you do find it, who can afford it? A kilo of tight-packed weed brick from Paraguay costs only 150 dollars. This cannabis comes from a low-yielding local variety, but she's a nice smoke, as long as she's been well grown and dried.

In the future there will probably be better, more affordable cannabis o the market, given that indoor growing is developing rapidly. Indoor growers are still quite rare, but indoor growing is definitely on the increase. The knowledge of growers here comes from the internet and from books they are ordering off the Net. After all. there are no books or magazines here on cannabis. A big advantage of this is that the police so far have not started to search in houses and gardens for cannabis. The few indoor growers there are you tend to find mainly in the big cities. I have seen a few of these indoor growing spaces, but few people seem to know what they are doing. Some had well set up systems, and also had a bit of knowledge of indoor growing. I myself have tried growing cannabis under a 400 watt lamp indoors, but I quickly came to the conclusion that outdoor growing gives much better results, and what's more saves me a lot of money. The only incentive for me to grow indoors is for getting the seedlings going from seeds, making clones and giving mother plants somewhere to grow.'

Tropical Sativas

"I raise the seedlings in pots until they have developed their first big leaves. Then they are planted into the ground, which has first been enriched with cow and chicken shit, along with worm castings. I give them water when they need it, especially when it is dry. Outside, the plants continue to grow without much more help than this, so they are pretty self-sufficient. In São Paulo Indica hybrids go straight into bloom at any time of the year, it doesn't matter when you plant them. Because the photoperiod here is only 14 hours, this is not enough to keep them in growth. They grow for about 30-40 days and then automatically start to bloom. The trick to getting a good harvest



A sun-drenched Brazilian plot



This Paraguayan beauty is enjoying a bit of Brazilian sun.

is to make sure the plants get in this short growing period the best possible growing conditions. In this way pretty big plants can be realised. The maximum height I ever achieved was with a White Widow of 1.20 metres. I think that the Indicas would reach a much bigger size further South, by having more growth. The tropical Sativas start to bloom around mid-February, once the photoperiod has fallen to 12 hours' light a day. If I plant them early enough in the season they can develop into enormous plants. Depending on the variety, Indicas can be grown and harvested throughout the year. But I would not advise people to time their harvests in January since the rain is very heavy then. So you can get a number of outdoor harvests. Tropical Sativas can only be harvested once a year. But of course it is possible to grow Sativa-dominant hybrids like Skunk x Kalimist, which will bloom whether it is Summer or Winter, and in this way you can achieve several harvests a year.

During the bloom period I help the plant by tying up the branches to allow for better penetration of light through the leaf cover. I pay special attention to the nutrient needs of the plants, and make sure that they do not develop any deficiencies, and I pray that the strong rains do not destroy my plants during the Summer months. The biggest part of my time is spent simply giving the plants love and attention. In spite of the favourable climate, not everything runs smoothly with no problems. During my first and second indoor growing attempts my plants did develop nutrient deficiencies, such as the frequently occurring nitrogen- and manganesedeficiencies. As well as this I also had trouble with my pH. With outdoor growing it is mainly the strong wind that can spoil things, as the branches often become damaged by strong gusts



The harvest has been gathered, and in a few days the buds will be dry.

thanks to their heavy weight of buds. I control insects with a tea I make myself. Mould does not strike very often, and if it does, it is usually just a small part of the plant damaged."



Thanks to the powerful sun this White Widow has adorned herself a wealth of heavy buds.

Harvesting and the law

"Eventually it is time to harvest the plants. For doing this I always get the help of a friend who has already helped me a lot during the growing by looking after my plants, but I generally try and keep my

that they dry out. I usually use an empty room or cupboard. I try to trim the buds while they are still wet (freshly harvested), and then leave them to dry out completely until their twigs snap easily, which usually takes between five and seven days. After that the dry buds are snipped off their branches and put into glass pots to ripen for 30 days. I have not had any extreme harvests, because I try and remove as much leaf material from the plants as I can. This means the yield is kept very low, but that doesn't bother me as I make water hash from these leaves. The average yield I get from a 60 centimetre high Indica is about 70 to 80 grams of dry buds. A pure Sativa of the same size produces 35 to 40

and be given a three-to-15 year prison sentence. Even the possession of seeds is forbidden. The laws where I live are gradually in the process of being changed. From now on smokers will not be picked up, but they can be ordered to spend some time being checked out by a doctor for drugs use, or else be given a spell of community service. Thankfully, Brazil is closer to the European drugs policies than the American. Drugs dealers do get heavy punishments though: five-to-15 years in jail. Sadly, growers are still treated as dealers. The drugs laws are still tightly applied. But thanks to police corruption it is possible to buy your way out of a prison sentence and walk free."



A piece of DIY Brazilian hash, and very tasty it was too.

Dreadz wishes everyone a *Boa Colheita* (a fantastic harvest).

Por que ter olhos verdes se o verde da natureza os deixa vermelhos? (Why have green eyes when nature's green makes them red?)

These weed fields are owned by very rich families, sometimes politicians, and they are very seldom troubled by the police.

growing activities as secret as possible. I harvest the plants by breaking off the branches and hanging them upside down in a cool, well-ventilated and dark room so

with the location and the people I spoke to about it. In Brazil growing cannabis is strictly forbidden. Whether you have one plant or a field full, you can be arrested

grams. My main concern is quality, not

the size of the yield. I would rather have

20 grams of explosive buds than a kilo of

average weed. My best outdoor yield ever

was from an Indica, which gave me about

80 grams, and this was with a short grow

period. Recently I had several four-metre

high Paraguayan ladies that I'd raised, but

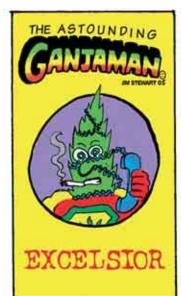
they were stolen before I could harvest

them. I felt so bad when they had been

taken, but I did learn to be more careful

A few handy Brazilian words:

Weed: erva, maconha, marijuana, verdinha, tchais, beck, fumo
Hash: hash, haxixe, bola de hash
Joint: beck, baseado, banza, baga, bagana
Roach: ponta





The Mad Processor

Where Gamers and Tokers unite

By Kristie Szalanski

Endless hours spent with a can of air freshener, smoking bongs with a towel stuffed under the door can ruin your social life. Unless, of course, all your friends are stoners as well. If you happened to have had a computer while growing up, chances are the combination of these two factors has resulted in You: gaming genius. If you manage to crawl out from behind the monitor long enough to travel to Amsterdam, stop by the Mad Processor on the Kinkerstraat and you can indulge in both your favourite pastimes- in public!

Open since 1997, and relocated in 2003 from their old Bloemgracht location, the Mad Processor is an Internet and LAN gaming centre that happens to be joint and cigarette friendly. And to think, many people can't even smoke in their local pub anymore! Ambling up to its inauspicious storefront, one wonders what's inside. The entryway appears to be that of an office complex or perhaps a slightly upscale Internet café. In actuality, visitors can simply check their email on the fly or party with friends until 2AM, while collectively getting baked and killing stuff. You can even kill each other, as a multiple comps/ players setup is possible. In terms of a cheap evening out, a small crew can log on at €4/hr., sip a few sodas, munch some sweets, and let off some steam before grabbing a free coffee and hitting the town. Music ranges from soul, R & B, dancehall, hip-hop, and classic 50's tunes to incredibly cheesy disco, but the provided headphones tend to drown out exterior noise with the explosions, gunshots, and screams that are a part of the gaming ambiance.

If you need some room, all the PCs are surrounded by ample work space, and one of the 'net friendly sections is even a smoke free option. The Processor

is an ideal spot for free-lancers who want to pad their paychecks with travel articles. The two Internet rooms contain a combined 13 PCs, and the larger gaming room holds 24, each with access to dozens of games. Lately the most popular have been World of Warcraft, Counterstrike, and the Eve series, but stoner and straight gamers alike should be pleased with the selection, which includes FIFA 2005, Call of Duty, Doom3, Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, NBA Live 2005, and Command & Conquer. So how is it that a place with a cheerful and active atmosphere hosts so many laid-back pot smokers?

called Pie in the Sky until 1993. He took over ownership in 1987, when there were probably less than ten shops in his particular neighbourhood, and attempted to change the name along with the deed. Newer generations of smokers and expats know the now-defunct coffeeshop as "Pi," but as it established itself with a reputation for strong ganja, it's still spoken of and mostly known as the old Pie in the Sky. These guys provided their customers with a bio-grown specialty called High Rise, and knocked them all out accordingly. Remember, this was a point in Cannabis history at which many Amsterdammers



Kep, owner and smoker, feels that the environment is welcoming to folks of all backgrounds, not just because of the smoking, but because a lot of them have the games in common. It's not unusual for locals and tourists to meet in places like the Mad Processor, smoke a few and play a few, and just chat with each other. Most of the employees are smokers as well, and Kep even used to own a coffeeshop

and tourists were still smoking indigenous imported sativas like Columbian, Mexican, and Thai, or hash from the Hippie Hashish Trail. What we all have come to expect with regards to indoor-grown, heavy-hitting buds was difficult to find, and many people had not yet become interested in auto-production, much less full-on commercial growing. Skunk #1 had debuted a few years before, and any

shop that could supply the strong hit of "Nederwiet" was certainly cherished. Pie in the Sky remains in memory one of the first shops that could be relied upon for such strong smoke.

Unfortunately for Kep, the coffeeshop scene got heavy and people started to get shut down. Those whose licenses remained were subject to raids and checks that made the owners and patrons uncomfortable. This still happens today, but with the added result that some of the checks turn out safer shops for tourists. Of course nothing in Amsterdam is 100%; even now, as it was in the eighties, laws change frequently. Kep recalls a time when it seemed the weight restrictions on product limits in coffeeshops was changing every week. One week 50 grams, the next, maybe two kilos. With such a shady business future, many coffeeshop owners opted instead to get out, and luckily, this one transferred his own personal tolerant policy into a very welcoming environment for smokers who happen to like computer games. As long as you're eighteen or over, of course.

Whether you need to have a fax sent, play some games, print an email, or just meet some cool folks who like to smoke a joint now and then, make sure you check out this unusual shop. Ladies tend to filter in during the day to check emails or chat online, while the guys will happily hang out until five AM almost every night of the week. In fact, the busiest time seems to be after eleven, as locals stream in after work or on their way somewhere else The non-smokers don't seem to be bothered by all the extra clouds in the room, so bring your ganja and some Rizlas, strap on some headphones, and get ready to kick some ass.

The Mad Processor Internet and LAN Games Centre Kinkerstraat 11-13 1053 DB Amsterdam, NL tel.: +31 (0)20 612 18 18 email: mmc@madprocessor.com Open 7 days a week 12 noon – 2AM

Doctors 'recommend cannabis use'

One in six people who take cannabis for pain relief say their doctor advised them to use it, a survey suggests.

The UK survey, published in the International Journal of Clinical Practice, asked just under 1,000 people about their use of the drug.

Almost 70% said cannabis significantly relieved their symptoms - 45% said it worked better than prescribed drugs.

But the British Medical Association said it had never heard of a doctor recommending the drug.

The survey was sent out to people who contacted the company GW Pharmaceuticals because they were interested in its research into using cannabinoids as treatments.

People with chronic pain were most likely to use cannabis for medicinal purposes (25%) followed by patients with multiple sclerosis (22%), depression (22%) arthritis (21%) and neuropathy, or nerve disorders (19%).

Most people used the drug at least once a week with a third of those surveyed said they used cannabis six or seven days a week.

Younger people, men and those who had used cannabis recreationally were also more likely to use cannabis for medicinal reasons.

Two thirds said a friend, or family member had suggested they take the drug, but 16% said their doctor had suggested it.

And 45% said cannabis worked better than prescribed medication.

'Harness the benefits'

Dr Mark Ware from McGill University Health Centre in Montreal, Canada, told the BBC News website: "The results show that people with a wide range of conditions thought cannabis had benefits.

Dr Ware, who conducted his research with GW Pharmaceuticals, added: "To our knowledge this is the most extensive survey of medicinal cannabis use among chronically ill patients conducted to date."

A spokeswoman for the charity Drugscope said: "The medicinal benefits of cannabis have been widely discussed for some time, and pharmaceutical research is ongoing into finding a way of harnessing those benefits in an effective way." She added: "I suspect doctors do sometimes say to patients that there's nothing else they can currently give them to relieve their pain, but that cannabis could work."

A spokeswoman for the British Medical Association said: "We are not aware of this happening".

But she said the BMA wanted certain cannabinoids - chemicals extracted from the drug - to be legalised for wider medicinal use.

Date: 19/03/2005 / Source: BBC Online







Urban Hydroponics, Bolton Advanced Nutrients and the Eco Systems



Urban Hydroponics opened for business in Aug 2003 in quiet secluded premises just 5 minutes walk from Bolton town centre. A lot of people have said they like this aspect to the shop. Says co-founder David "We are off St. Georges road in a unit with plenty of parking space for the customer" Ideal for the most publicity-shy or paranoid grower.

David had previously been unemployed and keen to turn a loved interest in hydroponics into an exciting business venture. His partner Craig was formerly a structural steel engineer who shared David's passion for hydroponic growing.

The shop stocks a wide range of hydroponic equipment, from small one plant systems, right up to commercial size systems, fans, filters, lights, nutrients and organics. The guys work off a company motto "We have got everything you need to get good growing!'

Over the past year there have been a lot of changes in the hydroponic industry, some being quite revolutionary for indoor growing. And Urban Hydroponics has welcomed products such as the 'ADVANCED NUTRIENTS' range on to their shalves, which is now becoming a leader in sales.

Craig commented "Everybody's going mad for it! The results that people are getting are fantastic! We have had excellent feedback from all who are using

Also, over the past few months, a new system has arrived, called "THE ECO SYSTEM" which is described by Craig and David as "The Future of Hydroponics". The Eco System, which is run on 2 x 600 watt sodium lights. is a compact all-in-one, super-cool, fan assisted system, and is proving a real hit with the customers of Urban Hydroponics. Craig commented "The systems are only about 1.6 to 1.7 metres high and about 1.4 metres wide, and cost very little to run off electricity. The feedback Dave and I are getting from our customers is extraordinary!"

Dave commented "This is definitely a must for all growers out there. This is the best product we have seen on the market since starting out!"

As well as always stocking new products, the shop also stocks all the old favourites. "We believe in giving the customer a good choice of products. We are always willing to try new products on the shelves to help people increase yields and improve their gardens" commented the lads.

Urban Hydroponics is open 6 days a week and is always willing to help people out. As they say, advice is free. If you require more information on any products, you can ring us on 01204 522217, or pop in and see us!!

HAPPY GROWING FROM ALL THE STAFF AT URBAN HYDROPONICS BOLTON

Urban Hydroponics

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"Female seeds are derived from pure female parents with no hermaphrodite tendencies, which results in reliable plants, which are always 100% female - no matter how you treat/abuse them."

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"Feminised seeds are derived from parents who are hermie-carriers. However, reliable all-female seeds can be obtained from feminised strains by testing the offspring on all-femaleness under heavy circumstances before release. These seeds are more sensitive to environmental conditions, but are reliable in being 99,9% female when treated under normal circumstances. Tested seed-batches which turn out to have hermie-seeds in it are NOT sold and simply destroyed. However in one or two strains it is possible to find an occasional feminised plant which can form a first undeveloped male flower; after removing this first flower the plant still grows out in a nice all female plant. Although this happens very rarely, customers are always informed beforehand about these possible deviancies when they buy a strain where this can happen. This is the Female Seeds what you see is what you get policy.

"Because they save precious time, space and energy. Imagine 5 female seeds in one hand and 10 regulars in the other, with a bit of luck you'll have 5 female seeds in both hands. However to find the 5 female seeds out of the regulars costs so much more that it is cheaper to buy female seeds directly, even when the regulars are for free.

Can female seeds be used outdoors?

"Especially in countries with a cold and short summer, Female Seeds' outdoor strains are the most profitable compared to clones or regular outdoor seeds. The best

advertorial

outdoor strains on the market today have auto-flowering tendencies which makes them very difficult to clone/make into cuttings. Regular seed plants need to be grown out for months just to find the males. Female Seed outdoor strains such as Maroc, Easy Sativa and Purple Power also have this auto-flowering tendency, start flowering half July and finish before half September in Holland. And all the Female Seeds indoor strains can be used outdoors, where the olive and citrus trees also grow.'

For how long can Female Seeds be kept?

"Female Seeds is committed to providing customers with top quality seeds. Our seeds are processed in a protective environment and are kept refrigerated (3–5 $^{\circ}$ C) and under controlled humidity for optimum freshness. The seeds are then packed in sealed seed packs coated with a special foil in which the seeds are not visible. This is necessary to protect the seeds from destructive light and to preserve their germination ability for as long as possible. Each packet of seeds states its own batch-number which corresponds with the date of packing. When kept refrigerated at least 80% of these seeds will still germinate after 5 years of age! We offer packs of 4 and 10 seeds and our aim is to give you the most reasonable price.'

What do you mean by stability?

"By stability we mean the rate of variation between individual plants. The higher the stability, the more the plants look alike. Scientifically stability means uniformity over generations or how predictable a seed really is, however in the growers spoken language it is often referred to stability.'

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The Female Seeds Team





Indoor strains: Northern Light White Widow **Skunk Special** Easy Bud Cinnamon Grapefruit **Nevilles Haze Hybrid**

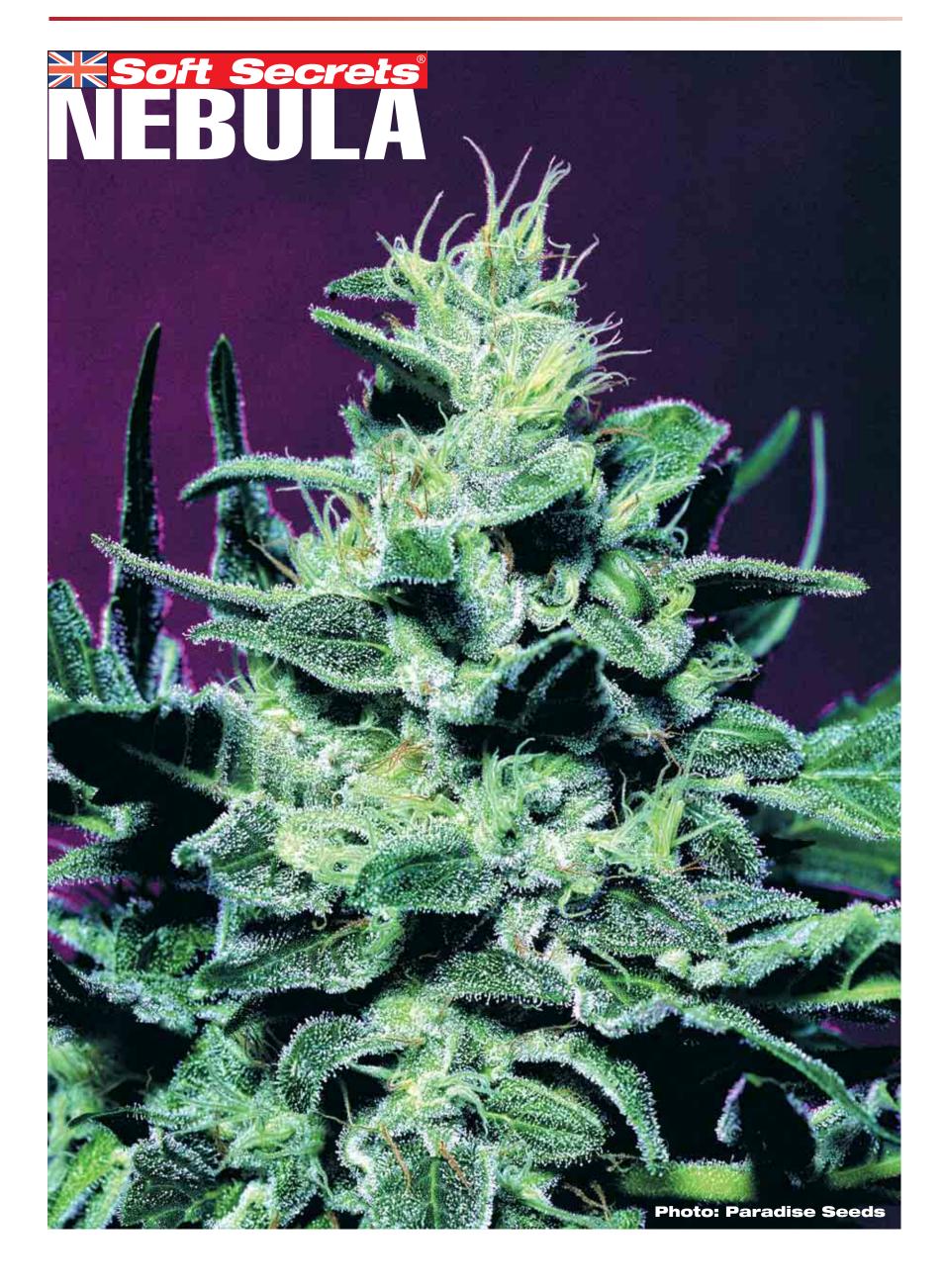
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Basildon Echo Wednesday 23, February 2005

Man's 18-month sentence for growing cannabis

Cops joy at drugs factory jail term

BASILDON police have applauded the jail term handed out to a man they caught running a cannabis factory from his home.

John Willett was arrested in April 2004 when police raided his home in Grimston Road, Basildon, and discovered more than 30 cannabis plants growing in bedrooms and the toilet.

The 46-year-old was sentenced in Basildon Crown Court to 18 months' imprisonment after he admitted at an earlier hearing to cultivating the class C drug.

PC Kelly Ebdon, officer in charge of the case, said: "This is a victory. This is a good result and a lot of time and effort was put in by all the members of the Basildon tactical team.

"This sends a clear message to any people who think they can get away with cannabis production.

III By NAOMI CASSIDY

"The sentence reflects the obvious severity of the offences. Although cannabis has been reclassified, it does not mean it is legal."

Willett was also given 12 months for tapping into someone else's electricity and three months for possessing three knives and a police-style baton. Both will run concurrently with his other sentence.

Judge Frank Lockhart ordered the weapons and narcotics to be confiscated and destroyed.

At the time of the raid an emaciated lizard was also discovered in one room and the RSPCA was called in to take it into their care.

Initially the Crown
Prosecution Service
charged Willett with
neglecting the creature, but
later decided to take no further action.



■ Cultivated – cannabis plants were grown in the loo Picture: LUAN MARSHALL XTLGD24

The cannabis class

Pupils as young as 13 openly share two joints they just bought at the school gate



A GANG of teenagers stand outside their school gate, two of the girls smoking

cannabis joints.

Their friends patiently await their turn for a hit of the drug. The youngsters have just bought their supply from another teenager who got off a bus outside the school then waited for them to emerge on their lunch break.

The juvenile dealer handed around a joint for his customers—who are aged from 13 to 15—to sample.

for more lessons. The disturbing images, taken

By Jaya Narain

outside a school in Greater Manchester, illustrate the growing menace of drug taking among

pupils.

There has been an explosion of cannabis use among children since it was reclassified from class B to class C 15 months ago.

Four out of ten 15-year-olds in Britain now admit to having tried cannabis, the highest rate in Europe

Europe.

Police working with schools to combat drug use say there is confusion over whether cannabis is now legal as well as ignorance over the health risks.

PC Mark Marsden, based at a school in Salford, Greater Manchester, said: 'Kids come in on a Monday drained of energy because they have been

taking it at weekends. They have spent the weekend getting hammered.

have spent the weekend getting hammered.

'Downgrading cannabis gives the wrong message to them.

'They think they can walk around town smoking a joint and nothing will happen.

'They think it's Amsterdam. They are shocked when I say they can be arrested.'

Babs O'Brien, manager of a school drugs service in the city, said her staff even knew of 11-year-olds who have smoked cannabis.

'It is now very accepted in youth culture and very easily available,' she said. 'They often just use it to kill time.'

There is evidence that the availability of the drug has soared as its price has dropped.

Police also fear some children are resorting to stealing to get

money to buy it. Home Secretary Charles Clarke was shown photos of these pupils, including the one above, on a visit to Manchester this week.

bove, on a visit to Manchester this week.

But he dealed downgrading the drug had led to an explosion in the number of teenage users.

Mr Clarke insisted: 'Schools need to be policing the area around the school and working with their local beat officer.'

Despite this, last week he urged a rethink on the controversial regrading of cannabis, which was carried out by his predecessor David Blunkett.

Mr Clarke wants the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, which played a key role in the decision, to re-examine the policy. His major U-turn follows mount-

His major U-turn follows mount-ing evidence that heavy use can precipitate serious mental health

problems. This month, an Insti-tute of Psychiatry study warned that teenagers who smoke cannabis regularly at 15 are 4.5 times more likely to suffer serious mental problems by their mid-20s.

mid-20s.

Last night a spokesman for Greater Manchester Police said an inquiry had been launched and officers were working to identify the school.

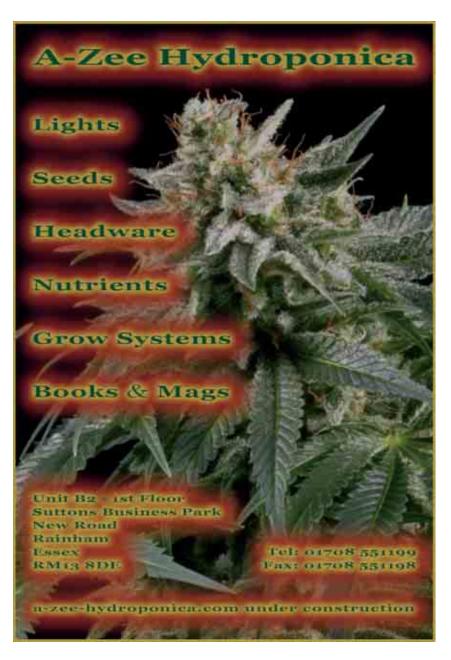
the school.

'Any criminal offences will be hilly investigated,' he promised. The downgrading of cannabis means police no longer routinely arrest people caught using it.

The maximum penalty for possession is two years in jail.

But if officers had seen the pupils using cannabis, they could simply have confiscated it and given them an informal warning.

an informal warning. j.narain@dailymail.co.uk





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Revealed: the secret world ondon's cannabis milliona

As skunk floods the city, we speak to a grower who works two hours a day, earns £400,000 a year - and not even his family know the truth about him



BY DAVID COHEN

VERY morning, Robert Wilson kisses his partner, Ella, on the cheek, sees her off to her secretarial job in the city, and heads — or so Ella believes — to his modest Job as a self-employed builder. In reality, Robert, 45, does no such thing. Instead, waiting for Ella to turn the corner, he hastens to his secret warehouse in a north London industrial park, bordering the M25.

This warehouse — the size of a tennis court and full of state-of-the-art equipment — earns Robert and his business

court and full of state-of-the-art equip-ment — earns Robert and his business partner more than £400,000 a year. Or, as he succinctly puts it, "four hundred large". For that, Robert, a white, north Londoner, works "a solid two-hour day", though some days, he grins sheepishly, "require just 30 minutes at the office".

To avoid being followed — for what Robert does is certainly illegal — he takes a different route to work each day, half-expecting the police to spring an ambush. But in 10 years, the police have yet to sniff him out. And so far, Robert and his two business partners, Pete and Wayne, have made themselves 24 million. Robert and Pete each take 45 per cent of the profit. Wayne, the "holiday relief", is the junior partner. Of course, it's all 100 per cent tax-free.

per cent tax-free.

Robert's business is growing cannabis.
Or to be precise, skunk, which is cannabis refined to a high degree of potency. His warehouse heaves with more potency His warehouse heaves with more than 600 plants that produce skunk with a street value of £97,500 every two months. It takes "just 48 hours", he says, for the entire lot to be sold into the London dealer network. "Business is booming." Robert beams. "f***ing booming."

It is precisely this explosion in the market for high-potency skunk that is causing grave concern among UK mental-health experts. They say the Government's decision to reclassify cannabis, downgrading it from a class B to a class C drug in January 2004, has

sent out a misleading message to young people that cannabis is harmless.

sent but a misseating message to young people that cannabis is harmless. Yet a recently published study by Professor Robin Murray of the Institute of Psychiatry in London shows that teenagers who regularly smoke cannabis are 4.5 times more likely than non-users to suffer from schizophrenia by their mid-twenties.

Marjorie Wallace, chief executive of the mental health charity SANE, says that the link between teenage use of cannabis and schizophrenia is now well established. She says that the people who support the liberalisation of cannabis, who came of age in the Sixties and smoked grass, don't understand the danger posed by skunk, which, unlike grass, is grown indoors under carefully controlled climatic conditions.

"It is skunk, not grass, that is sold on the state of the

"It is skunk, not grass, that is sold on the street corner and in the playground," Wallace says, "The problem is that skunk is 10 times stronger than grass because its THC [tetrahydrocannabinol) content—the chemical that gets you stoned—is up to 10 times higher than in grass. And up to 10 times higher than in grass. And, although for 90 per cent of users there is no ill effect, it is impossible to tell who the 10 per cent are for whom smoking

cannabis will trigger severe psychotic breakdown, and often violent behaviour." This link between cannabis use and violent crime was highlighted last week

when John Barrett, a paranoid schizophrenic whose psychotic condition was apparently fuelled by <u>cannabis</u> and other drugs, pleaded guilty to stabbing a cyclist to death in Richmond Park.

Scotland Yard chiefs have also added their voice to warnings that demand for cannabis has exploded in the wake of the relaxation of drug laws. They point to recent massive seizures of cannabis in the South-East in recent weeks, and say that criminal gangs are trafficking large quantities of cannabis because they believe police "have taken their eye off the hall".

the ball".

Reclassification, they add, has led to a "mushrooming" of the home-grown cannabis market, despite the fact that growers, if caught, face a maximum 14-year prison sentence.

Much of the increase in the home-grown market is driven by people growing a few plants in their loft, mainly for their own

use. That was how Robert started out 12 years ago. But he soon figured out that growing skunk commercially could bring him riches beyond his dreams.

I had made contact via a go-between who supplies him with the specialist equipment he needs. Waiting for me in a bar near his warehouse, he seemed a decent guy: medium height, with short, blond hair, blazing blue eyes, a gentle manner and a surprisingly honest take on himself. and a surprisingly honest take on himself.

E TELLS me he comes from a hard-working family and grew up in Palmers Green, north London. "My father and mother would be absolutely appalled if they knew how I've chosen to earn my crust," he says. Extraordinarily, it turns out that nobody in Robert's life — neither his brothers (both engineers), nor his two children (in their twenties), nor his ex wife (married for 17 years), nor Ella, (his current partner of four years) — have the slightest clue what Robert does for a living.

They all believe that he is a rather canny builder who manages to shield his earnings from the taxman, and who somehow earns enough to go on exotic holidays every two months. They also know nothing about his luxury house in the south of Spain.

In the beginning, Robert was indeed "just a builder", like his father, and earned a modest £400 a week. His life was solid, predictable and law-abiding, with one exception — he liked to smoke the odd spliff on the weekend.

One day, about 10 years ago, his friend, Wayne, who lived in Walthamstow, invited They all believe that he is a rather canny

him up to his loft. "Wayne had six plants growing there," recalls Robert. "He rolled me a joint. It was wonderful stuff, really lovely, and very strong. After that, I started dabbling in my own spare bedroom. My wife had recently left me, so I had the space. It cost only £200 to set myself up." Robert's friend went to Amsterdam and

Robert's friend went to Amsterdam and returned with some high-quality cannabis seed, together with instructions from a place called the Cannabis College on how to grow the stuff commercially Today, such information is freely available on the internet, as well as in specialist shops — of which there are dozens around the country, including at least six in London — that sell state-of-the-art hydroponic equipment for growing cannabis.

Within a few weeks, Robert was approached by another friend, Pete, who was also acquainted with Wayne's loft. Pete, who made a living dealing cannabis and cocaine, had a found a cheap but spacious warehouse to rent on the edge of London and had a proposition for Robert.

Together, they bought the necessary equipment from a shop in Harrow, north London, spending £11,000 in total to set

themselves up. They had 30 tables, each with 20 mother plants, but these plants were not grown in soil. Rather, they were grown using a hydroponic system, fed by a continuous supply of water, to which key nutrients were added, under 600W sodium

nutrients were added, under 600W sodium lights for 18 hours a day.

Their first crop was a bit of a disaster, recalls Robert "We only produced 13 kilos of crop, because we got blighted by black aphids. But after those teething problems, it was all systems go. It's actually idiot-proof, as long as you do about two hours'

maintenance a day, checking the water acid-alkaline levels and making sure that the light meters are working. Often I get bored because I've got nothing to do after lunchtime."

FTER eight weeks comes the pay-off. They cut and dry the buds, compressing the 18 kilos into one-kilo bricks. They wrap them in clingfilm, sprinkle them with ground coffee — to take away the smell — and stuff them into plastic bin-bags.

"We hire a van, drive to our distributor — who my partner found — and, 48 hours later, he has sold the lot to dealers — and we collect a rucksack stuffed with banknotes.

Sixty large. Yeah, it's a boring job, but a f***ing good business," he says, grinning.

There are many strains of skunk, but the one Robert produces, White Widow, is one of

'The link between teenage use of cannabis and schizophrenia is now well established'

the strongest, with a 20-25 per cent THC content. Other strains are called White Russian, Purple Haze and Jack Herer and, like alcohol, they have different strengths.

But what about their landlord? "We told him we're a joinery workshop, making tables and chairs, but he never visits anyway," says Robert. "The bigger problem is our neighbour at the industrial park.

"Every month, we have to do this little ruse. During morning tea, when our

morning tea, when our neighbour's employees are sitting outside, we make a great show of loading a few dozen cardboard boxes onto our van. We

make a noise, make it look like the boxes are heavy — in fact, they're empty Then we drive off, go watch a movie, return for afternoon tea, and unload the boxes.

"We also send ourselves mail, purposefully misspelling our address so that it goes to our neighbour, to create the impression that we are a legitimate business."

The interesting thing about Robert is

that we are a legitimate business."

The interesting thing about Robert is that he says he wishes he never got into this business. "There is no question in my mind that cannabis is a dangerous drug and can cause psychosis," he says. "Especially the skunk that we grow. Because it's strong, very strong. I wouldn't smoke more than one or two a week myself.

"But the worst part for me," he continues, "is the stress. I live like a spy. I live this secret life and I hate it. I can't even tell the woman I'm with what I do. She's got very conservative views on drugs.— she would leave me in an instant if she knew. Do you know what that's like? And the stress of always expecting the police to kick down the door."

So why doesn't he pack it in? "You know," he says, getting ready to leave, "I've always been in it for the short-term, temporary like. It's been tem.porary for 10 years. I always keep telling myself that there's something better, but then I pick up my 60 large and think: what else could I do for two hours a day that would make me a millionaire in two

a n two

 Names changed for legal Picture left posed by models.



Easy money: a 'skunk factory' like this one hidden on an industrial estate can produce nearly £100,000 worth of the drug every two months

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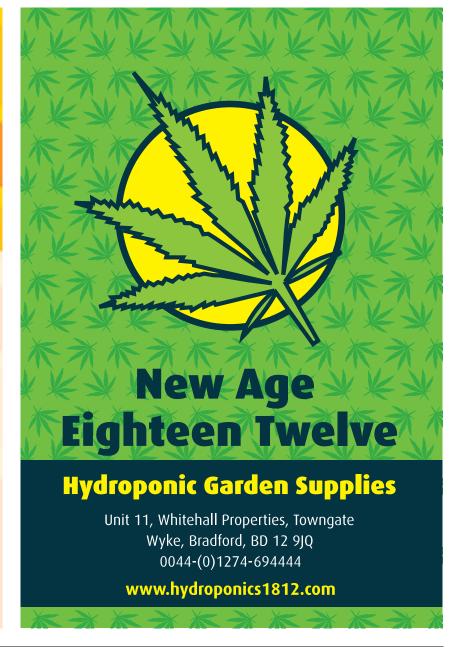
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DRUGS Friday 25, February 2005

by JAMES GLOVER and SARAH CHAPMAN

IT WAS a plan that would have put £35m of cannabis on to the streets of Mersey side - the biggest shipment the region had ever seen.

Two containers packed with the class C drug would arrive in Liverpool docks hidden inside hollowed-out marble boxes en route to Merseyside's drug dealers.

But customs officers out a stop to the scheme by pouncing on the cargo.

And today Scott Minshull, Gary Scarlett and Neil Mollart were beginning 12-year jail terms after they were convicted of running the multi-million pound drugsmuggling operation.

Sentencing them at Liverpool crown court yesterday, Judge Bryn Holloway told them: "I cannot imagine a more serious case.

"You were deeply involved in these transactions, realising the seriousness of it and none of you had the courage to plead guilty."

The court heard the trio, along with Minshull's father, Michael, plotted to bring in millions of pounds of cannabis through Liver-pool's freeport at Seaforth.

Minshull senior set up an importation company, Maple Chief Ltd, and arranged to buy thousands of pounds worth of low-grade marble from a firm in Lisbon, in Portugal.

The Portuguese firm produced hollow marble boxes for Minshull and the gang



SCOTT MINSHULL



GARY SCARLETT



NEIL MOLLART

took delivery of the boxes and filled them with bags of cannabis resin.

The crooks flew back to Britain to wait while their cargo travelled by freighter from Lisbon to Liverpool.

But it was intercepted at Seaforth docks by customs officials, who contacted the police drugs unit.

For seven days, customs officials and police waited for lorries to arrive to collect the cannabis.

From information in the drivers' documents police went to the waiting gang's warehouse in St Helens and arrested them.

Stoke-on-Trent men Scott Minshull, 24, of Blandford Close, Scarlett, 31, of Bur-lidge Road, and Mollart, 38, of Royden Avenue, were yesterday found guilty of

plotting to bring in drugs. Nigel Harper, 30, of Newchapel Road, Kidsgrove,

was found not guilty of being involved in the operation. Minshull senior took his own life before he could be put on trial.

Police do not know how much cannabis the gang brought in to the UK, but are aware of 13 other shipments imported from Portugal.

When they raided the warehouse, they found a lorry-load of empty marble boxes which could have been used to bring in more than £17m of cannabis.

They suspect the smug-glers could have imported up to £150m of cannabis.

Detective Inspector Andy Black, of Merseyside police's Matrix team, said: "Seven tonnes of drugs is a massive seizure - the biggest Merseyside has ever had.

"The Matrix team has been set up to deal with people like this who think they will get away with it.

"We will catch them, arrest them and deal with them.

Drugs harm communities."

Anyone with information about drug-dealing should contact Crimestoppers anon-ymously on 0800 555 111.

Citizen (Gloucester)

'Drink 1,000 times worse than cann

A REFORMED heroin addict stood up in court and told city magistrates that alcohol was 1,000 times worse than drugs.

Stephen of Jersey Road, Paul Gloucester, who pleaded guilty to possessing £5 worth of cannabis, said the law was "a little bit hypocritical". The 36-year-old said: "I am a heroin

addict but I am now completely clean.

"Cannabis should be legal. It is far less dangerous than heroin or alcohol.

"I don't want alcohol because it makes me aggressive and I don't want heroin because it makes me steal.

Cannabls is harmless and it is silly to charge me with this. It is all a bit hypocritical as alcohol, which is legal, is 1,000 times worse than drugs.

Prosecuting solicitor Stephen Migdal said: "Police officers were on patrol when they saw a group of people in Tredworth cemetery.

"They saw an exchange taking place

and believed drug-dealing was going on. "A search took place and the defendant was found to have a small amount of cannabis, around £5 worth.

Probation officer Patrick Tracey said: The defendant is currently on a Crown Court drugs treatment and testing order. He is making very good progress on the order and is now clean of all Class A drugs.

The defendant added: "I was not searched but handed the cannabis to the officer." Chairwoman of the bench Dr Hazel Padfield said: "We have listened carefully to all you have said but must remind you that possession of cannabis is still against the law.

"We are imposing a conditional discharge, which means if you keep out of trouble for the next six months you will

hear no more about this matter."

Stephen said: "Hopefully I will be keeping out of trouble for the rest of my Ipswich Evening Star Saturday 19, February 2005

Cannabis grower

arthritis sufferer from Ipswich convicted of cultivating cannabis is still waiting to learn his fate today after judgment was reserved at his appeal.
Reay Wales of Vincent Close,

Ipswich was found guilty of growing marijuana in January 2003 but claimed he was using substance for medical the purposes

The 53-year-old, who suffers from pancreatitis and arthritis, claimed the drug was the lesser of two evils and that the use of prescribed drugs such as morphine would damage his health beyond repair.

Wales' was one of five men appealing to judges in London.

His QC Edward Fitzgerald argued a defence of "necessity" should be available to anyone who used cannabis to remove or alleviate the greater evil of chronic pain.

He told the Court of Appeal

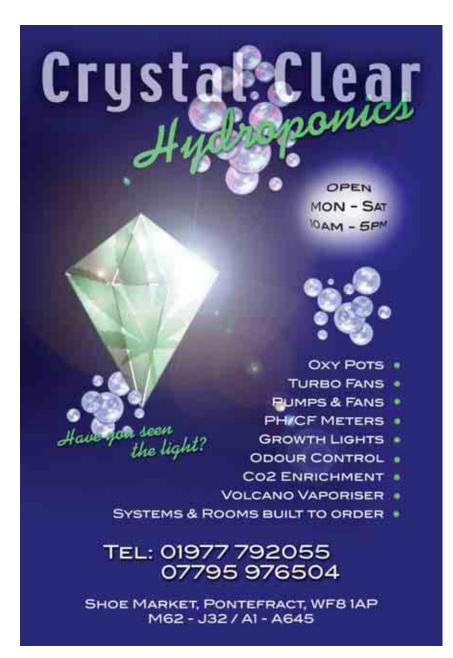
cannabis was more effective than conventional forms of pain relief and did not have the potentially serious and life-threatening side effects of alternative treatments.

In Mr Wales' trial at Ipswich Crown Court the issue of necessity was left to the jury, but jurors were warned the defence was available only to someone who committed an unlawful act in the belief that otherwise he would soon be killed or seriously

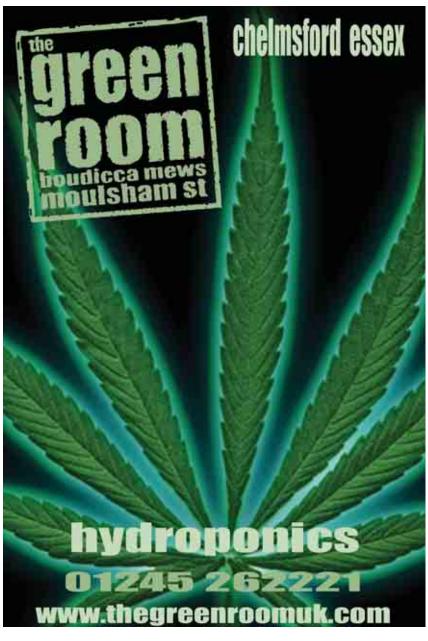
He was found guilty and was ordered to pay a £200 fine.

Also appearing at the court of appeal were Barry Quayle, 38, Rasen, Market Lincolnshire; Graham Kenny, 25, from Shipley, West Yorkshire and Anthony Taylor, 54, and May Po Lee, 28, both from London.

Appeal judges Lord Justice Mance, Mr Justice Newman and Mr Justice Fulford reserved their decision on all of the men.









The Scotsman Wednesday 23, February 2005

Expert doubts drug tests are deterrent

SCHOOL SCREENING

Academic says there is little proof so far that random checks among pupils work

KEVIN SCHOFIELD

EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

RANDOM drug testing in schools should not be rolled out across the country until there is clear proof that it prevents young people from getting involved in substance abuse, according to a Scots academic.

Professor Neil McKeganey of Glasgow University said there is little evidence at the moment to suggest that it stops pupils from taking drugs.

The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, announced plans to introduce random drug testing in English schools last year, although the Scottish Executive has consistently refused to follow Westminster's lead.

So far, only one school in England - Abbey School in Faversham, Kent - has introduced the controversial measure.

But Prof McKeganey's report, which was carried out on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, has said that random testing may be "potentially damaging" and should not be introduced in schools across the

country until more research has been carried out into its effectiveness.

'In the absence of robust evaluation, student drug testing will continue to be promoted or contested on the basis of political viewpoint and opinion rather than evidence, and we will be no nearer to answering the question of whether it works," his report said.

Prof McKeganey points out that although random drug testing is already common in American schools, the evidence that it actually works in reducing drug abuse is "remarkably

He said random schemes are most likely to identify pupils who occasionally use cannabis and are less likely to get early support for young people with serious drug problems.

Another potential side effect is that pupils may be tempted to stop taking substances such as cannabis, which are easy to trace because they stay in the body longer, and move on to harder drugs such as heroin,

which clear the system more quickly.
Prof McKeganey also criti-

cised the government's decision to downgrade cannabis from a class B drug to class C at the same time as the Prime Minister was giving his support for drug tests in schools.

He said: "The coincidence of these two developments stands as a clear sign of the confusion which cannabis elicits on the part of those in government.

'We have a situation where a young person may receive a formal warning from a police officer for being found in possession of cannabis and yet be permanently excluded from school for having failed a drug test for the same substance."

The report concluded: "Until the evidence one way or another is available, it would seem prudent for the government to advise caution rather than encourage experimentation with a costly and potentially damaging new approach to drug prevention."

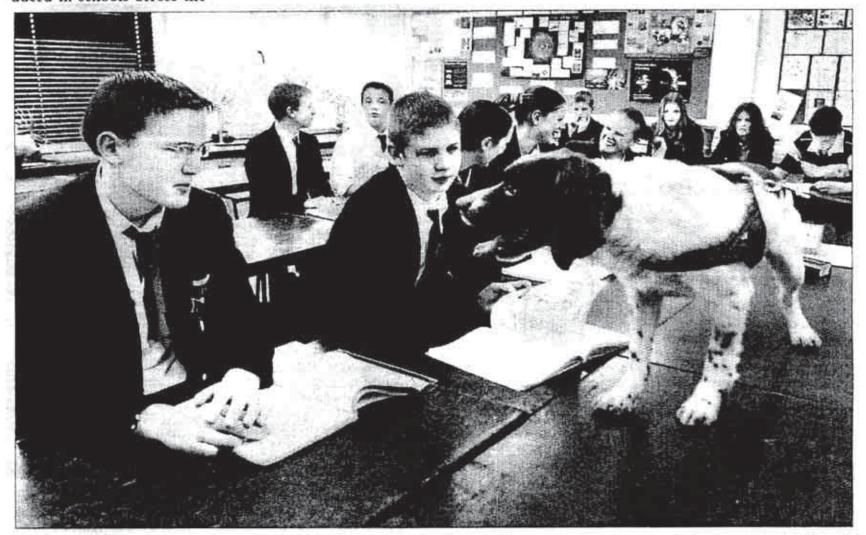
A spokeswoman for the Department for Education and Skills in London insisted random testing was only one tool available to help schools

tackle drug use. She said: "Headteachers are best-placed to determine the range of approaches to tackle drugs in their schools according to their local circumstances, and we trust them to make the decisions that are right for their schools

'Where they believe it necessary, of course we fully support heads who take tough steps to tackle drugs in schools. This is why drug testing is highlighted as an option in the range of strategies they can employ.

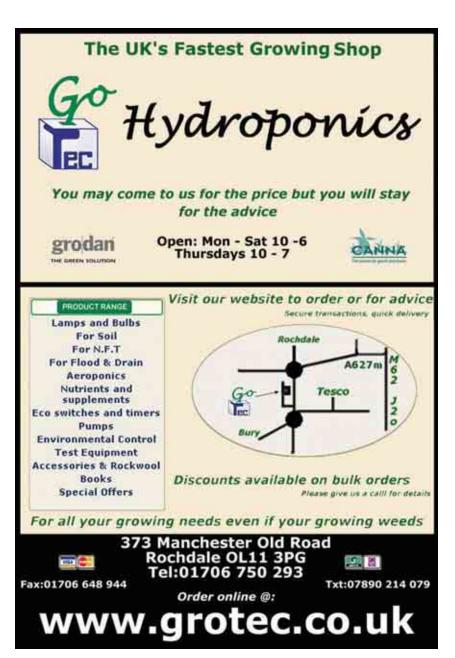
A spokeswoman for the Executive said education officials north of the Border had completely rejected the introduction of random drug testing in Scottish schools - and insisted that teachers already had enough powers to deal with the problem. "We asked local authorities and headteachers if they wanted these powers and they said no," she said.

If a teacher suspects that a child has drugs on them they should phone the police. All schools also have in place drug education policies so that child-ren should be in possession of all the facts and should be able to make informed choices."



Anti-drug measures such as at this Coventry school, where a sniffer dog was introduced, are far from consistent

Picture: Rui Vieira/PA





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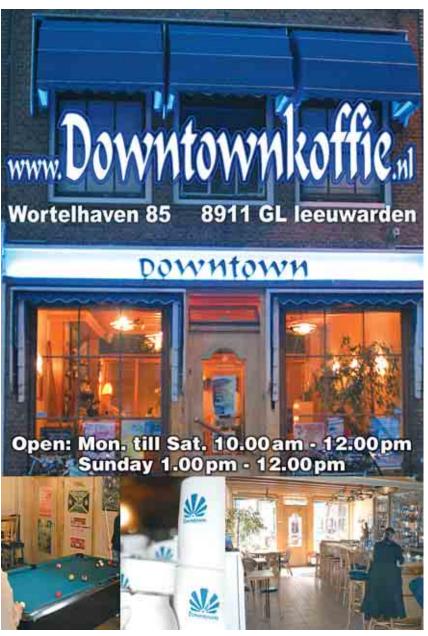
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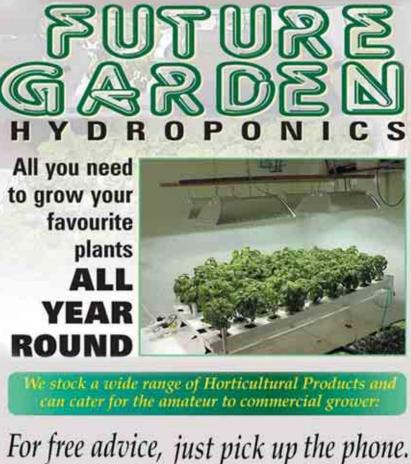
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Daily Star Wednesday 2, March 2005

IM 'SOLD

■ by JOHN MAHONEY

A MUM used her car as a "drugs tuck-shop" for children, a court was told yesterday.

Julie Morris, 46, cut up quantities of cannabis so small they could be bought with pocket money for as little as 20p.

And if kids were struggling to pay she would allow them to buy "on tick", it was claimed. Morris, left, used the family Ford

Mondeo to run her mobile drugs empire with the help of sons

Michael. 21. and 16 year old Christopher, though much of the dealing was done at their home, the

jury was told.

The family business collapsed when two girls told police she had

sold them wraps of cannabis.

Detectives discovered Morris had £13,000 stashed away in Halifax accounts and found dope worth more then £1,000 in her handbag. purse and sons' bedrooms.

Prosecutor Michael Leeming told

Manchester's Minshull Street Crown Court: "We say they were operating a tuck shop for drugs – not only a tuck shop from home, because she was prepared to deal from the car. from the car

Bags

"They are drug dealers who ran a

Mr Leeming added: "They were made available to children at prices they could afford. And if they couldn't afford it, tick was given."

This included logging how much

each youngster owed her, he added.

"The list showed some children owed 20p, 75p or £1.50," he said. Morris claimed the cannabis was

for Christopher because she was trying to regulate his drugs use. The brunette of Denton, Manchester, admits possessing, but

denies supplying drugs.
Christopher and Michael have admitted possessing cannabis with intent to supply

The trial continues.

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Shropshire Star (Last edition) Tuesday 22, February 2005

Smuggler gets jail after years on r

By Arthur Mills

A former Shropshire horse dealer has been jailed for seven years for smuggling an esti-mated £1 million worth of cannabis into the country - 10 years after he went on the run.

Paul Goldsteyn disappeared part way through the drug smuggling trial in 1994 and was only recently traced by police. The 42-year-old father of two was arrested in Hol-

land earlier this month on an international warrant and extradicted from Amsterdam last week. He appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court yesterday

before Judge Frank Chapman, the original trial judge.

Goldsteyn admitted con-spiring to illegally import around 300 kilos of cannabis, for which he was jailed for seven years.

He was given an addi-tional nine months after he admitted absconding having been given bail during his trial

Goldsteyn, who was also involved in showjumping, had been living at Wood-house Farm, Redhill, Telford and was part of a substantial conspiracy involving large amounts of drugs and cash.

Judge Chapman told Goldsteyn that the day of reckoning the defendant had always hoped would never happen had now arrived.

"It is a surprise to me that so long after you went missing you are now standing in court," said the judge.

"I do not say your role was as involved as the other defendants in the case and I take the view you were not involved in the management of the conspiracy or the criminal distribution of the

"But you still played an important role and on one occasion brought a large consignment of cannabis into the country.

"And on five other occasions you were carrying cash for other conspirators so that they could make drug purchases on the conti-nent," said Judge Chapman.

Passing sentence, the Judge said that the breach of was blatant and Gold-

steyn simply ran away and kept out of the way.

Adrian Roberts, defending, said his client had been living in Holland, but had retained his Telford address.

He said Goldsteyn had

received around £20,000, his only benefit from the drug smuggling conspiracy.

Stephen Linehan QC, prosecuting, said customs officers had found 300 kilos of cannabis and part of large quantities of drugs bought in Belgium and Holland in Goldstey's horsebox when he arrived in Dover.

Monday 7, March 2005 Western Mail (Cardiff)

Lorry driver jailed for smuggling cannabis

A WELSH lorry driver has been jailed for 10 years after trafficking drugs worth £4m into Ireland.

David Passmore from Swansea was involved in one of the country's biggest-ever drugs busts after being caught trying to smuggle almost a ton of cannabis resin.

Passmore, 41, admitted four charges relating to the sale and supply of drugs at Wexford Circuit Criminal Court. He was arrested last September after customs officers found the drugs hidden in 17 large unmarked boxes in a lorry container at Rosslare Europort.

Daily Post (Wales) Friday 18, February 2005

case

By SARA THOMAS

A NORTH Wales man who gave cannabis to multiple sclerosis sufferers set himself up as a quack doctor, a court heard yesterday.

Jeff Ditchfield, 43, of Rhyl, had plans to set up a "cannabis cafe" when he was arrested and charged

with possession of the drug with

But he should not have been cleared by a jury, London's Criminal Appeal Court was told during a test case over the drug's use for medicinal purposes.

He was acquitted at Chester Crown Court on January 16 last year after being allowed to use the defence of "necessity" by the trial

judge. This defence is open to people

who commit a crime to prevent a greater evil from happening, but it usually only applies to people being threatened.

Now attorney general Lord Gold-smith is asking top judges to look at the defence behind his acquittal

Mr Ditchfield's acquittal cannot be overturned, but Lord Goldsmith says Judge Elgan Edwards got the

law wrong.

John Rees, for the attorney general, told Lord Justice Mance, Mr Justice Newman and Mr Justice Ful-ford, that Mr Ditchfield was in effect "a quack doctor" by supply-ing drugs without medical training. He argued the court would be encouraging unqualified people to

encouraging unqualified people to

ractice medicine if it upheld Judge Edwards' ruling.
"Those who set themselves up to

supply cannabis for pain relief are setting themselves up as doctors, but the fact is that cannabis still remains a designated drug, and is unlawful except for research and

other specific purposes."

Keith Sutton, for Mr Ditchfield, argued special exceptions to the cannabis laws, which allow MS suffers to possess seeds and cultivate the drug for their own use, should also apply to his client.
"There was no commercial

element. He should perhaps be con-sidered a donor rather than a sup-plier. It was a wholly altruistic act.

A judgement will be given at a later date.

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Britain, the drug capital of Europe

BRITAIN was labelled the drugs capital of Europe yesterday.

A United Nations report said we have the highest rate of amphetamine abuse, the worst record for taking Ecstasy and a rising market for cogaine.

for cocaine.

It also said Britain has the highest rate of seizures of heroin in Europe and the third highest number of heroin addicts.

The situation will get worse with the addition to the EU last year of ten new countries with weaker border patrols, the UN International

Narcotics Control Board warned.

Its report is a serious rebuke for the Government which abandoned its war on drugs' four years ago. The strategy that replaced it was supposed to get tough on the abuse of hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine and deal more effectively with users.

But the UN said around one in ten 15 to 34-year-olds in Britain has tried cocaine. And we are now one of the main gateways through which 200tons of the drug reach Europe each year.

Cannabis use on

rise. police warn

RELAXED cannabis laws are being blamed for a rise in demand for the drug.

Massive hauls of marijuana have been seized by police in the past few weeks.

A record 1.37tonnes of cannabis resin worth more than £4million was found in a pub in Dagenham, Essex.

Days later, more than 600kg was found on a lorry near Folkestone, Kent.

In parts of Scotland, seizures have risen tenfold in the last year.

Senior Scotland Yard officers

BY SARAH HILLS

warned that downgrading cannabis from Class B to Class C a year ago sent out the wrong message.

A source in the Met's organised crime unit said: 'The supply side has reacted to the liberalisation because they think law enforcement has taken its eye off the ball.

'We are now recovering tonnes of the drug at a time and that is something we were never doing before.

'The decision to reclassify was wrong.' But the Home Office

estimates 199,000 police hours have been saved since reclassification.

Arrests for cannabis possession have fallen by a third but use among young people is said to have remained stable. Danny Kushlick, director of the Transform Drug Policy Foundation, which calls for drugs to be legal but government regulated, said: 'I can't imagine there was a whole group of people saying, "Oh, it's only Class C now".

'If people want to smoke dope, they will do it. There is probably more open smoking now.' Reading Evening Post Monday 21, February 2005

In brief POLICE OFFICERS ON DRUG CHARGE

TWO police officers have been arrested on suspicion of attempting to sell drugs.

The pair, a man and a woman, are both serving constables with Thames Valley Police in Maidenhead, Berkshire.

The police spokeswoman said they were arrested on Wednesday on suspicion of corruption, perverting the course of justice and attempting to sell and possession of a class-C drug, understood to be cannabis.

The two officers have been bailed until

The two officers have been bailed unti April 25, she said.

Citizen (Gloucester) Tuesday 22, February 2005

Cannabis suspect

A TUFFLEY man has been arrested on suspicion of growing cannabis plants.

The 56-year-old man was detained after officers raided a property at Ardmore Close at around 3pm on Sunday afternoon.

Gloucestershire Police spokeswoman Zoe Young said "numerous" plants were seized at the address and the man was still in custody.

Press & Journal (Aberdeen) Friday 18, February 2005

Inmate should not have been able to abscond, says drugs campaigner

by Victoria Mitchell

A DRUGS campaigner yesterday said punishments handed to drug traffickers need to fit the crimes after a convicted smuggler jailed for a decade absconded from an open prison.

Christian Ekkebus was convicted in December 2000 after he and two others were caught with 8.5 tonnes of cannabis on a boat, the Red Scorpion, by coastguards off the north coast of Scotland.

Ekkebus, 33, and the others were jailed for 14 years each but he had his sentence reduced to 10 years on appeal.

On February 4 this year he left Castle Huntly open prison in Perthshire on weekend leave – but never returned.

Instead, a newspaper claims he left the country using a fake passport and returned to his home 50 miles north of Amsterdam in his native Holland.

The paper tracked him down to the town of Den Helder, where he said: "I'd had some cash sent over and I used that to pay for the trip – the passport which cost £1,500 and expenses like hotel and food.

"I had no idea how easy the whole thing would be."

Yesterday, Alistair Ramsay, director of Scotland Against Drugs, said: "At a time when major efforts are being made to seize the assets gained illegally by drug dealing, it is important that the other side of the matter, the punishment fitting the crime, is maintained. Punishments not only need to be appropriate but must be seen to be appropriate.

"Where a custodial sentence is meted out by the court that sentence should be served in an institution which matches the nature of the crime." Shadow justice minister Kenny Macaskill echoed those sentiments.

He told the paper: "We must make sure that those who are sent to prison actually serve their sentence and don't walk away Scot-free to thumb their noses at the Scottish courts,"

Castle Huntly houses around 400 inmates and is run as a single unit with Noranside facility.

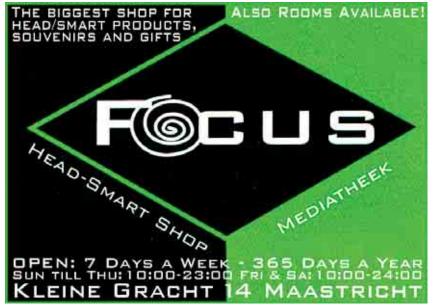
A spokesman for the Scottish Prison Service, which runs the open prison, said: "We take the issue of absconding very seriously and continually review the assessment process in light of these events."

Ekkebus, skipper Albert Hulst, 48, and Arjeh Van Dijk, 37, were caught as they attempted to ferry 285 bales of cannabis – weighing 8.5 tonnes – from Morocco to the Netherlands in June 2000. In a bid to avoid patrols in the English Channel, they detoured round the north of Scotland. But they were stopped by Coastguard cutter Searcher while on a routine patrol from Kirkwall, Orkney. The coastguard then became suspicious because the yacht appeared to be flying the wrong flag.

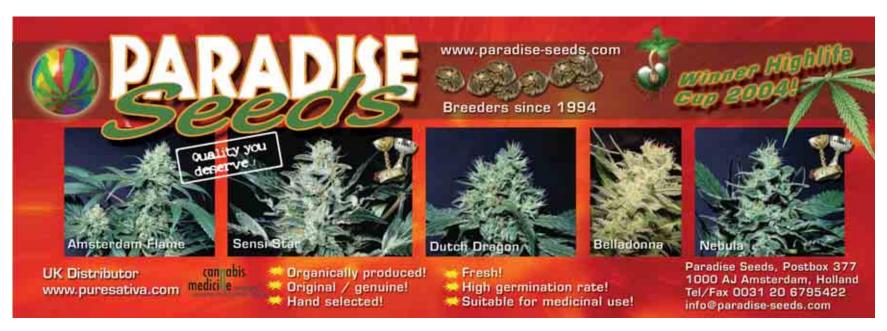
The street value in Scotland of the cannabis, if broken down into street deals, was agreed by both a drugs squad officer from Aberdeen and a defence witness in the trial to be £43million.

Ekkebus, Hulst and Van Dijk originally denied the charge at the High Court in Edinburgh but admitted their guilt after the Crown dropped an allegation that the cannabis could have been bound for Britain.

Tayside Police were yesterday unavailable for comment.











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Officer's nose for trouble leads to cannabis haul



PC Nigel Morris with some of the cannabis plants

AN OFF-DUTY police officer uncovered a £100,000 haul of cannabis with his nose.

PC Nigel Morris was visiting the shops on Booker Avenue when he detected the scent coming from a nearby residence.

As a result, Merseyside Police officers raided the property, which is above one of the shops, and discovered 96

cannabis plants growing. They also recovered £5,000 in cash and a hydroponics system, which are lamps to aid the growth of plants indoors.

Police arrested a 22-year-old man on suspicion of cultivating and dealing the drug.

He was questioned at a police station on Merseyside and has been bailed pending further enquiries. PC Morris

Picture: TONY KENWRIGHT

had visited the Booker Avenue shops over the weekend and the subsequent raid took place on Monday at about 12pm.

Insp lan Black said: "This was an excellent piece of police work by an off-duty officer. Thanks to his vigilance and professionalism, we have been able to remove a substantial amount of drugs from the streets."

Shropshire Star (Last edition) Friday 18, February 2005

<u>Cannabis</u> for pain acquittal contested

Prosecuting authorities maintained an uncompro-mising stance in the face of a claim that people who supply or use cannabis to relieve severe chronic pain should not be treated as criminals.

Counsel for Attorney General Lord Goldsmith reminded the Court of Appeal yesterday that, despite its downgrading to a Class C drug, cannabis was still illegal.

Its supply was "wholly unlawful" except for special purposes such as research, said Jonathan Rees.

"On any view, it simply cannot be right for this court to countenance someone who is medically unqualified supplying drugs, which have dangers attached, to other people without regulation, he said.

As a matter of public law and order, "we don't want everyone setting up their own little home pharmacy".

Mr Rees was arguing against the acquittal of Jef-frey Ditchfield on a charge of possessing cannabis with intent to supply.

Mr Ditchfield, of north Wales, was cleared on the basis that he had a defence of "necessity" or "duress of cir-cumstance" when he gave cannabis to chronic pain suf-

Yorkshire Post (South/Sheffield) Tuesday 22, February 2005 Drug-arrest trucker's relief as French let him return home

Joanne Ginley

HAULIER Paul Watson was back in Leeds yester-day after being bailed back to the UK by French authorities while they decide his fate after a ton

decide his fate after a ton of cannabis was found in a load he was delivering.

In December, the French courts allowed Mr Watson to return to the UK for two weeks - the first time he had been back home in 15 months. The authorities have now decided he can be bailed back to the UK permanently.

He has not been charged

He has not been charged with any crime, but was held on remand at a prison in Arras, near Lille in northern France, for nine months, after a ton He has not been charged nine months, after a ton of cannabis was discovered.

Last June

granted bail on condition he remained in France. Yesterday Mr Watson, 40, who has always

protested his innocence said: "It's very good news. You cannot keep the smile off my face.

It just came out of the blue. I was very surprised and very overwhelmed. "I think it's a very posi-

"I have just got to sit it out now until the investi-gation comes to an end, and see what they are going to do."

Mr Watson says the French authorities have

until September to decide whether to charge him and set a date for a trial. Equally, they could decide to take the case no fur-

He thanked his fiancée Sarah Wilson and family and friends for all their support.

For the last 17 months, Miss Wilson has driven to and from northern France to visit Mr Watson, first in jail and then at his bail

The couple estimate they have spent £40,000 on legal bills, travel and other costs, but now Mr Watson is back in the UK, he is hoping to get a job to

help reduce his debts. He said he hoped to marry Miss Wilson next

year. Mr Watson's nightmare began in September 2003, when he flew from his home in Morley, near Leeds, to Spain to pick up a tractor unit and drive it back to Britain to use in his haulage business.

It is alleged he was asked to attach a 40ft trailer to the unit and deliver it on his route.

He says hauliers often help fellow truckers, and he agreed when the load appeared to have proper documents.

He believed he was carrying pottery. But at Arras, France, he was stopped by customs offi-cers who discovered the

drugs. He says he was in total shock.

Last night, Miss Wilson said she was delighted that Mr Watson could

now live back in the UK.
"We are thrilled. It's
very strange because it has all happened so sud-denly, but it's brilliant

Mr Watson has to report to French authorities in Dover every month, or risk being arrested. He has always said he is

determined to prove his

innocence.

He said: "It has been a very hard 18 months. I have been through a hell have been through a hell of a lot and the financial burden has been horrific, and the support from friends and family has been fantastic."

Mr Watson said he was now looking forward to getting on with his life.



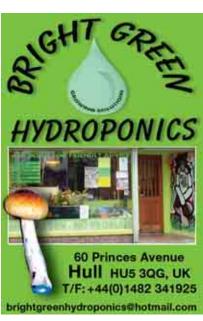




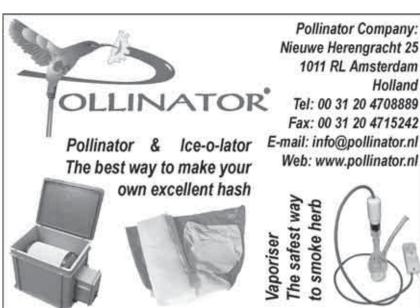












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Cannabis not

IN reference to Wednesday's story on Angela Kelly's page. Having smoked cannabis, and knowing people who smoke this drug on a regular basis, I would have to argue with your point that the laws should be tougher.

Alcohol is a much worse drug. After walking through the streets of any area on a Friday or Saturday night, you are much more likely to be stabbed by a drunken teenager than oen who is stoned.

In the long term, cannabis might cause mental illnesses. But Luke Mitchell, the teenager who murdered his girlfriend, is likely to have used this as an excuse.

On the website www.weed.com there are regular cannabis smokers who have been using the drug for the last 10 or 20 years, and are very nice human beings who wouldn't dream of stabbing their

There are health risks with everything and cannabis is far less dangerous than heroin.

Mark Wyre Darcy Lever

Liverpool Echo Tuesday 1, March 2005

Cannabis farm man is jailed

AN asylum seeker who had a cannabis farm in his house has been locked up for 15 months.

Lu Nguyen, 20, from Vietnam, pleaded guilty at Liverpool crown court to cultivating the drug.

Graham Pickavance, prosecuting, told the court police searched Nguyen's home in Staley Street, Bootle, on October 12 last year and found 86 cannabis plants.

The court heard that Nguyen told police he was being paid £600 a month to look after the plants on someone else's

Judge Elizabeth Steel told Nguyen: "You had the tenancy for the property, which was effectively a factory for the production of cannabls."

Monday 28, February 2005



HREE years ago, I am proud to say, I was one of a number of Labour MPs who Labour MPs who voted against the Government's foolish and damaging decision to downgrade cannabis from a Class B drug to a Class C.

At the time we were accused by some of our more trendy col-leagues of being old-fashioned and out-of-touch and quite outrageously of failing to show due tolerance to differing lifestyles in multicultural and ethnically diverse Britain. What patronising nonsense!

Sadly, all the evidence that has piled up since that vote confirms that cannabis does even more harm than we feared - and young people with developing brains are desperately vulnerable.

So we have to listen when a scientist of Professor John Henry's standing warns of a 'mental health timebomb'. He is adamant that the growing popularity of the drug is due to its reclassification.

Professor Robin Murray, another world expert in drug abuse, agrees and says that the Government would never have downgraded cannabis if they'd had access to this alarming new research linking cannabis smoking to psychotic behaviour. behaviour.

behaviour.

We must abandon instantly this fashionable posturing about the drug and our lenient but misguided stance. We have to start taking cannabis smoking seriously again.

Of course I do not pretend that one drag on a joint means that you are hooked for life. Nor do I claim that all regular cannabis users end up brain damaged or mentally ill.

But I do say, with a growing body of reputable scientific and sociological evidence to back me up, that the drug can trigger the most appalling behaviour in those who are vulnerable.

I have personal cause to know the

are vulnerable.

I have personal cause to know the damaging effects of the Government's liberal policy. Part of my inner London constituency, Vauxhall, was chosen by the Metropolitan Police in 2001 to test their ideas about tolerance of small-scale cannabis possession and use.

The pilot scheme meant that anyone found with a small quantity of the drug was merely given a warn-

the drug was merely given a warning. The aim was to reduce the time police officers spent on paperwork so they could pursue hard drug dealers instead.

HE reality was that this scheme actually led to open dealing on the streets and increased usage of cannabis by young people who had greater access to it and no fear of the consequences. I remember walking through a park in Stockwell, south London, at the time and coming across a group of youngsters, no more than 12 or 13 years old.

They had 'bunked off' from school and were sprawled on the grass, smoking joints. They told me that dealers were now giving out free samples to children – and in any case, 'It's legal now, isn't it?'

At best, youngsters like them will end up uneducated, spaced out, virtually unemployable, and condemned to a life of violence, vandalism and petty crime to get by. At worst, some of them may end up acting out violent pyschotic fantasies on innocent passers-by.

fantasies on innocent passers-by. Certainly the drug dealers in my constituency got steadily bolder as the cannabis law was relaxed. I

the cannabis law was relaxed. I have been accosted myself at least twice and asked whether I wanted to buy skunk, the most potent form of genetically-modified cannabis.

The truth is that the radical

change in policy has sent out the wrong social signals, particularly to the young who see that <u>cannabis</u> is harmless and it is OK to use it. Most of the rank and file police officers I talk to in the constituency are in despair at the confusion downgrading the drug has caused. It has also made it much harder for parents and teachers to hold the anti-drugs line when dealing with youngsters who retort: 'The Government says smoking dope is OK.' In reality, teenagers need firm and consistent boundaries, not mixed messages, if they are to avoid the deadly temptations offered by by drug dealers. This is particularly true of those youngsters growing up in relative poverty and deprivation on large, often rundown housing estates.

It was interesting for me to discover that most of those MPs who, like me, opposed lower penalties for cannabis abuse, represented innercity constituencies with grave social problems, while those MPs most keen on a liberal approach were often more trendy types who foolishly believed they could afford to shrug off cannabis smoking with the private thought: 'We all smoked dope at university, didn't we?'

Well, it's not like that anywhere, anymore. Nationwide, we are now seeing the devastating effect of tolerance of the growing drug culture. I sense a new demand in Parliament for an end to this misguided permissiveness and if the new Home Secretary will allow us another vote, he might be surprised by the result.

Grimsby Telegraph Saturday 19, February 2005

Appeal hearing

JUDGEMENT has been reserved in the appeal of Barry Quayle, the Market Rasen-area man who was convicted last July and handed a five-month suspended jail sentence for possessing cannabis.

Quayle (38), of Arlington Road, Newtoft, had both legs amputated below the knee and suffered pain from damaged tissue and "phantom limb" sensation.

He used the drug for pain relief, the Court of Appeal heard.

At the end of a two-day hearing, the court reserved judgement without setting a date for its decision.

Evening Gazette (Teesside) Thursday 24, February 2005

FIREFIGHTERS found a cannabis farm when they tackled a blazing house.

Crews from Hartlepool were called to the fire in Pelham Street at 10,30pm on Sunday.

Inside two adjoining unoccupied properties they found the remains of a sophisticateddrug factory

Station officer Steve Harli said: There was heating equipment, lighting and an irrigation system, the full works.

The fire was started by an electrical fault in one of the appliances. The fire burned through the floor and destroyed a first-floor bedroom.

A Cleveland Police spokeswoman said the extent of the damage meant officers had been unable to examine the scene until the beginning of the week.

She said: "It looks as though the remains of a cannabis farm have been found."

Hartlepool CID is investigating. Anyone with information can call Crimestoppers in confidence on 0800

News of the World Sunday 27, February 2005

Cop sniffs out

OFF-DUTY cop Nigel Morris £100,000 uncovered a drugs haul-with his nose.

The PC was in a flat when he smelled cannable from a shop below.

Cops raided the premises in Liverpool and found 96 plants growing. A man of 22 was arrested and balled. Daily Mail Monday 28, February 2005

green light to light up

DAVID BLUNKETT, then Home Secretary, announced the proposed 'downgrading' of cannabis shortly after Labour's 2001 election victory. It was carried last January

For years it had been a class B drug, alongside substances such as amphetamines. The maximum penalty for possessing it was five years in jail, and police had full powers to arrest anyone found carrying it.

Switching it to class C, alongside prescrip-

tion medicines and drugs like the anabolic steroids used by bodybuilders and cheating athletes, meant it was no longer an arrestable offence. Police who find cannable in some-

one's home will caution them, but take no further action. The change was meant to free police from supposedly trivial and bureaucratic prosecution of small-time users and allow them to pursue serious criminals and users of class A drugs like heroin and cocaine. But, perhaps inevitably, it has led to a boom

in use and a perception among youngsters that it is harmless. A Metropolitan Police report at the end of last year said the number of people found with cannabis had risen by nearly a third. It added: 'The reclassification has sent out a mixed/confusing message to police officers and members of the public.

Police find drugs den containing cannabis plants Western Morning News (Devon) Thursday 3, March 2005

A MAJOR operation involving police and cus-toms has uncovered two drugs dens in one of the largest swoops carried out in Teignbridge.

Three men and two women were arrested after

a tip-off during a raid on two addresses, in Starcross and Dawlish, last week. Thirty police officers from tactical aid groups in Exeter and Bodmin and four Customs and Excise officers were deployed with a sniffer dog.

At a business premises in Starcross, officers uncovered a professional, well-concealed drug den containing 50 cannabis plants. At the Dawlish address, police uncovered a similar, smaller grow-ing operation. Officers also seized 20,000 cigarettes, five kilos of tobacco and various items of clothing and perfume, believed to be counterfeit.

Five people have been bailed to return to Torquay police station on April 21.

Yorkshire Evening Post (Leeds edition) Wednesday 16: February 2005

Cannabis factory is raided after call to drugs hotline

DOB-in-a-dealer claimed another success yesterday - when police discovered a sophisticated hydroponic cannabis factory in a Leeds house.

It happened when officers from the West Yorkshire Police's drug and organised crime unit raided a house in Ash Grove, Hyde Park, Leeds. They found 186 cannabis plants with indoor plant growing equipment in the

Officers arrested a 19-year-old who was

being questioned about the production of the

Police revealed that the raid was a direct result of a phone call on the Yorkshire Evening Post-backed Dob-in-a-dealer hot-

The raid was carried out as part of Operation Crackdown, the Government's threemonth long anti-drugs campaign. Last month a raid on a one-bedroom flat in nearby Burley turned up a hoard of nearly 2,000

weapons. The seizure was one of the biggest of its kind in the country for some time.

The county-wide crackdown has also seen other successes in the West Yorkshire area with hauls of heroin and crack cocaine being seized in a number of raids across mainly Leeds.

Anyone with information about drug dealing activities should ring the Dob In A Dealer hotline on the Crimestoppers numSouth Wales Echo (Cardiff) Monday 21, February 2005

<u>Cannabis</u>' arrests at school

A DRUGS bust at a top school has led to the arrest of five pupils accused of possessing cannabis.

As previously reported, one of the five boys was expelled after allegations of drug-dealing at Cowbridge Comprehensive, Vale of Glamorgan.

Four others, accused of possessing small amounts of cannabis resin, are being questioned by police over an incident at the school on January 24.

They have been released on police bail.

Teachers called police to the school after suspecting one of the boys had been taking drugs. The arrests followed a visit by officers.

Soft Secrets UK 4/05 out: July 15 2005

Coloton

Soft Secrets is published by Discover

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Layout & print: R&B Communicatie, Schijndel, Holland

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Cover photo: Master Bud © Soma Seeds

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 marihuana. 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 proand 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. Nothing from this publication may be copied or reproduced in any format without prior permission from the publisher and other copyright holders. The publisher is not responsible for the content and/or point of view of advertisements. The editors take no responsibility for unsolicited

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