



In this issue:



Page 29: Coffeeshop Rusland, Amsterdam

Not a lot of people - Amsterdammers even - know that the street in the old centre of town known simply as Rusland ('Russia') has nothing to do with the country. In the 15th century, the city built this narrow street to connect two major canals, and the district it passed

through had been called the Willem Ruusschentuin. - a mouthful that by the 16th century had been bastardized to Het Ruyssenlandt, and eventually to its current name. Jules Marshall takes a closer look at this famous coffeeshop.



Page 33: Outdoor growing indoor blooming, part 5

In this episode of Weckels' experiment, we will be taking a look at what factors are of importance in keeping conditions as close to the wishes of the marihuana

plants as possible. Because after all, as indoor growers we are able to create an ideal living environment for the White Shark plants, so that the ladies will bloom optimally. The plethora of nutrients, stimulators and the PK 13-14 which we have continuously been applying to the plants, will by now have shown their effects on the bloom and growth of these well-developed plants.



Page 41: International Grower Zamalito

Zamalito is a cannabis-anthropologists and herbalbotanist. Rooted to the earth, his studies are mostly conducted in the field - alongside his plants. Very few people can actually claim to have grown as many

pure landrace genetics - collected from all over the world. From the Congo to Kashmir, from Burma to Brazil, the tapestry of cannabis genetics is a vast subject. Soft Secrets UK's Lazystrain then arranged a Q & A session with Zamalito to get back to basics.



Page 46:

Jorge Cervantes' Reflective Hoods

Some reflective hoods reflect light more evenly than others. A reflector that distributes light evenlyno hot spots—can be placed closer to plants without burning them. These hoods are most efficient, because

the lamp is closer and the light more intense. The farther the lamp is from the garden, the less light plants receive. For example, a 1000-watt reflector with a "hot spot" must be placed 36 inches above the garden. A 600-watt lamp with a reflector that distributes light evenly can be placed only 18 inches above the garden. When placed closer, the 600-watt lamp shines as much light on the garden as the 1000-watt bulb! Read all about this when Jorge explains!

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age 3 Girl

Moby Dick

The most potent variety from Dinafem (from Spain) is at the same time their most powerful grower. The genetic influence of the Haze family is given away by the vitality of the plant, the speed of growth and in it's pine tree aroma, but most of all in it's extreme potency. The effect is of a typical sativa; powerful and trippy, and transforms with the passage of time into a more physical and narcotic feeling. Thanks to the indica influence the yield is spectacular. If you are looking to maximize the yield from this variety, you need to give it a lot of light, water and nutrients.

Genetics: predominantly sativa

T.H.C. Level: high **Bloom time:** 9 weeks **Bloom outdoors:** mid-October Yield: very high **Effect: Stimulating**

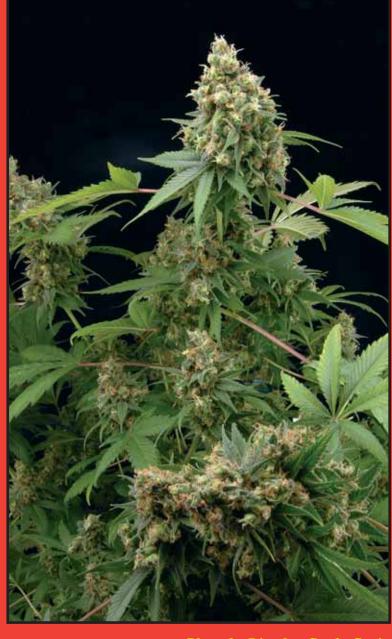


Photo by Dinafem Seeds, Spain



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

Dear Soft Secrets



Hi Guys

Hope you like the photo of my two favourite girls. My wife (GANJA GIRL) is showing off a couple of buds of our latest grow. Strain unknown but smokes and yields were great. Grown in 10 litre pots of mapito & Diahydro mix. Fed on Ionic & Monster Bloom

What a waste if you don't know what strain you're growing... Knowledge is power, mate! But with such a wife we guess you don't need too much knowledge, just stamina.



Dear SSUK,

We had a bud given to us at a motorcycle rally which contained seeds and we managed to grow four lovely plants. Not bad for our first attempt!

Well, clearly the plant looks in a very good shape. Don't harvest her too early!



Dear Editor,

I recently read a copy of your magazine and I was particularly enamoured by your Readers Photos section. What a fine selection of buds! I would like to make my own contribution. Here is a photo of my darling buds accompanied by some of my nice plants too! The photo's a few weeks old, but my plants are now in a safe place under lights and nurturing a nice yield. It's my first attempt but it will be all the more enjoyable for this extra effort and care. I also read other sections of your magazine, and I particularly enjoyed your brownie's recipe. Long live Silver Haze from the Dampkring!

Paul & Frank

Good job supporting those plants with bamboo stakes. Are these Silver Haze? If not, next time try to grow em more in width. With a true Silver Haze this is almost impossible.



From a faithfull reader in California

Who gives a fuck about big fat buds when you have readers like this? Little girl, what section are you reading there? Just curious...



Hi Soft Secrets,

Here is a picture of my AK48 cut down two weeks early for my birthday. Grown in soil under 600W HPS using Optimum nutes. Any tips on how to get a bigger yield? I've always wanted to grow White Widow, maybe you could hook me up with the seeds if you print this! Love your paper keep up the good work!

Green Eyed Monster, Belfast

Hey Monster, for a 600w lamp this is a shitty result. You harvested her too early as well. Our tip: read SSUK from the first issue onwards again! You clearly missed something here and there...

Attention Guerilla Growers!

Fancy a FREE packet of High Quality Seeds? Then send us a picture of your garden, including a visible copy of SSUK, and we'll send you the seeds. BUT: should your garden happen to feature your topless girlfriend or wife, you even get a pack of Black Label stock, the label of the champions!

Editor's Choice will receive 3 packs of choice of prime Black Label stock! Send all entries to our PoBox or e-mail them to SSUK@softsecrets.nl Please DON'T print your digital pic on paper but email it!

NOTE: All entries are handled with the utmost discretion. We don't publish out of focus pics, and we don't like photos of plants in veg stage. It's fat buds & hot tits we want to see!



Please find attached our two Prized assets. To the left Latifah (EazyBud 2wks into Flowering). To the Right MaryJ (White Widow with 4wks to go). Both fed on Canna Coco, Mary is gonna get some PKing soon. both planted in Canna Allin1. This is our first grow and we are both really pleased with them.

They are both in seperate cabinets with a 400watt HPS 12" from the top. The cabinets are TOTALLY mylar'd

out even the BOTTOM (is this right?). We are flowering them on a 12/12 light ratio. Would we benefit even more if the last 2 weeks they were on 8on/16off? Me and my Cousin are both Barnsley born and bred so if we areout walkin the whippets or siftin a bit of coal for t'neets fire then we will get back to you as soon as. Much Rispek and BongOn.

NikNik and WildLawt

Dear Hobbits, to switch back to 8 hours is not a very good idea, your plants will only feel stress and it doesn't do anything for your harvest. Mylar on the bottom, well why not? Though it doesn't make much sense. Leaves do not take up light from the floor!



Me and my girlfriend are living in Portugal and we decided to send some pictures of our outdoor project. As you can see the ladies are all well fed. They are 2 Early Skunk from Sensi Seeds and they are growing with Bio-bizz. Tiago, Portugal

Way to go. Skunk varieties produce a lot of leaves and therefore make optimum use of the sunlight. Your

bird should do the same too, she looks a bit pale. Or do you never let her out? We'd understand, mate.



Hallo there,

These are my plants, Power Plant, Blueberry and White Rhino, grown in a cupboard (bit of a squeeze). Had a problem with spider mite in the early stages so was hoping for a bigger yield, but heyho the sight of my girlfriends lovely tits next to them made up for K & R, **England**

Those filthy little buggers sure know how to spoil a perfect crop. How did you get rid of em, mate?





Hello lads.

Lovely magazine, taught me a lot. My bird insisted on a classy picture so thats why it looks like a brothel in a dope factory. This is 17 ounces of Cali Orange grown from HQS with Canna Veg and Bloom, PK13-14 and a few other little treats. James

Well, we would like to check out that brothel anytime, mate! We noted the glass of white wine on the table, you must have had lots of fun producing this photo for us. Say hello to your classy bird, she's lovely!

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Hi guys!

After reading my first copy of Soft Secrets and seeing all the pics of the home growers I decided to take some myself! So here is a couple of pics of my bud (not bad for a first attempt) and the lovely Holly! Pete of the Good old New Forest!

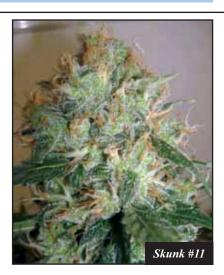
 $Good\ job$ removing those lower branches, Pete. And how we would like to have a taste of that perfectly shaped butt!

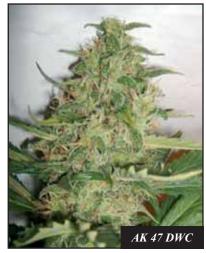


Laurie

For fucks sake, what is it with all these SSUK readers with beautiful and georgeous girlfriends? We always thoughtmost SSUK readers were like Eddie & Richie from the tv-series Bottom.









Billy my mate's White Widow grown in pro-gro soil under a 600 sodium. He spent so much time with them his girlfriend thought he loved them more than her. Its not called the widow for nothing, ha ha!

Ha ha! Ha ha ha.. ha ha.. hehe..



Thought I'd share some budshots with you. Here's 2 x AK-47, one grown in compost/perlite mix with Biobizz feeds, the other grown in DWC bubbler with Vitalink food, both cuttings from same plant same veg time etc etc. The bubbler AK has the edge on size but compost AK has the edge on flavour. Also Skunk 11 grown in coco with Vitalink, ripe dead on eight weeks, strong narcotic stone! All grown in my room under 600w HPS, forced intake, extraction through a Carbon filter. My rooms stays nice & cool in those hot summer months & warm in winter. Smoke on!

Law- middle somewhere- UK

A Skunk #11 blooms for 11 weeks, hence the name. So we doubt if you really had a Skunk #11 there, buddy.



Sylvie

A rock-hard bud! Sylvie rules...



Dollar

Mate, with buds like that you can surely afford to buy a real digital camera?



Holy shit. Why don't you throw that strange bean stalk away and start all over again?



GR, Essex Three bamboo poles for one average plant. GR, you must be a most optimistic guy or gal!

It was Xmas 2003, during the holidays while browsing a grower's forum online that I stumbled upon Advanced Nutrients. A thread about 3 experienced growers, whose previous grows I had followed and had just switched to Advanced and achieved 20-30% increase in yield! I did some research and was soon on the phone to my wholesalers to see what they might be able to find out as I knew they already had contacts in Canada. Well 10 out of 10 for being 1 step ahead, they were already signing the deal to supply the U.K. with all the Advanced goodies... I was very pleased.

Soon after that phone call I received an unexpected box packed with samples of lots of exotic sounding concoctions, it was my Advanced sample box from my suppliers. I gave out the samples to good customers who were all on the phone or back at my counter asking when I get the whole range?? Also reporting increased yields massive roots lots of comments and all good.

Nutrients are fast dominating my shelf space, not because I make any more selling Advanced than any other brand, but because my belief from day 1 was to only stock the best, let all the others sell cheap and cheerful I only have

GROWING MEDIUMS - FANS - CO2 - MYLAR - GROW KITS COME SEE OUR DEMO GROWROOM) **EVERYTHING NEEDED FOR INDOOR GARDENER OPEN 7 DAYS**

room in my shop for serious products that will benefit the customer, i.e. be value for money. If it's on my shelves it's been tested not because it has a

nice label or has a good mark-up, but because it is popular.



Initially you'd think Advanced Nutrients were more expensive than other brands available, don't be fooled by simply looking at the price of a litre of nutrient, make sure you check the dilution rate, example: Advanced Sensi Grow AB is dosed at 1-1.5ml per litre to achieve full strength solution, whereas a number of competitors nutrients are as high as 7ml per litre, and lets not forget... In my personal opinion, the results that are possible with Advanced especially when using some of their groundbreaking additives like Big Bud or Voodoo Juice, make them worth their weight in gold. Not forgetting Advanced have some of the best organic feeds and additives too with Mother Earth Super Tea Grow and Bloom, there is a nutrient program to suit any budding grower.





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- °I still can't believe it... It is so light; I suspended it from my ceiling with cotton thread and drawing pins... its still up there...
- "It came to me in a tiny box, in the post! I thought the box was empty and laughed. It was in there all right.. It works 100%.
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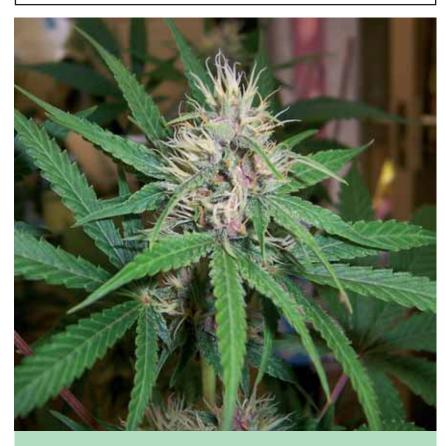


Hi here are some pick of my NL from Nirvana at 7th week in flower. They were grown in soil under 250w HPS and tied up to the floor at 3rd week in flowering, they were grown in a closet that has maybe 4m3, roof at angle and in the highest place is 1,5m high so that was a big challenge to grow something in there. Results were a big disapointment to me, I was counting for 50g but it came up something about 35g (I used cheapest soil,very old HPS with hood that I

made myself and a shitty bulb that cost me 20 zloty that's about 4GBP), I smoked most of the crop with friends, I sold some, and now I have money to start my second grow. This time it's gonna be bigger, better and more expensive: 600W HPS and a basement, under 250w I'll keep mothers. Wish me luck and thank you for your magazine! It teached me a lot.

Olej from Poland

Olej, why do Polish people always economise on the wrong things? NEVER buy cheap soil, because when the very first basics of a grow operation is not good, the whole operation will get fucked up. So throw in some extra zloty's next time and your harvest will improve dramatically.



Here's a couple of photo's of my latest grow, they are KC33 from KC Brains seedbank, grown in my own soil mix and given no added nutrients. They are currently 28 days in flower, so there's another 28 or so left to go, hope they carry on at this pace as they are already quite bulky and already quite a lot of cristals hope they make it into the paper, as it's one of the best sources of straightforward information I have found, and it's free!

Happy chap, UK

Beautifully done, Happy chap.

High Soft Secrets,

My first grow's harvest: I didn't have Soft Secrets when I started so was using a halogen security light until I realised how leggy they were getting so I got a 400w HPS for the 10week flowering stage... stil harvested 6oz of quite small buds-top smoke thou (Cali Orange. Long live homemade hash and long live Soft Secrets!

Bobby Botanical



 $And\ did\ you\ call\ yourself\ Botanical\ Bobby\ before\ or\ after\ you\ discovered\ Soft\ Secrets?$



Dear SSUK.

Here's a few snaps of our outdoor atempt in Bristol, Hayley's Comet was recommended by our Dutch friends, and we gave it a go, perhaps a little later in the season then we would have liked, but the results smelt sweet and it was covered in crystal! No tits this time, maybe when the indoors done!

The Doctor & Chaz, Bristol

Well done, guys! If you wanna grow outdoors in the rotten UK climate, always use early flowering varieties. In this way you avoid the wet and windy autumn, which will wreak havoc on your crop.



F3 hybrids. Lovely blue/ purple hue to one of the plants. Smells of citrus. Notice the lady on the window sil, grown under the finest Welsh sun shine money can buy.

Kolor & Kyles (Wales)

Well we don't see any purple in your plants, to be fair. Are you sure it was a purple variety? Or were you just scammed into believing so? Anyhow, your plants clearly got stress from a too wet soil, purple or not...



This is me. **Veronika, Slovenia**

Is it really, luv? Juding from your nipples, yes, it IS you!



This is a photo of my very modest garden, taken a little while ago when my mate left his copy of your publication. I've now past it on to another friend, my girlfriend wants me to take photos of the new garden with her in it, but I don't have a copy of Soft Secrets, is it posible to get hold of a copy in this country?

We like growers who dare to experiment a bit... It's the best way of learning on-the-job so to speak. Next time try a more powerfull lamp, your harvest is a bit meagre.



Here's a few of photo's of me, teddy and plants; she's a female bear it has to be said. Oh yes sir, no "rogue

traders" here. No naked ladies on offer either, however, teddy is very nice: there's no hysterical tantrums, no sarcasm, no farting in bed and no unsightly stains on the bed sheets. JPG 39 is a Thai lady waiting to be sorted. She's wild, a seed I picked up on Kho Chang; if she's anything like the ladies of Pattaya I'm in for a pleasurable time. **Steve, Yorkshire**

You're a wise and serene man, Steve, who speaks in a truthfull and philosophical way. But a pair of womens hands could well be needed for trimming those buds!



Thank You to everyone involved with Soft Secrets. The buds in these pictures have been grown using your information and Jah love... Respect! Also, a huge thanks and an eternity of love to my Special. The only girl who

has shared my love of the herb! We'd love to get our hands on some high quality seeds. Might try some scrogging. What ya reckon?

We reckon some of the leaves are too yellow, you probably over-fertilised them. And put some Mylar on the walls dude, that way we can see your bird's butt.





We were growing White Russian but the spidermites were getting the better of them so I didn't take any cuttings and this is the last batch! Hope you enjoy the pictures as much as you'll enjoy sending me some seeds!

Hi there

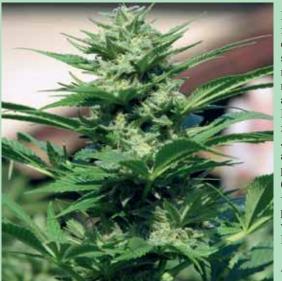
Soft Secrets

The Yorkshire Ladettes

Next time spray your cuttings to prevent this kind of disaster. And always make sure your grow room is tidy and clean. It's the only way to prevent litle buggers like spidermites to invade your territory!

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I brought your magazine from Amsterdam, I enjoyed it so I decided I send you my pictures of my outdoor 2006 in Czech republic. The big plants are from clones (Apollo, Pot of Gold, Apollo x Matanuskathunder, Jamaican and the bigger are uknown, small violet plants are from seeds (Nirvana-Northern Lights + Durban Poison), and 1 picture of my indoorbox with 600w HPS). Robert, Czech Republic

Nicely done, Czech mate!



Mystery indica, begining of flushing period, single plant grown in claypebbels, Ionic range of nutes. Skinny, east anglia

Indica's tend to stay low and compact. But they do branch well and the quality of the bud is superb. Good job, they all have the same size and height.



Pathetic buds, way too thin and skinny.
Or did you grow them behind a window?



Ilovepink



Ice, 5 weeks into bud. Feed Canna nutes all the way through + 10% charcoal per litre of soil.

Pingu from Hull

Well done, very good looking plants Pingu!



Here's a couple o pics of my Top 44, grown in coco with Canna nutes. **Kev**

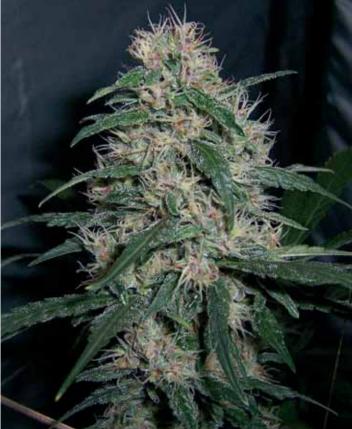
Dude, are these 3 plants or is it just 1?

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Not so starvin Marvin

Again, well done, very healthy looking buds!



Mango from KC Brains Seed Bank, they have been in my own organic soil mix and given no added nutrients. under a 600w sodium light. Happy chap

This variety was probaly crossed over and over again, judging from the many colors in the bud.





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DEAR SSUK EXTRA

























Dear Soft Secrets,

Not a happy story to tell you. I recntly wemnt to court to be sentenced for growing some beautiful stinking mary-jane. I got the following: 3months suspended sentence for 12 months, 200 hours community service 140 pounds fine.

The reason the judge gave me no jail was because when the coppers put my weed into evicence bags they sealed them tight and thought it would dry OK – but it went mouldy! So the judge didn't have the weight of the bud to determine any length of prison sentence. Result or what, nice one haha!

I've sent you most evidence pictures that the judge and sollicitors looked over in my trail. The Old Bill took everything from my house that had any connection with growing: 3 grand worth of growing equipment, 3 bars of Skunk, weed grinder, weed pot, Jorge Cervantes' Canna Bible.

Red Eye, West Midlands

Tough luck, Red Eye... At least you didn't have to do hard time.. Thanks for the photos mate, interesting to see what the coppers like to register for their files..

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ARJAN'S ULTRA WINNER OF THE 19TH HIGH TIME

























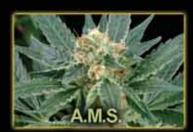




















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All-new Soilmix A-Quality compost from Bio Nova BV



As of October 2006, Bio Nova BV has totally re-formulated its BN Soilmix A-Quality compost! The re-vitalised compost has an organic-mineral nutrient



mix for both a quick start and a long lasting effect. As well as this the bag has been radically restyled in order to better fit the demands of the market place. Three weeks after beginning, additional liquid fertilizer is added in order to give the growth and bloom an extra impulse.

The product is essentially a qualitatively high-value substrate with sufficient rough elements to ensure good percolation of air and dispersal of moisture, and in doing so guarantee optimal results. Thanks to this the addition of perlite to the compost is not necessary. Besides the basic components, which consist of peat, inorganic and organic materials, this

compost also contains an organic fertilizer enriched with micro-organisms. A single pallet contains 70 bags of 40 litres.

The advantages of this new, responsible basic compost are:

- * Very even distribution of the nutrients.
- * Slow release of nutrients, parallel to the needs of the plant.
- * Working life of the nutrient mix: 12-14 weeks.
- * Follows the growth curve of the plant.
- * Does not compact and holds both air and water very well.
- * Is the base for a healthy plant by providing and stimulating a healthy soil life.
- * Is an environmentally-friendly compost base, developed exclusively by Bio Nova. Application: in tubs, pots, etc.

Info: www.bionova.nl



These two plants were grown with a nutrient solution infested with Pythium and Phytophthora root diseases. The plant on the left was treated with Regen-A-Root and the plant on the right received no treatment.

REGEN-A-ROOT

Are Root Diseases Hammering Your Crop?

Use for correcting poor root growth & preventing root disease

Do you know how many diseases are waiting to attack the roots of your hydroponic crop? The effect of root disease can be mild through to devastating. Most growers have had the experience of thinking that their crop is going to be great only to find that, within the space of a few days, the crop's condition has degenerated markedly. For example, the leaves start to change color and it begins to wilt. Almost without exception, your crop has been attacked by one of the myriad root diseases that lurk in the nooks and crannies of most hydro systems waiting for an opportunity to start feasting on your plant's roots. What are these diseases? There is Pythium, Rhizoctonia and Phytophthora which are the most common. In addition, there are several others which are less

common but nevertheless very dangerous if they infect your crop. Among these are Thielaviopsis, Fusarium, Sclerotinia and Cylindrocladium.

Pythium is the most commonly found root disease in both hydroponic systems and in the soil. The symptoms are quite specific. If the plant's roots go brown and smelly and the plants wilt when the lights are on, then you are probably dealing with Pythium. Before blaming a disease, however, check that the nutrient aeration is ok. Lack of oxygen in the system can cause similar symptoms.

When plants are growing strongly, they can usually fight off the effects of the disease. They are able to produce chemicals which attack the disease organisms. When the plants are under stress, however, they produce much less of these chemicals and the disease organism can take hold.

Stress situations can occur at any time but flowering is always a stressful situation and is the time that disease is the most likely to get the upper hand. This occurs also because the plant's energies are going into flowering and root growth tends to be limited to replacement of dead roots only.

At Canadian Xpress, our scientists have isolated the battery of chemicals that the plant manufactures to defend itself. We have encapsulated these chemicals in a liquid formulation and when this is used in your nutrient solution they have the same effect as the plant's own defenses and the result is healthy plants. This approach is known as Induced Resistance.

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Cloning with the G-Homecloner Junior / Senior

For several months now in the Netherlands there have been almost no decent clones available any more. Waiting times can be several weeks, the prices have soared sky high and the quality is often sub-standard. To fill the void, and now available

outside its home country, G-Tools has developed a cupboard that consists of two compartments. The bottom section is fitted with 160-Watt. Quick lamps, 225 m3 extractors and carbon filters. In here you raise the mother plants from which you can later take clones from. In the top part is the clone room. In here you can root the cuttings under two fluorescent lights. The warmth that is given off by the quick lamps in the bottom chamber serves as a source of soil warming for the cloning compartment. The rooting will proceed much faster thanks to this. As with all G-Tools products, this cupboard is also easy to erect without any tools within five minutes. The G-homecloner Junior's dimension (HxBxD): 176 x 78 x 58 cms, and the dimensions of the G-homecloner Senior are (HxBxD): 200 x 174 x 88 cms.

Info: G-Tools Tel: +31 (0) 294 458 202

www.g-tools.nl



G-Kit 320

Good quality marihuana is getting harder to get and more and more expensive. On much weed bought on the street, traces of pesticides and other chemicals are found. So, time to grow your own! The G-KIT 320 is the ideal solution for anyone who doesn't want to buy on the streets or in coffeeshops anymore. The cabinet is especially designed for growing the Lowryder strain. But of course other varieties can be grown in it as well. What makes the G-KIT

320 so unique is it's lighting system. It doesn't have the usual High Pressure Sodium lamps. But the, especially developed, DUO FLUOR saving lights. This creates extra advantages and possibilities. This way everyone can grow his own safely and cheap.

SPECIFICATIONS:

H x W x D: 111 x 88 x 58 cm

Lighting: 4 x 80W DUO FLUOR with Miro Silver reflector, Legrand Omnirex timer.

Ventilation: RVK 225 m3 in-line fan + 225 m3 carbon filter Housing: Robust aluminium frame and 8mm PVC pannels.

ADVANTAGES:

- -100% safe
- -light-tight
- -smell free
- -silent
- -design cabinet, fits in every interior
- -low energy consumption
- -no heat production
- -easy to set up in 5 minutes, no tools required
- -delivered "flat-pack" in neutral packing
- -high output

LOWRYDER

Lowryder is a variety of the "cannabis ruderalis" family. The "ruderalis" grows originally in arctic areas where the days have 20 hours of sunlight during the summer. The plant doesn't flower under the usual 12 hours of light per day but with 20 hours. Because of this the plant has an extremely fast life cycle. From planting the seeds till harvesting takes no more than 9 weeks. Extra advantage is that the plant stays small (30 to 50 cm) which allows the cabinet also to be low.

For more info go to www.g-kit.com



The Counting House By Lazystrain

Time was that as youths we'd run low on dope from time to time, so we'd have to go a little further a field to find smoke. The most natural thing to do in this situation, as a teenager, is to hitch a lift down to front-line. Please allow us to

So we'd go to a place, that for all intent and purpose we're gonna call 'The Counting House'. The Counting House is in the inner-city, where rows of terrace houses line-up side by side in order to cast their sinister shadows unto the houses adjacent. The roads themselves run one way or another, with speed bumps that run into dead-ends. People from every walk of life go about their business - prostitutes, winos, junkies, social workers, part-time hustlers and fulltime thieves. As a middle class white boy, coming from the leafiest parts of the suburb, you notice these things.

Anyhow, we scrap some cash together and we're standing on some dudes doorstep, looking at two doorbells. I'm thinking, "He said the one on the left, right?". Ding-Dong. The door opens ajar. Two wild eyes. I'm thinking "He said push him out of the way, and walk in?" Seems like procedure is the call of the day, so we pushing the six-foot hit man to one-side. Strolling past some old guys chilling at a table, playing dominoes, sipping beers and smoking joints, we mooch on up to a stabledoor counter and say "Easy, you al-right?" An old fella with a really cool mind-set nods back and smiles. Pulling out some money we say "a quarter of weed, and a quarter of draw" (remembering that ghetto-folk don't use P's n Q's). The guy replies "What? You want quarter of erb n quarter ash man, sure?" He smiles again, rips a lump of erb, off an even bigger lump, onto some fish scales. He smiles and wraps it up in some cling-film. He goes about the same method with the ash. We couldn't careless what he's weighing it at, chances are someone would have jacked us already at this point. Placing the erb and the ash on the counter he asks for £70. Expensive, but then again we in the dudes front room/kitchen, not standing on a street corner. Hands shake, faces in the room seem to brighten. In the truth the faces where never dull, it's just that sometimes we don't always stop to pay enough attention to what's really going on.

Saying "Later" to the hit man at the door, we burst back out onto the street quite inconspicuously, and start searching for the girl that dropped us off. Ten moments later, we're back in leafy suburbia, no stress. Without the prostitutes, social workers, gangsters and thieves (still plenty of winos and junkies) our middle class enclave, in just an evening, has become the most backward place on earth. People walk past one another without waving hello, they walk out onto the road when old people pass for fear of frightening themselves, rather than asking "How is it?" The people are alienated from any sense of culture, other than that, which is presented to them in middle-class Sunday papers.

Luckily, some of us escaped the clutches of Babylon from time to time, and ventured back in search of Zion. 10g of slightly sticky Jamaican landrace and 9g of fairly good-quality gold seal at £70 (c.1992) fills any youth's coconut pipe for an evening chilling with the crew. So who's kidding whom? This day and age, middle class white boys are screwing middle class white boys £25 an eighth, without all the phone-calls. We guess they're all just happy to speaking the same language on the upload. Oh yeah I forgot, most of them can't read, and their parents are encouraged to follow league tables advertising the trendiest schools in town so they can.

Living on the front line may not be all plush leather sofas, under-graduate degrees and matching curtains (it is in places) but the people and the dialogue is real. Many a middle class white boy (and girl) shift their contes and codes (the rules of language) to fit their fashion, mood, lifestyle, until something fits. It happens a lot when affluent parents backpack their children off to university at a young age, without any prior life-experiences. Sometimes daughters come back as Goths with piecing in places their parents' wished they didn't. Sometimes sons come back with baggy jeans, an ital diet, and dread-locks. They now speak a strange new dialect.

Dialect is one of the key concepts in understanding - which nourishes good spirit and community. Without verbs we have no means of tell what another person is doing or thinking. Communication breakdown! Likewise, without the ability to understand and reason, from another perspective, life is all but the same, and we become nothing but automated reflections of the self. The summer of 1992 would have been really dry, had it not been for the ability to live and learn another man's language and culture. To be honest, the smell of jerk chicken and sweet erb reaped food for the mind for months.

Lime gives plants more strength and makes it easier for the plants to take up fertilizers, because the lime helps maintain a neutral pH value. The whole management of nutrients and their uptake from the ground is improved. Lime is also an important factor in the factor digestion/decomposition of organic substances, whereby nutrients in the soil become more available for the marihuana plant. What many growers do not appreciate is is that lime also prevents possible poisons less chance of having an impact. Lime also helps give poisonous substances less of a chance to have an effect, so it also protects marihuana plants to some extent.

The much-feared mould that afflicts marihuana plants, mildew, often begins with a few white spots on the leaves. In a short period of time the whole plant will be covered in it, as if the thing was covered in icing sugar powder. This mould is so persistent that all the flower heads will eventually become infected with it, thanks to which they will not able to be harvested. The best thing to do is completely remove any parts of the plant that show sign sof infection as quickly as possible. If this does not help, then remove fully all infected plants. If you do not do this, then in the shortest period of time the whole crop will be infected and you've lost your whole harvest!





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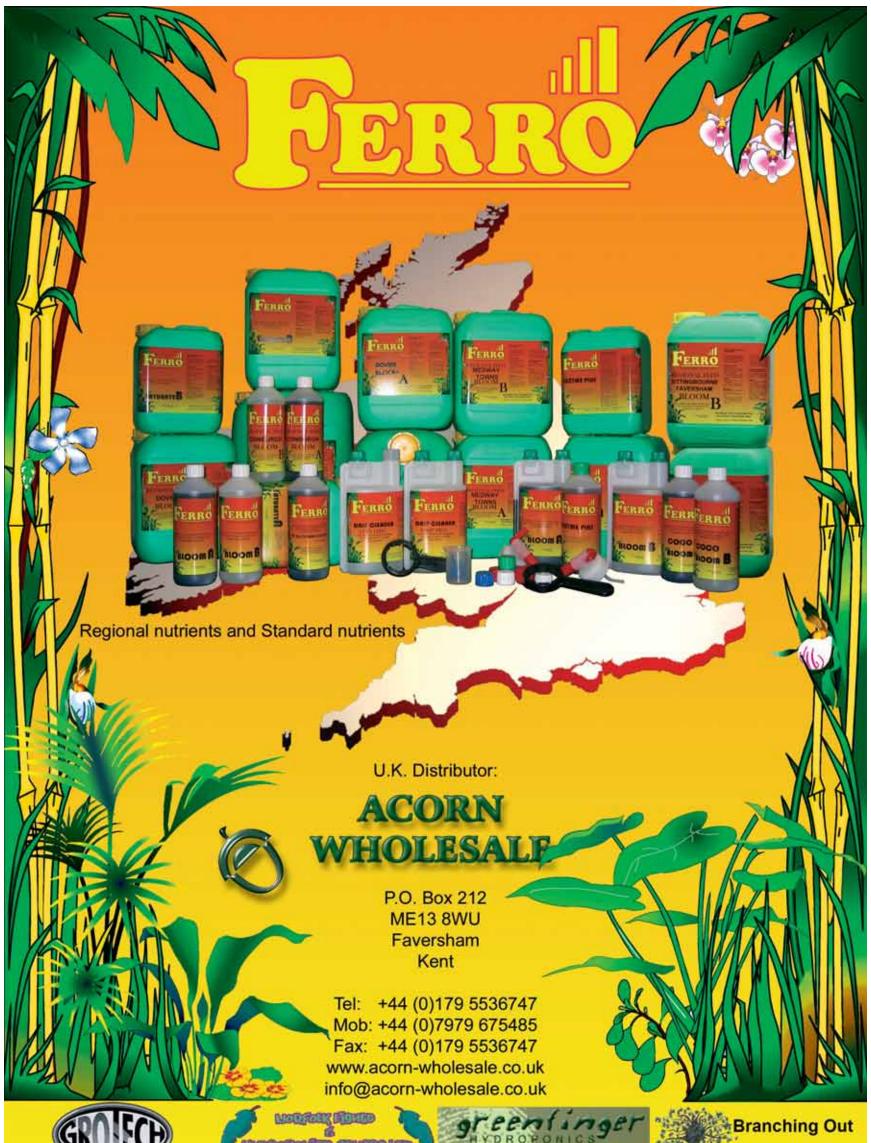
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By Weckels

Growing cupboard confidential (part 3)

In the article of two issues ago you could all read about the K2 plants that we allowed to complete their pre-growth in a simply-equipped grow cupboard. Of the total of four plants that were grown in this cupboard, we grew two on soil mixes, and two on mixes of different sized coco granules. Whilst the K2 plants back then were still small, only just rooted plants, by now they have managed to develop in to lovely, strong bushes and what's more, we have already had them in bloom for four weeks now. The result is plain to see! The well-developed plants have bright deep green leaves and the

flower heads are beginning to increase in size rapidly. In order to maintain this favourable development of the flower heads, it is important that we regularly remove the necessary (preferably the poorly developed) leaves. By doing this we ensure that the flower heads get (more than) enough light, which in turn will be to the benefit of their development and crystal production.

Buds

Besides removing the leaves, we also 'top' the plants (remove the uppermost growth

tip from each plant). Thanks to this the plant will branch out (even) more, and we also at the same time put a brake on the upwards growth. If we were not to do this, then the plants would pretty much only grow in height and we will never be able to enjoy the full surface area of the grow space. On top of that we have the fact that in the cupboard we are only growing four plants, and so we are striving for a really good harvest from each plant. To make this possible it is important that we raise a plant that is well branched, has a sturdy main stem and that has developed strong side branches. In short, in a cupboard we

want nothing to do with tall, skinny plants that within eight days have sprung up to a record height.

Fortunately the K2 belongs to the Indica family and that makes the plant develop nice and small and compact. So in short, it is the ideal indoor plant! But there are a few things we can do as growers to help the plants develop in to compact bushes. In this way the plant will manage to reach a dimension that is within the limits set by the space available in the cupboard, yet still produce a decent volume of good quality weed at the end.









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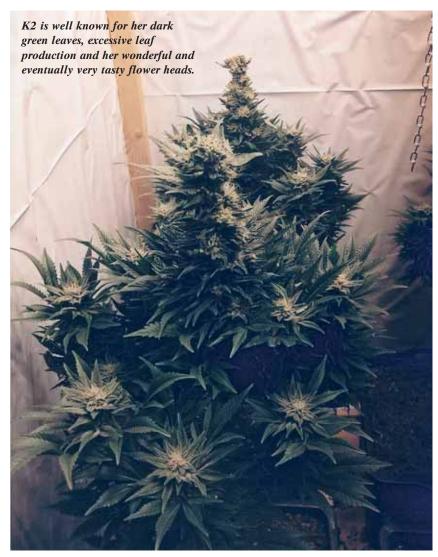
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K2 outdoors

Although K2 is best known as an indoor plant, outdoor growers tend to book reasonable-to-very-good results with this plant variety. The K2 plants are also ideal for growing on a balcony or roof terrace, given that they remain so small and compact (with some exceptions) and therefore have quite a bit more resistance to wind (gusts). As well as this the K2, thanks to her large leaf production, can thrive outside and can utilise sufficient light even on days without much sun. All this makes K2 a much-loved variety even among outdoor growers.

Snapping

But whatever the charms of outdoor growing, we must put them aside for the moment and return to the issue at hand, namely: creating as ideal conditions for

our K2 in the growing cupboard as we can. As I mentioned earlier, removing the top shoot (topping the plants) is strongly recommended, provided that it is done with a little care. Topping plants is actually not so difficult as long as you go about it gently. Some growers simply snip the top growth shoot off. Personally, I prefer to take the growth tip between two fingers and carefully snap it off. By doing this we can limit the wounding of the stem considerably and prevent unnecessary sap loss. There are actually a lot of sap streams flowing through the stalk of the plant, which supply the whole plant with nutrients. If we were to snip the growth tip off with scissors then there tends to be a sharp (cut) end (where the growth shoot was removed) and the plant will have difficulty healing the wound. An unnecessarily large volume of (nutrient) sap is lost from the plant as a result.

Flower heads

To prevent this we are better off snapping the top growth tip off carefully, so that we pinch the stalk and so stop the sap stream from seeping from the wound. The plant can now more easily repair the wound. Of course, it should go without saying that we should top the plant during the growth stage, so that the plants have a chance to heal themselves before the onset of the bloom period. What is more, topping the plants during the bloom period should be out of the question given that besides the fact that we would be removing fairly well developed flower heads in the process. the chances of mould getting a foothold in increased. The wound (the point where the top-most growth tip was removed) might also in a worst case have difficulty being repaired, which could lead to the plant dripping nutrient sap over the flower heads, with terrible consequences a possibility, since this can increase the chances of mould setting in quite a lot.

Pleasant

In order to make the whole bloom period generally even more pleasant for the plants, we have positioned them two by two next to each other rather than side by side. In this way the plants will get more light and they can better develop their side branches, and so also their flower heads. As well as the improvement in the light conditions (by arranging the plants differently), we also give them a little bit of bloom feed, bloom stimulators and we add some PK 13-14 to the nutrient water.

During the growth period we had deliberately not given any liquid nutrients and stimulators with the nutrient water, since we had already created a rich supply of all the right substances in both substrates (the soils mixes and the coco mixes). Even though the plants will have already used up part of this original supply of nutrients, when we start adding liquid nutrient we have to keep in mind that the plants will continue to get part of their nutritional needs met from the 'fixed' fertilisers. So factor this in and keep an eve on reducing the chance of any over-fertilizing, and when applying the liquid nutrient and stimulators, use half

the recommended dosage. In this way we can replace uncertainty with certainty and minimise the risk of giving too much nutrient considerably. Your calculations are also of course dependent on just how long you have been keeping your plants on a water-only diet and relying solely on the nutrients originally mixed into the substrates

As many growers know, marihuana plants are mad about richly-fertilised feed bases and can, given favourable living conditions (lots of light, sufficient water and an ideal temperature), rapidly deplete them. The longer we allow the plants to pre-grow, the bigger the chance that the plants will already have used up a good part of certain nutrients. In other words, the plant will no longer be able to extract these important nutrients from the existing feed base. In order to make up these deficiencies we give some supplementary fertilizer to the plants in the form of liquid nutrients added to their water (having mixed them well first!).

Often as a grower it is often a case of simply keeping a good watch over your plants. When they look lovely there is no need to give them extra (liquid) nutrients. However, things happen at an accelerated rate when growing under artificial light and sometimes it is better to leave a certain shortage unsupplemented than that we try to force the plants in all kinds of ways to use the provided nutrients. Make no mistake, a plant dealing with a (serious) nutrient deficiency will be considerably hindered by it, and will be slowed down in both its growth and bloom. And that is the last thing we want as growers operating in such a limited space!

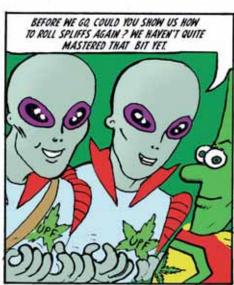
In the following article I will be taking another look inside the growing cupboard filled with coco and mapito substrate. Among other things we will be looking at the ideal growing conditions and the development that the marihuana plants have undergone. As well as this we will also be looking at whether there are any differences in the growth of the plants. The green ladies are being raised on different substrates after all.

It only remains for me to wish all readers, growers and others involved in the industry a good new year, and express the hope that 2007 will be a year filled with marvellous buds!



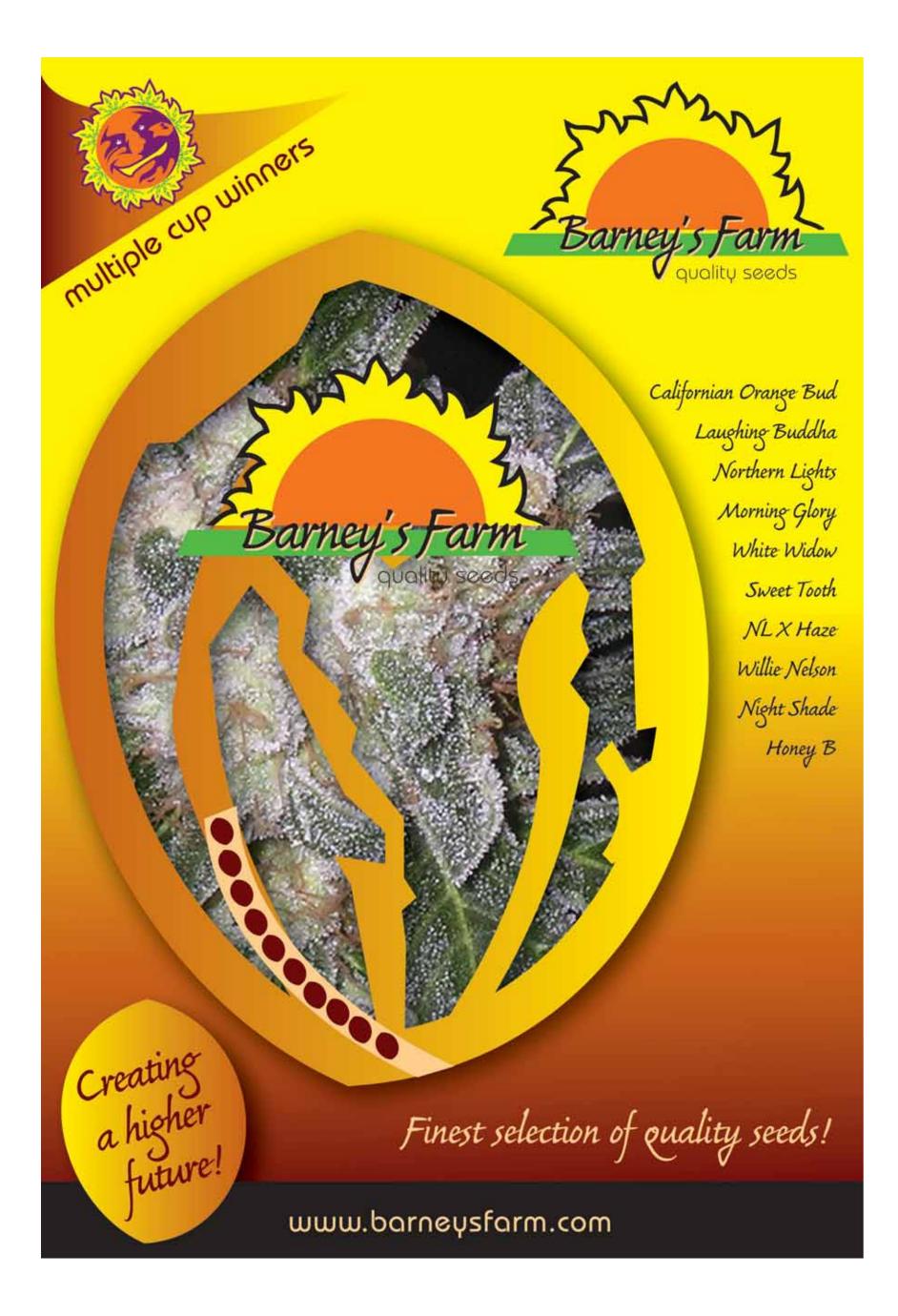






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HIGHLIFE FAIR AMSTERDAM 2007 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Reggae and hip-hop are coming to town!

The Meditations once sung with Bob Marley. George Nooks had a number one hit in the Netherlands under the name Prince Mohammed. LMS is part of the Morgan Heritage family, standard bearers of the New Roots. And Pow Pow Movement enjoy the status of top sound system in Europa. All in all, they add up to a particularly authentic reggae party on Friday 23rd Februari in Amsterdam's RAI congress centre. The Highlife Fair will be celebrating its 10-year jubilee and that is a good enough reason for pulling out all the stops with this extravagant musical night!

Description of the second seco

European DJs these days are no longer in thrall to their great Jamaican counterparts. In Belgium, France and Germany the number of *sound systems* has been uncountable for some time now. Pow Pow Movement is without doubt the most popular and most influential crew of the moment. For years already, Pow Pow has been bringing out records themselves that have been doing as well in

Jamaica as the local releases. With 'Blaze' in 2005 the group even scored one of the biggest hits of the year. *Irie vibes* are guaranteed then when Pow Pow Movement mix it up, the ideal sound for an evening filled with *riddims* both new and classic.

>> Ruff Out Band and LUIS &

The Ruff Cut Band is one of the best backing groups that reggae is so richly endowed with. Name any big name and Ruff Cut has accompanied them. Laza, Miriam and Shy-Poo (from who the initials LMS come), mostly tour with Morgan Heritage, their older bothers and sister. The trio mixes up roots reggae and dancehall with hiphop and even a dash of rock, which especially live makes for an explosive cocktail. Morgan Heritage and LMS have played a decisive role in recent years in bringing the new roots reggae to venues around the world, not least because they are perhaps the best live act in the entire genre.

A CENTRA MODITA (4)

George Nooks has called himself Prince Mohammed since the 1970s, following the fashion among other 'toasters' (as Jamaican rappers were called) back then (and actually today too) for fitting themselves out with happy and exotic names – like Dillinger, Lone Ranger, Nicodemus, Prince Jazzbo. He cut singles for obscure Jamaican labels, and it seemed after the boom in roots reggae had declined that he would be condemned along with many others of his generation to sink away in to anonymity. Under his own name, he has been causing quite a fuss since the early 1990s as a singer – in fact, as a much better singer than he ever was a toaster. His voice drifts somewhere between Dennis Brown and Freddie McGregor, and he uses crystal clear riddims, both old and new.

> The Medications &

Bob Marley invited The Meditations in 1979 to sing with him on three tracks: 'Punky Reggae Party', 'Blackman Redemption' and 'Rastaman Live Up'. It was the ultimate recognition of the vocal trio of Ansel Cridland, Danny Clarke and Winston Watson. Wonderful close-harmony singing has always been one of the strong points of reggae, and The Meditations have managed to successfully fuse this style with classical roots. They write their own songs

and arrangements, work in the best-known studios (Channel One, Lee Perry's Black Ark) and with the best musicians. With 'Message from the Meditations' (1976) and 'Wake up' (1979), The Meditations made two of the *must-have* albums of the genre,

two genuine mile posts, and definitely secured their reputation as a top roots group. Few Jamaicans dig vocally so deep as these three gentlemen, *rastamen from creation*,

proud rebels of Rastafari, who have grown into living legends. It is 15 years ago now that The Meditations performed in Europe for the first time, of which one was in Antwerp. Anyone who was there will still remember the concert today as one of the high points in the history of reggae in the Low Lands. And now anyone who was not there has no excuse to stay at home. If the roots feeling of the golden 1970s is still to be experienced anywhere, it is at a concert by The Meditations.



Decleration of the second of

On Saturday 24th February it will be time for the local Dutch hip-hop talent. As an absolute high point there will be the performance by Lange Frans & Baas B, the best known and most successful rappers in the Netherlands of this moment!

The line-up further consists of Dutch rappers Raymzter, Typhoon, Kubus, Opgezwolle and Jawat!

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Text and photos: Kristie Szalanski

Coffeeshop Tweede Kamer, Amsterdam

The Tweede ("2nd") Kamer coffeeshop in the centre of Amsterdam has been a long-serving institution to the smoking public of the city. Sister to the Dampkring coffeeshop a few blocks away, the Tweede Kamer was established in July 1985. The tiny shop is situated in an old brown bar which used to be a collectible stamp shop and then housed the very first Albert Heijn supermarket in the 1950s, a chain which is now visible throughout the Netherlands. "Tweede Kamer" means "second room" literally in Dutch, but also suggests that the coziness and welcoming atmosphere will lead you to make it your second sitting room. Further toward the political pun spectrum, the Tweede Kamer is actually the name of one of the Dutch houses of Parliament.

The coffeeshop can be summed up in one word: refreshing. Look around (it won't take long; the place is typically Amsterdam-sized) and you will see what coffeeshops were meant to be. The shop attracts locals and tourists of all ages and walks of life, and it's not uncommon to share a table with someone you've never met before and strike up a conversation. The music is quite tasteful and varied with smoking favourites and just plain good stuff (SSUK enjoyed Fela Kuti while visiting), plus the occasional strains of one of the friendly barmen joining in with the tune. The volume is thoughtfully placed below the conversation level, a common issue in Amsterdam coffeeshops. Often they either blast their tunes or everyone is so wasted that the customers slip into a collective coma. Neither will happen at the Tweede Kamer, as each product is matched well to the customer, and often the closeness engages almost everyone in the shop in the same conversation

Speaking of the menu, have they got one for you! As the commercial cannabis industry in Amsterdam becomes, well, more commercial, it's nice to see an emphasis on quality and variety. The aim of the Tweede Kamer "is to establish long term relationships with minor home growers who agree to use only biological insect controls and biological nutrients." For a long time, the smoke menu at the Tweede Kamer and Dampkring have been unofficially known by locals as the most varied, interesting, and extensive ones in town. As a grower it is generally considered quite an honour for one of these two to include your products on their lengthy list. For smokers, you couldn't ask for more choice in strains and varieties of hash. Imagine, a shop with around 20 types of weed, which is mostly biologically (soil) grown and includes interesting and tasty strains like Neville's Haze, NYC Diesel, and Jack Herer. One of the best deals in town is the *Salad Sativa*, which for a very small price delivers to you the crystal-packed shake from their finest sativas.

For the hash lovers, imagine another 20 or so types, including Moroccan, Nepalese, Afghan, and Nederhash (ice-o-lator or pollinator polm). The two shops also have exclusive access to Rifman hash, touting names such as *Nouzha, Noor, Jala,* and *Adiva*. If you just can't master the spliff thing, or are too stoned, this is also one of very few shops in the whole of Amsterdam where a pre-roll is not only smokable but very high quality. Seeds from certain menu selections are also available for purchase.

For some of the highest quality cannabis in Amsterdam plus honest and friendly service, make sure to check out the Tweede Kamer coffeeshop. One American gentleman who was a big fan of the cannabis scene in Amsterdam made a slightly unusual request in his will a few years back. He wanted to be cremated and have part of his ashes laid to rest in an Amsterdam coffeeshop. His widow chose the Tweede Kamer, and you can visit him as well now when you're there. Make sure you blow some smoke his way....







Coffeeshop Tweede (2de) Kamer, Heisteeg 6, Amsterdam Phone: +31 (0)20 4222236

De Dampkring Coffeeshop, Amsterdam

Ah, the smell, the flavour, the heady effect; must be weed from the Dampkring I'm smoking! For years Amsterdammers had been enjoying the Tweede Kamer coffeeshop when something else magical happened to the city: on 16 January 1993 the Dampkring ("atmosphere" in Dutch) opened, creating a larger annex to the original shop. This new addition to the coffeeshop scene in Amsterdam also allowed experienced customers to sip a cocktail, beer or glass of wine while enjoying the organic smoke selections.

Originally coffeeshops were meant to supply cannabis crowds with reliable products, taking the soft drugs out of hard drug dealers' hands. As well as safe distribution these smoky spots were also creating a vibrant social atmosphere in which a few shared spliffs often resulted in flowing political conversations and discussions on all aspects of life. It's on this point that the Dampkring shines especially well. At any given time of day the crowd in the shop represents a very wide cross section of the smokers of the planet. All ages (above 18, of course), races, cultural backgrounds, and types of employment are usually represented, and the menu complements this scene nicely with its scale and quality. Large groups of friends where some prefer spliffs and some suds will enjoy the beautifully decorated bar/coffeeshop and friendly, knowledgeable staff.

The building is thought to have housed a butcher or perhaps smokehouse in the "olden days," and prior to the Dampkring it hosted a few other coffeeshops, including Dokter Anders and Sinsemilla. Due to an emphasis on quality products and running things legally, both the Dampkring and the Tweede Kamer have maintained good relations with their neighbours. In fact, there is a beloved bakery at the end of the Tweede Kamer's street which has supplied the Dampkring with a special recipe for their space cakes. The Dampkring is centrally located just off of the Kalverstraat, one of the major shopping streets in Amsterdam. *SSUK* suggests you save your cash instead for the amazing varieties in a consciously chosen price range that are offered. Imagine trying to choose from the over 40 types of weed and hash on the Dampkring's menu.

You can pick up some legendary hazes such as *Nevill's Haze* and *Amnesia*, and the *Ocean's 12* experienced tremendous popularity during and long after filming. If you're flying too high from those, try some of the renowned *Acapulco Gold* or the unusual *Tasmanian*. They'll get you even higher! It is rare to find so many sativas and hazes on one menu, and usually even harder to find well-grown, organic, and properly harvested buds. Indica fans, don't panic. The *Hasj Plant* will make you drool on the floor.

The Dampkring owner, Paul, is definitely among a small group of dedicated cannabis connoisseurs. Armed with a microscope he carefully checks the quality of potential menu options, looking to see if the buds were flowered long enough, manicured properly, and dried and stored well to ensure the strongest possible effect and perfect flavour. Hash has

not been ignored, as the aromatic array of foreign and domestic hash is impressive and fairly-priced. Dampkring customers enjoy special access to the exclusive Rifman hash products, which are lovingly and expertly selected for the shop. Paul suggests you consider your smokeables along the same standards as fine wine. Different regions and growers produce different levels of quality, and cultivation methods sometimes affect the outcome of the smoke as much as what actual strain it is. The Dampkring and Tweede Kamer both realise the importance of matching products to each individual smoker, based on your level of experience, cash flow, and what sort of high or stoned effect you're after. There's a flavour for every palate, and the staff understands that some tourists seek a lively active afternoon, and others simply want to take a break from their holiday to get stoned and relax.

After years of humble service in Amsterdam, both coffeeshops are now members of an unfortunately small subsection in the cannabis industry, one where it is more important to supply a customer with a small amount of excellent weed or hash than to profit from large quantities of mass-produced garbage. It's this focus on customer service and quality control that has turned out masses of loyal repeat customers, local as well as visiting tourists.









De Dampkring Coffeeshop, Handboogstraat 29, Amsterdam. Websites: www.dampkring.net or www.dedampkring.nl RIGHAL SENSI SEEDS

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Dr. Lester Grinspoon (December 1996)

Lester Grinspoon M.D. is a Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He is the author of Marijuana Reconsidered and Marijuana: The Forbidden Medicine. www. marijuana-uses.com and www.rxmarijuana.com





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Coffeeshop Rusland, Amsterdam

Successfully invaded for more than 30 years

By Jules Marshall

Not a lot of people - Amsterdammers even - know that the street in the old centre of town known simply as *Rusland* ('Russia') has nothing to do with the country. In the 15th century, the city built this narrow street to connect two major canals, and the district it passed through had been called the *Willem Ruusschentuin.* - a mouthful that by the 16th century had been bastardized to *Het Ruyssenlandt*, and eventually to its current name.

Nonetheless, when coffee shop Rusland opened its doors in 1974 (or 1976; noone really knows any more), established by a regular customer of the original Mellow Yellow shop, the associations between the Cold War with Russia and the Dope War between the hippies and authorities, was played up.

Maarten Brusselers was an old-style dope revolutionary who thought he could do a better job of supplying the city's stoners. Originally a tiny space half the size of today's shop, he is credited with introducing the system whereby the customer entered via the front and leaves via the back door, and later he pioneered the wide choice of menu that became the standard way of running what became known as coffee shops.

I must confess a personal affection for Rusland; when I first moved to Amsterdam in 1989, it became my regular hang-out. Its (then) décor of light green and cream gave the place the air of an English tea shop (with one critical difference!), and it was just more chilled than the hurly-burly of the city centre's other smoking holes.

Several years ago the present owner Natascha had her brother re-decorate, and he chose to emphasis the shop's associations with Russia,. Today, it is all imperial purples and reds with gold accents; in short: it's *lush*. Thankfully, the chilled atmosphere, along with the super friendly service and policy of good

smoke for a reasonable price, were kept. Back in the mid-70s, Rusland, like much of the old historic centre, was a pretty sleazy, run-down part of town. These days, after a decade-long drive by the city to smarten up its heritage, the street is fairly chique. It's location, a crucial 100 metres from the start of the Red Light District, means it avoids the tourist hordes. But also because in 1990 the SAS Radisson hotel chain bought half the street and renovated it.

In a week in mid-November, as everyone was running around sprucing the place up for the annual invasion of Americans that marks the *High Times Cannabis Cup*, I spoke to Victor, manager of Rusland for the last five years, about the

hashes at the moment and seven grass varieties. We just try to keep prices down – the cheapest is 5.75 Euros and most expensive is 7 Euros, which are good prices. A lot of our customers are just ordinary people who want an affordable smoke. And yeah, we've got a lot of tea (famously, 40 varieties). Some of our customers have been coming here for more than 30 years and they know more about the shop than I do!

I remember a middle-aged French, skinny guy who was always in here when I came in back in the early 90s...

Oh, you mean Maurice. He was an artist who recently died - there's a picture of him on the wall. He used to come in,

When we started the police came in on a daily basis, confiscated everything, including customers' stashes. And half an hour later everything was back and on sale again! It was an exciting time.

shop's history, its present and future. For no particular reason other than that it was on my mind as I parked my bike out front, I wondered:

SSUK: Had the shop had felt threatened by the arrival of its rather straight international hotel neighbour?

Victor: We were afraid when the hotel first announced its plans (it even made an offer to buy-out Rusland), but it's been no problem at all. Many of the hotel guests pop in to smoke a joint and have a coffee.

When Rusland started I guess it was mostly selling hash? What does the current menu look like?

There was no Dutch grass at all; only in the last 15 years, and home produced grass now has 70-75% of the market. We do not specialise in expensive varieties like Haze. We have seven

smoke a joint then go and start working. Anyway, as the police eased off their original pressure we soon had a lot of competition with other coffee shops opening in the centre. We realised we had to do something special to get people in ours, and that's the atmosphere; we get nice people, I think.

Rusland is very laid back compared to most shops in centre, aimed mainly at tourists, with pumping music.

We just want to be a little bit special

— which is hard, as everyone wants to
do that. Even though we're really close
to the Red Light District, you have to
know we are here. But a lot of people
do. It has a very good reputation among
Amsterdammers. Everyone knows it
even if they haven't been here.
When we started the police came in on
a daily basis, confiscated everything,
including customers' stashes. And half
an hour later everything was back and on

sale again! It was an exciting time. But now everything is official. The police come in around four times a year. It's a nice thing to see – a shame you are not allowed to make pictures. Two policemen in uniform come in with their own scales and start measuring everything and count the total to make sure it is below 500 grams. If it is, you've got no problems at all. If there's a little bit more, they will take it. It's funny to see the police handling all the gear.

Out of the four check ups, there are two big ones, when they turf everyone out and come in with a dog. That's also nice to see. It can be a bit alarming if you don't know what's going on.

What's the connection with Russia, apart from the street name?

The owner back then used the catchphrase "Invade Russia!", and this was in the middle of the Cold War. So it was a bit of a joke with customers about the police, but also a bit political. In those times, the selling of hashish was mostly done by people a bit on the left wing – revolutionaries, if you like. It was done out of idealism. But now it's just a business.

What changed was at the start, the dealers worked independently with a bag and the coffee shops had nothing to do with it. But now that's not the case. The taxman comes with the police on the big check ups, and they go through our books, what we pay for our supplies and so on. I'm told I have to keep a receipt for every kilo I buy – in fact, I have to make my own receipt, because obviously no-one will give me one.

It does lead to some strange situations, like if you were being chased by the police for having 100 grams of weed on you, and you step into a coffee shop, they can do nothing. But when you leave the shop they can arrest you. Sometimes one of the growers gets arrested, but they typically have to spend a day in a cell and pay a small fine. It's not legal.

It's an irritation, rather than a liferuining situation as in most of rest of the world.

It's hard to keep treading the line between legality and illegality. I'm not sure if things would be any better if everything was legal. If it was like cigarettes and alcohol, the prices would triple from the tax. Maybe production costs would go down a bit, but if you look at the cost the few legal (medical) weed growers charge, it's also 6-7 euros a gram.

The rules now are a bit clearer – we can sell some non-smoking products containing of marihuana (Mika drops by later with the day's supply of homebaked hash muffins).

We are a little bit worried what's going to happen when *all* smoking is banned everywhere - maybe in 2008. What happens to a coffee shop? It is already illegal for people to smoke in the workplace – any workplace – and until now they have made an exception for the bar and café sector. But officially my

staff are working here and as the boss I have to take care nobody is smoking. Everyone is curious what they are going to do with coffee shops. Maybe they will all be gone and there will just be window booths selling.

A lot of people will start smoking outside. There are also certain areas in Amsterdam where smoking is banned in the open air – Mercatorplein, in the Old West. I don't think they will be extending this though.

What about smoking bongs? Would that get around the anti-smoking ban?

Well, a lot of Dutch and Europeans just don't like using bongs and pipes. It's more of an American thing. We like a joint. I don't really think the law has dealt with these types of questions: if you can smoke a cigar and a pipe, can you smoke a bong? There have been ideas about ventilation systems but this has not worked out. We hope that coffee shops will remain the only place in Amsterdam where you can still smoke.

You might get a situation where half you customers have just come in to smoke a cigarette.

(Laughs) Yes.

Isn't it frustrating that on the one hand you have to act very professionally, in terms of inventory control and taxes, but on the other hand you are not allowed to behave as any normal, professionally-run business would. Like advertising, investment and so on?

This is just something you have to accept when you get in to this area of business. It's also a little bit exciting of course: how far you can stretch the situation. All our supplies come from small-scale growers. They make nice products, and are passionate about what they do. The ones who just do it for money, mostly it does not work out. It can be a bit frustrating, sure, but also a bit fun.

You can't even make T-shirts with the name on.

Rules like this are changing all the time. As far as I understand at the moment, you *can* make a T-shirt with your name, but no marihuana leaf or big joint. You can't put on your address. But now we can get a list from City Hall of what is and what isn't allowed.

We have a sister coffee shop, and we had a situation where both places were checked up on. At one place they took all the pictures of marihuana off the wall and left the space cake, and at the other one they took all the space cake and left the pictures. It was the same police team! Sometimes even they don't get the rules themselves.

What is really important is the type of customer you get. This is something the police keep a close eye on, and the wrong customer can get you closed down. Someone carrying a gun or too much ecstasy or something. We of course do not sell or promote this, but you never know what someone's carrying on a



I'm told I have to keep a receipt for every kilo I buy – in fact, I have to make my own receipt, because obviously no-one will give me one.

Friday night. This makes it harder, but it is also necessary to maintain the split between hard and soft drugs. We have far fewer addicts in the Netherlands as a result of this policy. It's a pretty good system. Look at the US or Great Britain, putting people in jail has become a kind of industry with a lot of money involved. It's kind of a 'Hotel of Oppression'. You can't stop people taking drugs – nowhere in the world has managed it, ever. We can laugh about it but over there in the US, people are not laughing.

What kind of skills are needed to run a coffee shop?

Errrrm....I guess you need basic number skills, but you also have to know people. You have to act really fast; if someone working for you is screwing up you have to act immediately as you can be closed down so quickly and easily. It's easier to tell ages now as everyone has to carry ID. You have to pick out the hard drug users and kick them out. Now we have straight rules and we all know what to do and not to do, but there is a fragile line that can be broken. The authorities are trying to close many shops. But

It would be different if you were opening a coffee shop today?

It's not possible any more. All you can do is buy one, and they are getting really expensive, plus the fact that this license can be lost very easily - it would not be a good idea to get in to the business now. They can always find an excuse to close you if they don't like you. You might never even be told the real reasons for being closed. Although this does not apply to us, next year they will enforce the split between bar and coffee shop, force owners to sell either alcohol or marihuana, and for many this will be a reason to stop the coffee shop activities.

The city has always seemed a bit embarrassed by tourists coming for dope, its reputation – but surely freedom and tolerance are good things to be associated with.

Of course for the city it is not nice when they are connected too much with drugs and sex. Other countries don't see the difference between drugs and *drugs* and DRUGS. If you're the mayor of

Mayor Cohen is keen at the moment to portray Amsterdam as a 'creative capital.'

'freedom and tolerance' when it might

to them be a reason not to locate their

offices here.

I don't know if using drugs is creative...

No, I mean the lack of police action against innocent soft drug users creates a more relaxed environment in which to be artistic. It makes the city a more relaxed place to live and work.

Yeah, yeah, I think so. I can also imagine that if the Mayor's with George Bush that he'd rather not talk about the subject. A lot of countries talk about it, but nobody seems to agree with Holland. It all boils down to politics, and in my opinion a lot to do with keeping the prisons full.

I pop back to Rusland later that day to meet Natascha, one of maybe 4-5 women owners of a coffee shop. Surprisingly, she's never met the other women owners in the city. There's no *Society of Dutch Dope Chicks* or anything; not even a monthly networking event. She laughs and likes the idea, but that's maybe for the future. In the meantime, she reiterates most of what Victor said about like in the coffee shop business, and tells me how she landed up in such an interesting profession.

"I was always a smoker, and I worked in Rusland from the age of 23. When the owner decided to get out of the business in 1988, I took over the shop with my (then) husband."

Now divorced, she took over the shop when her kids had reached a certain age. Her day involves meeting with her producers, buying fresh flowers for her other shop, Het Ballonetje, in the East of the city, and currently making sure Rusland is re-stocked with cushions – for some reason they are a popular target for tourists.

"It's a job that combines well with having kids," she says. "I have time to spend with them – although it's a bit strange that they cannot come and see me at work." As if to illustrate the point, almost on cue, her 15-year-old son appears at the door and has to ask her to pop outside so they can speak!

The thing she dislikes most about the police check ups is being made to feel like a criminal, with dogs running all over the place. "The first time it was quite a shock, but you get used to it. You have to keep a cool head – they always ask me who I bought my cannabis from – like they expect I'm going to tell them!"

A lot of Dutch and Europeans just don't like using bongs and pipes. It's more of an American thing. We like a joint.

there were too many – it was not good for business. But it's not so different to running a normal bar, where you also have a lot of rules to stick to. We're treated about the same.

But special skills? Well, obviously you have to know a little bit about the product – but don't worry about making a mistake, as your customers will very quickly tell you if you're selling crap! Definitely. For the rest, you need the same skills as running any business that employs young people. It's often their first job or not their most important job, so you have to keep them motivated.

Amsterdam and you go to New York and someone starts laughing because you're the Mayor of Dope Town or something; they want to talk about something else. How big US companies think about the



Rusland Coffee Shop Rusland 16, Amsterdam Tel: +31 (0) 20 627 9468 Open every day from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm



Caners on a Train

By Joe Kane

So I've been visiting some friends out of town and a really chilled fucking day it's been. Good company, lots of fucking laughs, great food and wine and some primo, and I do mean P-R-I-M-O dope.

One of the folks I've been visiting is an agricultural biologist. That's his real job, mind, but at home it's got a lot of uses as well. Fucking right: home grown organic vegetables and fruit and home made organic wine (that really tasted like wine). Oh yeah, I nearly forgot the weed. Loco weed, or as the man describes it "Crack Pot". You get the picture: after-images, severe stonedness, inability to string a coherent fucking sentence together, etc.

I've done a lot of grass in my time but this stuff was well fucking righteous. He's promised he'll show me what he did and how he did it next time. But I'm getting away from the fucking point of the column.

Yeah so I'm totally fucked. Rubbered; absolutely wasted like I haven't been since I was 15 years old or something. My hosts say I can stay over and offer me a bed for the night, but of course I've got to get back to town cos I've something really fucking important to do that absolutely can't wait, blah blah. Yeah of course I'll have one more single skinner of straight weed for the road that's mighty generous of you my good friend.

Anyhow, they take me to the station and wave me off and I slump into a seat, switch on the MP3 player and chill into some tunes.

After maybe 10 minutes or so (I really don't know how long it's been cos I'm so stoned I've totally lost track of time) I come back to reality with a jolt, having suddenly realised that I utterly fucking STINK of skunk. Not only that, but people are looking at me. No, they're STARING at me. Shit, shit! Keep it together now.

I sidle down to the crapper at the other end of the carriage. Luckily, it's not engaged so I gets in and lock the door behind me. The first thing I notice is that my eyes look like fried fucking eggs, I'm white as a fucking ghost and my tongue

feels like it's too big for my mouth. Ignore all that shit, I've got to find that weed. This is fucking awful! Wasted like a 15 year old and getting on for as paranoid as one as well. Keep it together, boy.

So anyhow, 10 minutes later and I've emptied out every pocket and had my fingers in every fucking place it could be: nothing. Not as much as a bit of fucking twig. How can this be? I can still smell the skunk but I can't find the fucker

By this time there's some cunt tapping on the bog door wanting in, so I either stay put and risk the wrath of the ticket inspector and abso-fucking-lutely guarantee an ugly scene, or I just brazen it out and go back to my seat.

No contest. It's back to my seat. So I shuffle up the aisle and I think I hear someone say "Hmm, nice aftershave". KEEP IT TOGETHER!

The ticket collector checks my ticket. "That's fine" he says, "You fucking STINK of weed", he's thinking, "You smell like a POLECAT!"

Finally we get to Glasgow and I'm half expecting the Old Bill to be waiting to lift me in front of everyone, my status of "never been busted for anything" blown away like leaves.

Of course, it never happened, and of course, there was a hippy kid sitting at the table behind me with a load of dope in a rucksack. Even I could smell it when he stood up to get off the train.

Now, I'm really quite embarrassed about the above story. But every word of it is true and it is pretty fucking funny...in hindsight.

Later,

JK

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By: Weckels, the grow specialist from Atami // Photos: Weckels.

Outdoor growing - indoor blooming (part 5) The bloom period under artificial light

In this episode of the 'Outdoor growing – indoor blooming' experiment, we will be taking a look at what factors are of importance in keeping conditions as close to the wishes of the marihuana plants as possible. Because after all, as indoor growers we are able to create an ideal living environment for the White Shark plants, so that the ladies will bloom optimally. The plethora of nutrients, stimulators and the PK 13-14 with which we have continuously been applying to the plants, will by now have shown their effects on the bloom and growth of these well-developed plants.



These fine bushes will most definitely be creating some lovely flower heads!

In addition to the quantities and correct composition of the fertilisers that we have been adding to the marihuana plants' feed water, the quantity of light they received also has a huge influence on the size and quantity of the flower heads that the ladies have been able to produce. If growers know anything, they know this, and this has been the impulse for many to pack their grow space as full as possible with lamps, in the hope of realising as large a harvest as possible. What they forget is that frequently, adding a lamp or more to the grow space can have huge repercussions - for the temperature in the space, for example, or the quantities of air that have to be expelled from the grow space, or the air moisture content. Should the temperature in the grow space for example rise above 30°C (because we have hung more lamps than there were to begin with), then the plants will be hindered in their growth and further development. Should the temperature rise even further than this, then the plants will not grow and / or bloom any further at all. In short, the development of the plant will come to a practical standstill. In this way it can happen that increasing the quantity of light leads to a tangibly lower harvest and therefore absolutely not to the improvement in yield that was originally

A marihuana plant will try to compensate for too high a temperature by pumping out more moisture by transpiration. By doing this the plant tries to reduce her temperature a bit. A good reaction, you might say. But what many growers do not appreciate is that this operation costs the



Even from a distance, the plants still look very impressive!

marihuana plant a lot of energy. So this is a real waste of effort for them, and this is a pity especially when you consider that the ladies could have used this energy for growing more and bigger flower heads instead. When we as growers take steps to prevent the plant having to evaporate more moisture, by bringing the temperature down ourselves and keeping it under control, then the plants no longer need to worry themselves about this. The green ladies can then put all their energy into creating nice big buds - which is something that will be clearly apparent to us too. It is not for nothing that growers with heat problems in the grow space achieve considerably less impressive results than their colleagues who have managed to keep their temperature safely under control.

Ideal values

In the event that we still feel that we need to hang some more lamps in the grow space and still want to keep the temperature within ideal values (between 24 and 28 °C), we can do this by installing a large(r) air extractor in the space. After all, this will have considerably more capacity than its smaller predecessor and will consequently be able to remove much more warm air from out of the grow space. One passing remark to add here is that the air coming in from outside the grow space must be considerably cooler. If the incoming air (the air drawn in to the grow space from outside) is not - for example during the summer months - then we can run the extractor as fast as we like, the

temperature in the grow space will barely be nudged downwards. After all, during the summer months the temperature of the outside air is pretty high (a minimum of around 18 °C), and thanks to its warmth it will do little to compensate for the heat from the lamps. In short, a couple of extra lamps in the winter months is do-able, but during the warmer months it is a problem.

In addition to this problem, a larger capacity extractor will often make quite a bit more noise and furthermore use a lot more energy in its operation. We can do something about the racket by making a sort of sound-dampening hood around it. With the aid of some insulating material and a few DIY skills we should be able to limit the noise to a minimum. For the grower not blessed with even rudimentary handiwork skills, many grow shops also stock ready-to-use sound-dampening casings. These are often available with the purchase a new extraction installation for a small additional price.

Staying with the air extractor installation issue for a moment, it is also advisable to let the extractor operate via a so-called step thermostat. This is actually a sort of switch mechanism that makes sure that the extractor speeds up or slows down step-wise (depending on whether the temperature is too high or not) and so whether it does or does not suck (more) air in to the grow room. This works really well, given that now we are able to keep the temperature in the grow room under much better control. If we were to use an air extraction system that ran continuously at the same speed, then

we would have a situation where there were large differences in temperature between the day (when the lamps are on) and the night (when the lamps are off). During the day the extractor would most probably work fine, because it would be removing all the warm air as much as possible out of the space. In the dark period, so when the lamps are not on, then the temperature in the grow room naturally will fall, thanks to which allowing the extractor to churn away at full speed would be pointless. Even more seriously, allowing the extractor to



The flower heads are beginning to reach a good size. And they haven't even finished blooming.

work flat out could even have a negative effect, because it would make the grow room too cold. Especially when growing during the winter, the temperature can have large differences between the light period and the dark period in the grow room. This can have very deleterious consequences, and that is why as growers we have to pay so much attention to this topic.

So it is fair to assume that most growers keep a regular eye on the temperature in the grow room, and yet it is precisely those times when we are not around in the grow room that are the most full of risk. It is then, after all, when we have no way of telling how the temperature in the grow room is doing. So for instance with a cold environment around a poorly insulated grow room, the temperature can drop to dangerous levels. The result of this can be a grower who regularly comes across purple or somewhat reddish leaves and / or even finds coloured branches among the plants. This phenomenon arises not from too much or too little nutrients, but is simply a signal that the plants have had to endure too much cold. Outdoor growers know all about this, because well-known outdoor varieties such as the Purple plants only develop their distinctive purple coloured flower heads thanks to the cold temperature of the outside air. If we were to grow this variety or even just allow it to bloom indoors, then their flower heads would be (almost) unrecognisable even to the fans of Purple strains. The buds simply do not develop their well-known purple hue.



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ICE 9

Northern Light White Widow



With the aid of an air dehumidifier (such as this Carrier) we try to keep the air moisture content under the 50% level. The ideal would really be to keep the air moisture content below 45%

Living environment

In order to make the living environment under artificial light as peasant as possible, as growers we have to make sure that we have a good view of the temperature during the whole cycle (so during the days as well as during the nights). A handy instrument for this is a temperature meter that displays the minimum and the maximum values reached, between which the temperature in the previous period has registered. A simple press of the button on the temperature meter can then tell us at exactly when and at what time the temperature might have been too high or too low. The real professionals are well aware of the importance of this and often connect the temperature meter directly to the extractor, and quite often to a heating element too. In this case the grower actually has rigged up a sort of climate controller. As soon as the temperature falls too far, the extractor will start to draw less air out of the space, thanks to which the temperature in the grow room will rise again on its own. If this turns out to be not enough or not quick enough and the temperature does not rapidly



The plants in the meantime have reached about 2 meters in height. This means we do need to have a good, high grow space available, if we want to have a chance of bringing such large plants to full bloom.



Because the plants are still growing in height, you can be sure these are going to develop into real monster bushes. We hang the lamps increasingly higher, to prevent burn spots from developing..

come back to the required level, then the heating element will kick in and in no time at all have the grow room back at its desired level (and of course as the temperature reaches this level, then the heating element switches itself back off again).

Since most growers tend to have their lamps on during the night, as the energy is cheaper then and / or because the energy groups around the grow room are put under less pressure in this way (at night we tend to use less energy altogether), the phrase 'night and day' in growers' jargon tends to be a bit confusing. When we speak about 'day' when growing marihuana under artificial light, we mean the part of the day when we have set our lamps to be burning.

Although in some grow rooms a large number of lamps can easily be hung, without sending the temperature too high, of course we always have to take account of the energy supply. In every home this is made up of a number of energy groups and thanks to this the possibilities as regards the amount of electricity we can use for the grow room are often severely limited.



To prevent insect infestations we hang bright yellow fly paper in the grow room and the underside of the stem of each plant. In this way we try to combat the presence (in this case) of fruit flies.

So far I have avoided discussing the manner in which we get hold of our electricity. A number of growers have a problem with high electricity bills and therefore try by all kinds of creative ways to bypass the meter for their energy. What you as a grower choose to do, this is something each one of us has to decide for themselves. The fact is that the growers who illegally tap their electricity often run a much greater risk of accidents and / or fires. In addition to this, plantations that tap illegally are more frequently discovered. The electricity companies are ripped off by a few growers for large amounts of energy and as a result they will go to great lengths to call a halt to this. This is contrasted with the growers who do pay for their energy, since then as well as the grower making money the electricity company is also getting its slice of the action. The increased chance of being busted by illegally tapping electricity aside, the risk of a fire and / or a deadly accident (from a heavy electric shock) thanks to the often badly botched wiring is also a point you as a grower need to have a good think about. Should your (own) house go up in flames and the insurance company finds that the fire started as a result of someone buggering around with the electricity meter or the wiring, then you can kiss goodbye to a lot more than a grow room. In short, be aware of what you get yourself in to.



The flower heads have been blossoming for five or six weeks. Commercial varieties should by now be ready for harvesting. The White Shark plants still need a few more weeks though!

White Shark

Meanwhile, White Shark plants tend to bloom in about six weeks. A commercial variety such as Top 44 will by then (after about 44 days of bloom) generally be ready for harvesting. The White Shark plants really need a few weeks more to allow their marvellous, white buds to develop to their full glorious potential. It is notable that the flower heads of the White Shark develop very gradually. In order to make sure that this blooming process continues along the right tracks, we need to make sure that the air moisture content in the grow room is ideal, and to make sure we keep it at that level. For the final blooming stage of marihuana, the ideal is when we can manage to keep the air moisture content during the period under 50%. An air moisture content of about 45% is actually the most ideal. We can tweak all the other growing conditions for the marihuana plant and still raise healthy plants, but the higher the air moisture content rises above the 50% level, then the greater chances of the subjects of our experiment being affected by a mould infection. Make no mistake; especially for the long-blooming varieties such as White Shark, the air moisture content in the grow room can not be low enough during the period in which it is blossoming.

The moulds that pose such a threat to the marihuana plant are found in the flower heads. The most feared mould is without doubt bud rot (also known in growing circles as bud molt or top rot). This mould is so persistent that when it is given even the tiniest chance to develop, for the flower heads of the marihuana plants there is no chance of escape. In addition to that, the mould is really treacherous, because in just a few days it can infect the whole grow room. The consequences of this are disastrous for the grower, given that the entire harvest is threatened with ruin.

To prevent such dramas from unfolding we as growers need to ensure that the air moisture content remains firmly under control. An ideal apparatus for this is an air dehumidifier. This apparatus draws the water vapour (moisture) out of the air in the grow room and ensures that the



Make sure that the grow room is continuously kept clear of dead leaves and other plant remains. These can create a ready source of diseases and / or insect infestations.

air moisture content in the grow room is kept below the danger level. An air dehumidifier that I have had very good personal experience with is the Carrier. This brand is available in various models, depending on the size of the grow room. Such gizmos are not cheap, but they do guarantee an advantageous (= low) air moisture content during the crucial bloom phase and thanks to this they would still be a bargain at twice the price!

Insect plagues

Another danger besides too high an air moisture content in this experiment is the possibility of an infestation by insects. When our plants were still outdoors doing their (pre) growth, I mentioned in this series of articles how important it was to spray the plants regularly with an organic pest controller. In this way we attempted to remain free of any insect infestation. A couple of days before we were due to wrap the plants up prior to bringing them in to the grow room for their final blooming, we gave the plants one last spray with the organic insecticide. For the first couple of weeks there was not an insect to be found anywhere. But with the arrival of the blossoming period and the first weeks thereafter, more and small flies started to turn up in the grow room. These small flies, probably little fruit flies, are easily kept under control, provided that the moment we see a couple, we take immediate counter measures. The total number of different measures that we can choose from to combat these little beasts during the bloom period is pretty limited. Bearing in mind what I have just been saying about the importance of keeping the air moisture content down, it is out of the question to go spraying any of our organic pesticide. It would seriously raise the chances of mould. Given this awkward fact, we are forced to go with a different, but also very effective, alternative approach. Namely, we hang lots of sticky strips or flypapers up in the grow room as well as on the underside of the stem of each plant. The flies are attracted to these bright yellow strips that also give off a smell attractive to flies, whereupon they will be stuck fast. This method works very well and presents no risk at all to the marihuana plants. Keep a good eye on the strips, because in no time at all they will be absolutely covered in



A primal forest of marihuana buds.



The mass of lovely buds is developing nicely. We make sure that the plants have everything to their liking, including all the necessary nutrients.

flies and then they will need replacing. During the bloom period we need to regularly raise the height that the lamps are hung at. The plants will continue to grow in height a little and this is something we have to keep track of. By doing this we can avoid burning the tips of the plants.



The small white hairs on the bud are evidence that this one has still not finished blooming.



Yet another well-developed bud. Despite the fact that this one looks really good, we are still going to give the plants a little while more to finish blooming.

As well as raising the lamps, we also turn the plants once in a while, so that all sides get a good-to-optimal share of the light. Given that the flower heads will already be pretty fat and beginning to be quite heavy, it is important that we provide some kind of support for some of the buds, so that they do not just

hang down under their own weight. If this does happen then the buds will be receiving quite a bit less light than they would otherwise have done if they were blooming right under the lamps. As a result of this the eventual marihuana will be of lower quality, thanks to the buds receiving (a lot) less light than those that were growing correctly and so make less THC crystals and therefore look less fat and attractive as a result.

In addition to this, well-illuminated buds will usually be noticeably bigger – and that is always something nice to contemplate as harvest time approaches.

So in order to make sure that our buds don't go hanging down, we stretch string or wires from the ceiling downwards and attach the ends to the flower heads. With this technique we suspend the buds from above, effectively, and give the marihuana plants a helping hand in supporting their flower heads. We have to make sure we only lightly tension the wire or string and not draw it too tight, because this could cause damage to the side branches and / or snap them - something that is guaranteed to put an end to any buds on them. Once the flower heads have been supported by the lightly-tensioned wires, we will no longer be able to turn the plants. This all sounds pretty logical, but anyone who forgets this and accidentally tries to turn the plants anyway, will create an absolute disaster. The buds will be dragged through the tensioned wires around the plants and that is the last thing we want to be doing with the plants still needing a good three weeks of blooming to finish their job.

In the next article we will take a closer look at this last three weeks of the bloom period, during which the White Shark ladies will be completing the last stage of their lives. In that article I will be outlining the most important points to keep in mind in this last three weeks. In the meantime I can reveal that the flower heads will be looking their very best!

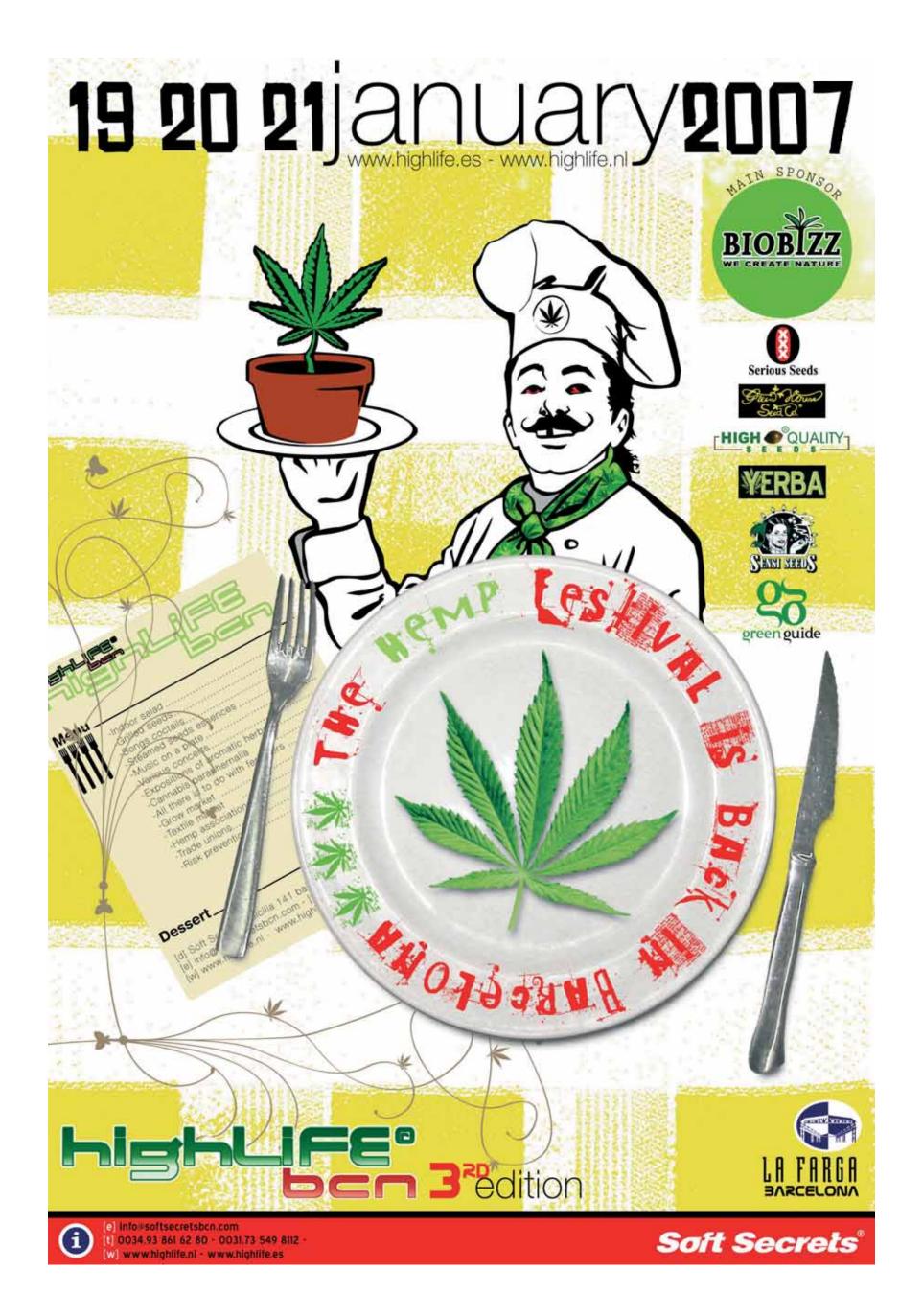
Finally, I would like to wish all readers, growers and others involved in the industry a good new year, and express the hope that 2007 will be a year filled with marvellous buds!

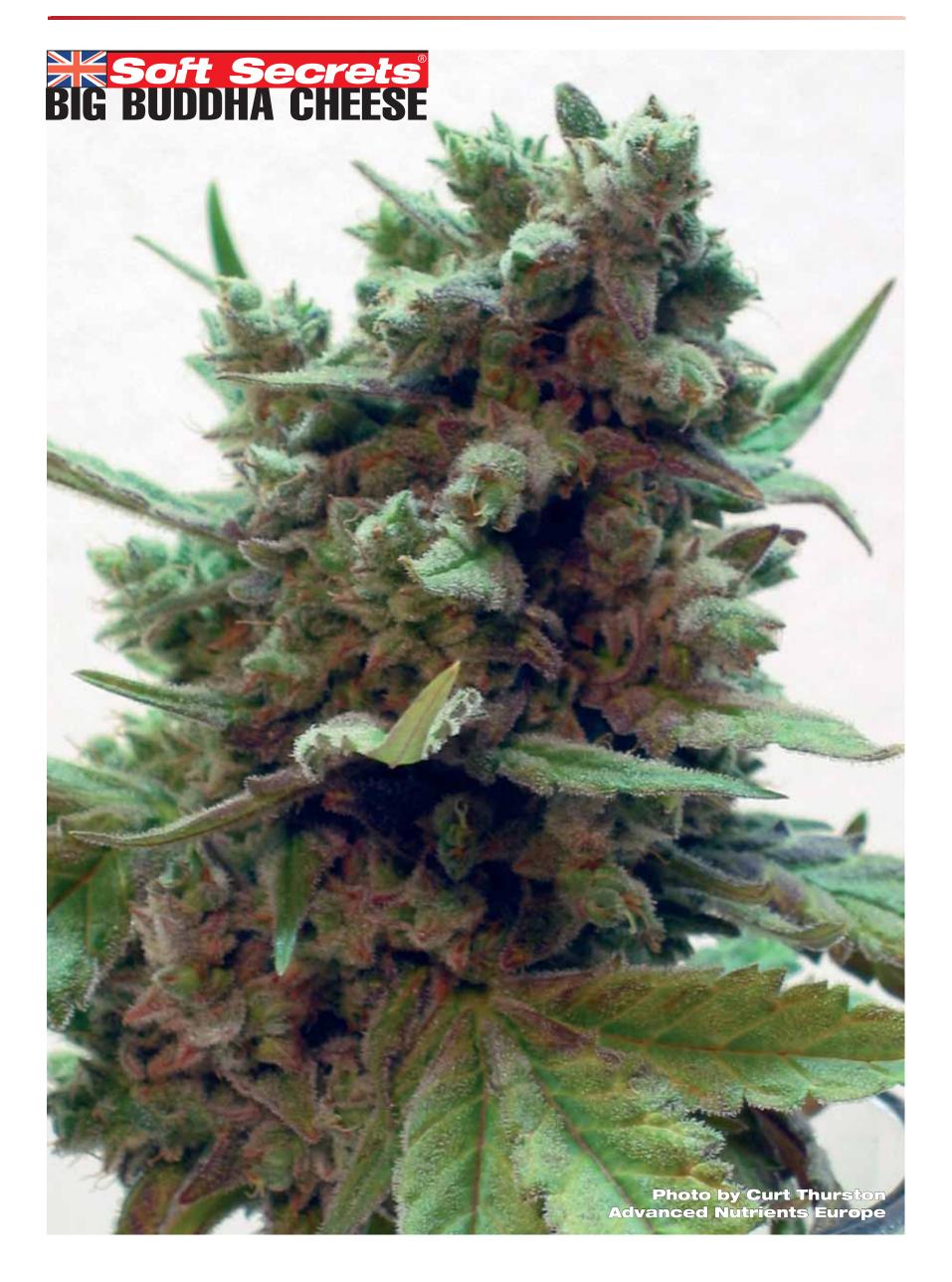


This photo was taken from the side. We turn the plants fairly regularly (and when you do make sure that there are no wires attached to the buds) so that all sides are well lit. The buds will show their gratitude for you doing this.



This apparent chaos of strings ensure that the flower heads do not droop downwards. We help the marihuana plants by giving them a hand, as it were, to support their buds.





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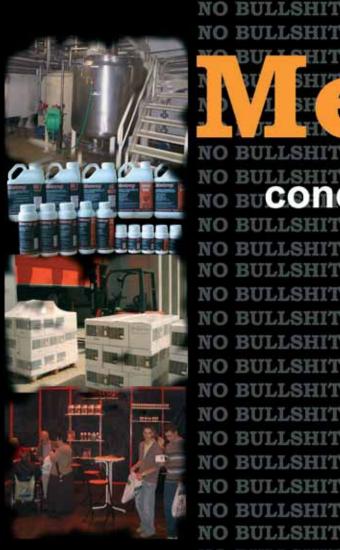
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Landrace genetics with Zamalito

By lazystrain

Fashion has it that the majority of cannabis growers these days prefer to be growing varieties of cultivated cannabis indoors. Ultimately, these cultivated varieties descend from a small base of genetic stock – mostly skunk/haze varieties. The collection of landrace genetics is then restricted to just a handful of dedicated enthusiasts across the planet. Sowing and growing, then reaping and mowing, cannabis seeds from far-off lands, is their passion.

Zamalito is a cannabis-anthropologists and herbal-botanist. Rooted to the earth, his studies are mostly conducted in the field - alongside his plants. Very few people can actually claim to have grown as many pure landrace genetics - collected from all over the world. From the Congo to Kashmir, from Burma to Brazil, the tapestry of cannabis genetics is a vast subject. Soft Secrets UK then arranged a Q & A session with Zamalito to get back to basics.

Whereabouts in the world are you based?

Lately, I've been growing in the eastern Blue Ridge Mountains in the southeastern United States. I've found this area to be capable of producing some truly fantastic herb that in my opinion is far superior to any indoor product. Being different from Europe and the Pacific NW there are very few commercial genetics available that are capable of taking advantage of outdoor growing conditions here. That's the main reason I started getting into breeding landrace genetics. The weather, this year, has just been phenomenal. Its been an El Nino year which has eliminated the hurricane and tropical storm related rains that normally plague us in September/October. The flowers harvested so far have taken on a look that I've only seen from flowers cultivated in Hawaii - where after curing you see just a huge array of color. Many different shades of green, lots of amber and red pigments, it's just a stunning crop. I'm the most proud I've ever been. The pure Zamals have vet to finish but when you pack a large bowl of Zamal x Parvati this year's has

a strong sweet carrot overtone that I've been trying to get since growing the *Zamal*. It's always produced wonderful flavors but until now I never understood why locals on *La Reunion* describe their herb as having a mango/carrot flavor. It's a really nice feeling to know that I've grown a landrace to produce the qualities it has in its native environment.

When did you start growing cannabis?

At the time when I started and even still now there wasn't much quality available except for a locally grown fluffy road-kill skunk sativa that they called "donkey dick". You'd get 1 or 2 seeds in a quarter. Though I didn't have a clue what I was doing I grew some of these seeds in the woods near my parents house. Deer ate most of them, and I harvested the herb prematurely before drying it in the microwave. Quite a few years later a friend who was down on his luck had a hydro-farm 1kw halide and copies of Ed Rosenthal's Handbook

Georgia mid-grade. These turned out to grow into wonderful plants. About half were pure Afghans. The other-half were hybrids with some Colombian influence, and a grape taste. One plant had long narrow leaves. The serration's were very course, and resembled alligator tails. The stem was different also. It was a Thai! I'd grown my first landrace sativa.

Which method do you use?

For a number of years now I've had the outdoor growing bug. Since I mostly grow landrace sativa and do not live in the tropics I have to use a few tricks to cause the plants to mature more quickly. The first is that I start my plants very early either indoors or in a cold frame. If I start them indoors I run them under 24 hrs of light to make them more sensitive to darkness. I'm fortunate enough to have a growing situation that allows me to grow very large plants in full sun and still have them camouflaged into their surroundings. Full sun is crucial to getting the landrace herb to finish as fast as possible. Though I really love the

We need more breeders in the sweet spots where the environment produces amazing cannabis with little help from man. In Brazil we can maintain the African, Mexican and South American genetics without worrying about changing the lines to the degree that say an indoor or temperate latitude grower would

and Mel Franks 'Growers Guide' he was selling. I'd just gotten my tax return and took him up on the offer. He had been growing for a couple years and had obtained some Shiva Skunk seeds before Sensi stopped shipping to the States. He gave me a nice cutting, but for the most part the mad scientist in me was more interested in growing bag-seed. Once a year this sweet piney skunk from Oklahoma came to town. I hit the dealer up for seeds and this became the first staple strain I worked with. It produced a nice yield and purple pistils. Over the years I had collected a glass cigar tube filled with seeds partly from fresh skunky compressed North

concept of building the soil with some of the more extreme sativa strains. This year, I grew them in grow bags. With many varieties especially those from the very lowest latitudes the root binding helps trigger the plants to flower. The plants still root into ground out of the bottom of the bags, but that doesn't seem to lessen the advantages of using containers. I then cover the bags in a large ball of straw and lignin grasses. My theory is the lignin grass increases the presence of beneficial fungi in the soil, but also the high concentration of spores in the grass ball inoculates the plant. I fertilize with 5-year-old chicken manure. I'm also a huge fan of compost and teas.

What is your favourite type of plant to grow?

It's hard to pick a favorite. I've always been partial to the pacific Mexican landraces. The problem with the Mexicans (that I have!) is that they don't produce anywhere near as high a quality herb indoors as they do under sunlight. Naturally I love the Zamal and its hybrids. I like all landrace for the most part. What I like the least are the Dutch indica-types. It seems that almost all of the ability to produce accessory cannabinoids has been bred out of the modern indica gene pool. Which is odd since hashish traditionally has very high CBD levels. We must not forget that CBD is medicinal also and crucial to the buzz of the older hashish varieties.

Do you prefer landrace or cultivated genetics?

Since I've started growing almost solely outside there aren't many cultivated lines that are appropriate so I'd have to say landrace. I definitely understand the value of cultivated lines but the level of diversity with landrace genetics is so nice. I also believe that when more chemotype work is done we are going to find there isn't much difference between the heavily cultivated lines be it sativa or indica. Maybe there's something wrong with me but I don't notice a huge difference between a 75% sativa Skunk #1, a Cinderella and Northern Lights. Whereas, you can take Kashmiri Resin Factory and Deep Chunk (both 100% indica from central Asia) and they're worlds apart.

Please explain a little about the genetics in your collection?

My three staples that I love and could never lose are my Zamals, the Ghanaian Accra Skunk, and the heritage Mexicans. Currently I'm working with getting these Congolese and Senegalese seeds and the wamm Malawi (wo(mens) alliance for medical marijuana) reproduced. Recent acquisitions include - Kona Gold, Columbian Punto Rojó, Brazilian Cabeça de Negro (blackhead), Angola Red, Columbian Black, a few Thais, a Sri Lankan, some wonderful Paraguayan landrace, and a very old un-worked Vietnamese line. I also have a Burma Jam female that was the only plant that germed from some 25-year-old seeds. At this moment my main breeding indica is the Parvati. It's as close to being a perfect pollen receiver for landrace hybrids I've seen. It has a huge variance of accessory cannabinoids, so when it is used in a landrace cross, the accessory cannabinoids of the female are usually carried to the f1. Dr. Greenthumbs Kashmir, Pine Tar Kush, and Deep Chunk are also being tested for breeding qualities. As you can imagine this is a lot of work. Thankfully my wife and best friend are into this as much as I am. Right now I'm looking into a new greenhouse facility and hopefully I can find something that fits.

How and why did you gather all these strains together?

The obvious answer is preservation and that is a large part of my motivation.

However, since reading Terrence McKenna's 'The Archaic Revival' I've been developing my appreciation for what indigenous cultures have to offer (?) Many of what I consider to be the finer things in life come from indigenous people - the finest cannabis, music, coffee, food and tobaccos. Being from the more "civilized" world we often consider the lives of those in the third world as hard, bleak and filled with suffering. I feel that the cannabis varieties that have been with a given culture for a substantial length of time tend to invoke the moods, attitudes, and philosophies of that culture in the user. Jamaican, Ghanaian and Hawaiian herb are great examples. The people of these cultures are laid back yet active, happy yet spiritual, and these paradoxes are certainly present in the herb. After growing and trailing my first landrace varieties I found that they had so many distinctive qualities. I was stunned to see that herb of incomparable quality has been in existence for thousands of years. In many instances it is nature that helps people lucky enough to live in certain sweet spots to breed some of the highest quality herb available. This is what motivates my collecting.

Has securing landrace genetics from across the globe become a hobby?

Yes, very much. If not a hobby, then a way of life! I've filled a kind of niche in my community where about 20% of the people who smoke what I produce are those that had long given up on cannabis because what's commercially available has no appeal. We have this product in the States from Canada, which is the blandest product one could imagine.

When and why did you start breeding your own seed lines?

When I first started breeding I didn't have a choice because I was growing from unlabeled bag-seed. I wanted to make more seeds many times, but I couldn't be certain what the males were. They could've come from somewhere totally different as another seed that was female in the same bag. It's just the nature of commercial bud. Needless to say my original breeding experiments were slow going. Eventually \tilde{I} tried Dutch genetics and they produced excellent bud - very different from what Id grown before indoors. However, in my environment the indoor varieties would mold and the outdoor varieties would flower too small and too early. I knew from reading marijuana botany that breeding is best when done with stable varieties. Eventually through the travels of myself, my friends and family and searching through seed catalogs I'd gathered together an assortment of mostly tropical heirloom varieties, landraces, and ibls.

Which strain(s) do you prize most and why?

That's a hard one because there's a few strains that I couldn't live without that I could replace easily - then there's a few that I love slightly less that could



In my environment the indoor varieties would mold and the outdoor varieties would flower too small and too early. I knew from reading marijuana botany that breeding is best when done with stable varieties.





never be replaced. Right now the *Wamm Malawi* is very high on my list, simply due to the fact that its a Malawi inbred to finish in a temperate climate. It has it all - painkilling properties, anti anxiety, mood enhancement, and it is simultaneously energizing. The *Zamals* and *Zamal x Parvati* when grown properly make the highest quality herb possible. The *Ghanaian* is an all round fantastic herb that is one of my most

potent yet is incredibly natural strains. Ghana has a close relationship with some countries in the west that have a strong African influence like Guyana and Jamaica. It's a very natural earthy herb with strong Malawi and Congolese influences. Last but not least are my two favorite Mexicans - the *Acapulco Gold* and the *Oaxacan Pelo Rojo*. I believe the high of these two cannot be improved upon.

Which advice would you give to fellow breeders landrace genetics?

If you're a person who whishes to see a line preserved contact Rahan over at www.strainguide.overweed.net. The site is mostly in French, however Rahan speaks English also and there should be enough English on the site to find your way around. Another important aspect to remember is that genetics aren't static they're extremely dynamic and the environment must be replicated to that of the region of origin (or as close as possible). If this is not done you could be changing the line you're working with quite substantially. One way to combat this is to use the best seed storage techniques available to you and to breed as few generations as possible. When breeding the seed there's two aspects I try to consider. The first is the percentage of the gene pool preserved from generation to generation. This is accomplished by using a large population of plants. The second aspect is the frequency or occurrence of the genes (particularly the desirable genes). When I say desirable I don't necessarily mean potency, flavor, bag appeal etc. I'm mostly referring what makes the line unique. Since the female offspring tend to mostly resemble the ovum donor, I select one very desirable female for representation of each phenotype. Then pollinate with a larger amount of males - with a good level of hardiness and disease resistance being the main selection criteria. The most important part of preservation is to use any opportunity to return the landrace to the region of origin. At the very least try to distribute tropical varieties to the tropics if at all possible. Returning indica to an appropriate environment is tricky since north India and Afghanistan are difficult places to get to. Fortunately some parts of north India at least from what I hear Pakistan are quite welcoming and it seems quite possible to return some of these lines to their home.

What projects do you have planned for the future?

I'm working on bringing Brazilian Seed Company back. We need more breeders in the sweet spots where the environment produces amazing cannabis with little help from man. In Brazil we can maintain the African. Mexican and South American genetics without worrying about changing the lines to the degree that say an indoor or temperate latitude grower would. Luiz from BSC is a great guy. Together we have an unprecedented array of landrace genetics to make available to growers. We have about a dozen African strains spanning the whole continent, a dozen Brazilian strains, half dozen Colombians, a couple amazing thought to be extinct Hawaiian strains and many-many more. Unfortunately Luiz has become ill recently and had to sell his breeding facility to support his family. I'm working on getting him a new one and within a couple years we should have everything together. Anyone who has any questions regarding the status of BSC can contact me Zamalito on the international forums anvtime.

Gangbusters By John Dee

There have been rather a lot of busts up and down the country in the past while. I'm not talking about someone being lifted for half an ounce (or even for half a pound) either. These are, on the face of it at least, serious operations involving "cannabis farms" and a lot of police time.

A few examples:

Monday, October 6th:

"More than 300 cannabis plants have been seized in a police raid at a flat in Sunbury, Surrey. Officers said they found 347 plants and "a complex arrangement of hydroponics equipment" in the raid on Thursday."

Wednesday, October 11th:

"Police have discovered a huge cannabis farm spanning four rooms of a suburban Northumberland house. Officers raided the property in Netherton Park, Morpeth, and found hundreds of mature plants and heating and lighting equipment".

Tuesday, November 14th:

"Police raided a house which was being used as a secret cannabis factory after officers passing noticed a strong smell of drugs coming from the property. A total of 400 plants of varying sizes were discovered during the raid in Preston, Lancashire'

These are just a few randomly chosen examples. There are a lot more I could have

Now, the interesting thing about these stories is that they're being described by the police (and reported in the media) as the work of "organised gangs". And so it is that we get "Turkish gangs", "Albanian gangs" and so forth. A few stories go so far as to explicitly finger "illegal immigrant criminals".

We all know about these characters. They're tough; they're ruthless; they think nothing of taking a life; they don't play by the same rules as our own home grown (so to speak) wide boys who by implication are presented as the very models of enlightened rationality and self-control. Gentlemen criminals, indeed

Hmmm.

Who knows? Maybe there is indeed some truth in all of this. Maybe it's all true, and every weed dealer in the UK is actually working for some faceless Levantine super-criminal mastermind. I mean, we've all seen "The Usual Suspects".

Over the years, I've interviewed a lot of growers, and I can't recall one occasion where involvement in organised crime has come up even in the most casual or tenuous way. Crime: depends who you ask and how you look at it. Organised: most definitely not.

Actually, disorganised crime is possibly closer to the reality of the situation, and when one examines the stories it's hardly surprising the individuals got caught. What is a surprise is that a lot of them weren't caught sooner.

Below, I've given you some more details for each of the respective cases mentioned above:

"Two people have been arrested and questioned on suspicion of producing cannabis and abstracting electricity". Illegally using electricity? It's a stupid thing to do when you're in the weed growing business, but it's hardly top-level crime, is it?

"A 27-year-old man was arrested during the raid on Tuesday afternoon on suspicion of cultivating cannabis".

"A man arrested by police has been released on bail without charge".

Maybe I'm wrong, but I find it hard to think of two people as "a gang". It seems to me that the police are maybe trying to justify the ludicrous waste of their time in man hours and resources. Nobody is that bothered about loosely associated networks of (domestic UK) stoners growing weed that there's clearly a demand for. Drop some east European immigrants (legal or otherwise) into the mix and sit back and wait for the media panic. Stir in the possibility that guns might be involved and bingo: Armed Response Units and all the other trappings of a totalitarian state. It's all necessary for protection of the public, you see.

And all over some cannabis plants.

I'd like to hear your views on this or any other of my columns. Get me at:

dimethyltryptamine777@hotmail.com



So sign up as a member today! Surf your way to www.softsecretsforum.com

Soft Secrets Inline Forum Launched

Of course it had to happen sooner or later: Soft Secrets, the best-read publication for smokers and growers in Europe, has recently started its own forum on the internet. From now on, on this completely free forum, you can pose any questions you want answered about growing, seeds, soil mixes or more technical subjects, directly to your fellow-growers on the forum. It promises to be the place questions and answers come together! Sign up is free, as of course is use of the various forums! We are currently working hard on enabling you to also post pictures of your favourite plant or grow space, so that the Soft Secrets Forum can meet all the needs of the modern grower.

The Calendar of the Year

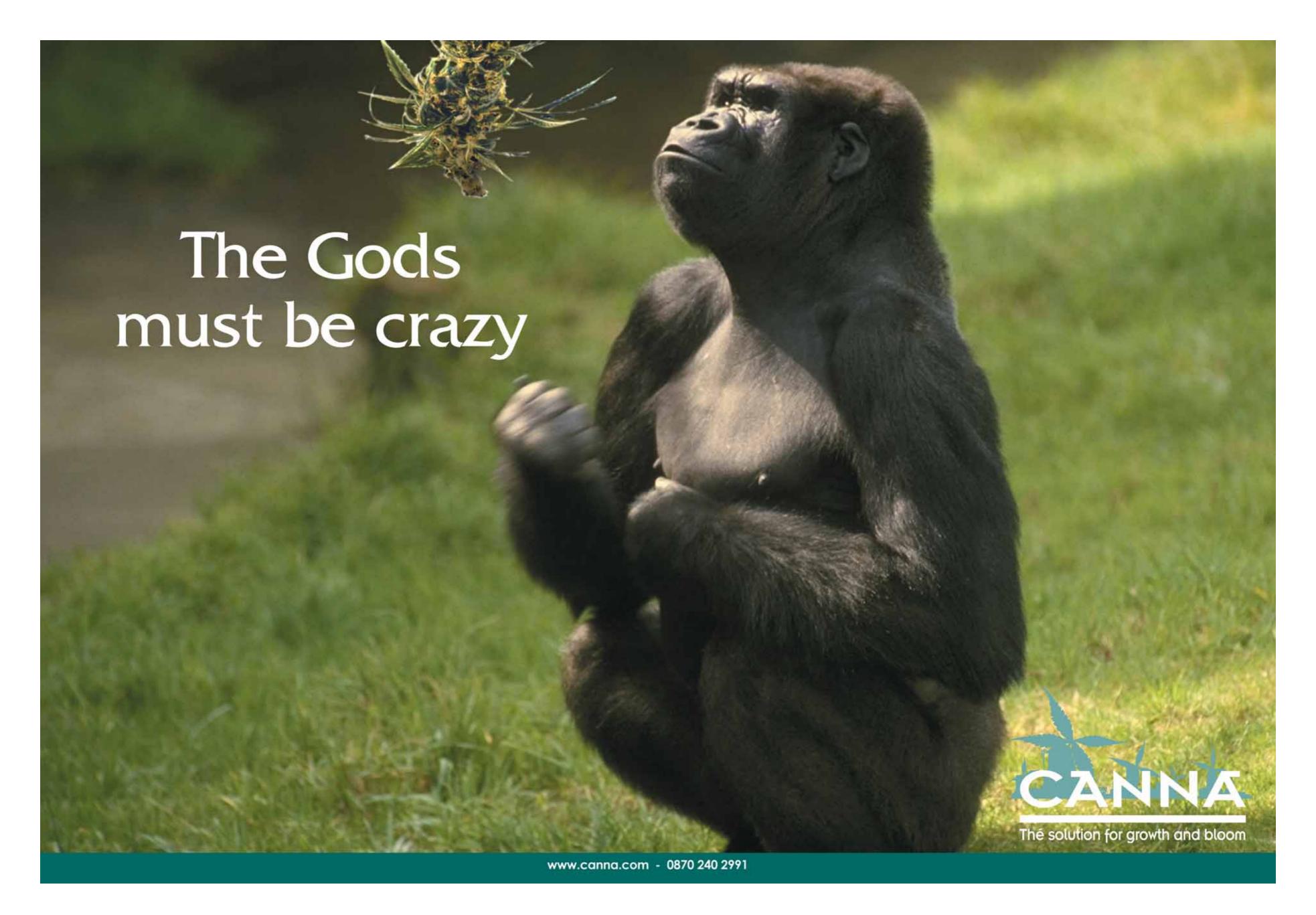


Calendar

It's that time of the year again: soon we will be bringing a toast to 2007. The days become shorter, the nights become colder. Fortunately, like every year. CANNA ensures that we are comfortably off, winter and summer. Thanks to the beauties which pose

on the famous CANNA calendar. For 2007, CANNA will again treat you to a fine combination of dazzling, artistic beauty. You will be able to get your own copy of the CANNA calendar 2007 at your local grow- or headshop. ENJOY!

See www.canna.com



GROW WITH JORGE CERVANTES



Reflective Hoods

Some reflective hoods reflect light more evenly than others. A reflector that distributes light evenly— with no hot spots—can be placed closer to plants without burning them. These hoods are most efficient, because the lamp is closer and the light more intense. The farther the lamp is from the garden, the less light plants receive. For example, a 1000-watt reflector with a "hot spot" must be placed 36 inches above the garden. A 600-watt lamp with a reflector that distributes light evenly can be placed only 18 inches above the garden. When placed closer, the 600-watt lamp shines as much light on the garden as the 1000-watt bulb! The proper reflective hood over the lamp and reflective walls can double the growing area. Growers who use the most efficient reflective hoods harvest up to twice as much as those who don't.

Seedlings, cuttings, and plants in the vegetative growth stage need less light than flowering plants, because their growth requirements are different. For the first few weeks of life, seedlings and clones can easily survive beneath fluorescent lights. Vegetative growth requires a little more light, easily supplied by a metal halide or compact fluorescent lamp at the rate of:

Horizontal Reflective Hoods

Horizontal reflectors are most efficient for HID systems, and are the best value for growers. A horizontal lamp yields up to 40 percent more light than a lamp burning in a vertical position. Light is emitted from the arc tube. When horizontal, half of this light is directed downward to the plants, so only half of the light needs to be reflected. Horizontal reflectors are inherently more efficient than vertical lamps/reflectors. because half of the light is direct and only half of the light must be reflected. Horizontal reflective hoods are available in many shapes and sizes. The closer the reflective hood is to the arc tube, the less distance light must travel before being reflected. Less distance traveled means more light reflected.

Horizontal reflective hoods tend to have a hot spot directly under the bulb. To dissipate this hot spot of light and lower the heat it creates, some manufacturers install a light deflector below the bulb. The deflector diffuses the light and heat directly under the bulb. When there is no hot spot, reflective hoods with deflectors can be placed closer to plants. . Horizontally mounted HP sodium lamps use a small reflective hood for greenhouse culture. The hood is mounted a few inches

over the horizontal HP sodium bulb. All

Chart: Maximum Light requirements for plants

Growth Stage	Foot-candles	Lux	Hrs. of Light
Seedling	375	4.000	16-24
Clone	375	4.000	18-24
Vegetative	2.500	27.000	18
Flowering	10.000	107.500	12

These guidelines will give plants all the light they need to form dense buds. Less light will often cause looser, less-compact buds to form.

Reflective hoods are made from steel sheet metal, aluminum, even stainless steel. The steel is either cold rolled or pregalvanized before a reflective coating is applied. Pre-galvanized steel is more rust resistant than cold rolled steel. This metal can be polished, textured or painted, with white being the most common paint color. Premium hood manufacturers apply white paint in a powder-coating process. Note: there are different shades of white, and some whites are whiter than others. Flat titanium white is the most reflective color and diffuses light most effectively. Glossy white paint is easy to clean but tends to create hot spots of light. Sheet metal hoods are less expensive than the same size aluminum hood, because of reduced materials expense..

The pebble and hammer-tone surfaces offer good light diffusion and more surface area to reflect light. Hot spots are commonplace among highly polished, mirror-like surfaces. Mirror-polished hoods also scratch easily and create uneven lighting.

light is reflected down toward plants, and the small hood creates minimum shadow.

Vertical Reflective Hoods

Reflectors with vertical lamps are less

efficient than horizontal ones. Like horizontal bulbs, vertically mounted bulbs emit light from the sides of the arc tube. This light must strike the side of the hood before it is reflected downward to plants. Reflected light is always less intense than original light. Light travels farther before being reflected in parabolic or cone reflective hoods. Direct light is more intense and more efficient. Parabolic dome reflectors offer the best value for vertical reflectors. They reflect light relatively evenly, though they throw less overall light than horizontal reflectors. Large parabolic dome hoods distribute light evenly and reflect enough light to sustain vegetative growth. The light spreads out under the hood and is reflected downward to plants. Popular parabolic hoods are inexpensive to manufacture and provide a good light value for the money.



PL reflective hoods are computer designed for even light distribution.



Vertical parabolic dome reflective hoods distribute light evenly over a large area and are perfect for vegetative growth.

Four-foot parabolic hoods are usually manufactured in nine parts. The smaller size facilitates shipping and handling. The customer assembles the hood with small screws and nuts.

Four-foot cone hoods are usually manufactured in four parts. The smaller size facilitates shipping and handling. The customer assembles the pieces with small screws and nuts. Cone-shaped reflectors using a vertical bulb waste light and are very inefficient. Growers who try to save money by purchasing cone-shaped reflectors pay even more in lost efficiency.

For example, say you bought a cone reflective hood for \$20 instead of the top of the line horizontal reflector for \$40. First, let's look at efficiency. The cone hood produces at 60 percent efficiency and the horizontal reflector at 100 percent, or 40 percent more. Each lamp costs \$36 per month to operate 12 hours daily at \$0.10 per kilowatt-hour (kWh). If 100 percent = \$0.10 per kilowatt-hour, then 60 percent efficiency = \$0.06, or a loss of \$0.04 for each kilowatt-hour. With this information we can deduce that \$36/\$0.04 = 900 hours. In 900 hours (75 12-hour days)

the horizontal reflector has recouped the extra \$20 cost. Not only does the vertical cone yield 40 percent less light, it costs 40 percent more to operate! When this 75-day break-even point is reached, you will be stuck with an inefficient reflective hood that costs more for fewer lumens every second the lamp is using electricity! Lightweight reflective hoods with open ends dissipate heat quickly. Extra air flows directly through the hood and around the bulb in open-end fixtures to cool the bulb and the fixture. Aluminum dissipates heat more quickly than steel. Train a fan on reflective hoods to speed heat loss.

Artificial light fades as it travels from its source (the bulb). The closer you put the reflector to the bulb, the more intense the light it reflects.

Enclosed hoods with a glass shield covering the bulb operate at higher temperatures. The glass shield is a barrier between plants and the hot bulb. Enclosed hoods must have enough vents; otherwise, heat build-up in the fixture causes bulbs to burn out prematurely. Many of these enclosed fixtures have a special vent fan to evacuate hot air.

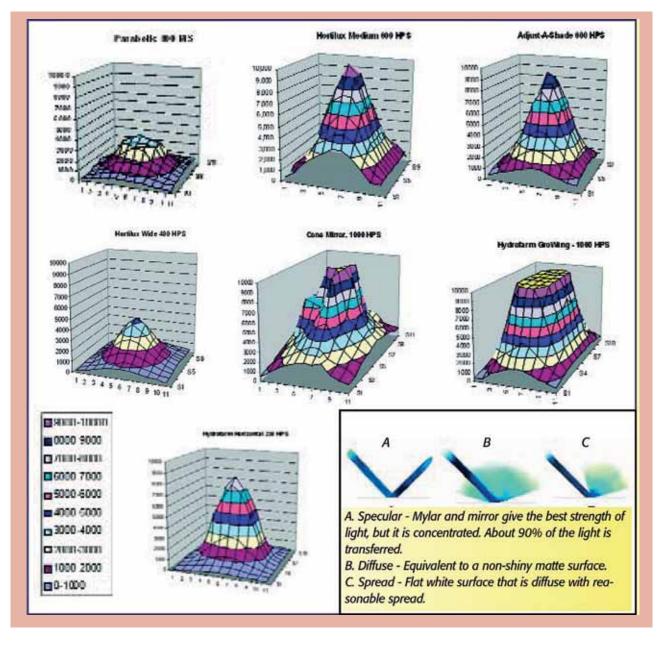
Reflective Hood Study

I constructed a black room, everything black inside, to measure the amount of light reflective hoods yield. The room was 10 _ 10-foot square (3 m2). The floor was covered with black tar paper. Less than three percent light could be reflected from the black surfaces—there was no extra light in this room. Measurements were made every 12 inches (30 cm) on a matrix marked on the floor. The walls had one-foot increments marked.

I tested five different lamps: a 1000-watt clear super metal halide, a 1000-watt HP sodium, a 600-watt HP sodium, a 400-watt super metal halide, and a 400-watt HP sodium. I positioned the bulb exactly three feet from the floor. Every lamp was warmed up for 15 minutes before taking measurements

The foot-candle readings on the floor were taken every 12 inches (30 cm) and the results posted to a spreadsheet program. I used a simple spreadsheet graph program to present the graphic results.

The studies show a huge difference between reflective hoods. Some companies do not test their hoods before



putting them on the market. To protect yourself and your plants, set up tests like the ones I did here to find out which reflector is the best for your needs.

When a reflector distributes light evenly, the lamp can be placed closer to plants.

In general, the larger the wattage of the bulb, the more efficient it is. Since light intensity diminishes so quickly, bulbs must be close to plants. Consequently, more lamps or point sources of light are necessary for even distribution of bright light.

Operating costs for three 600-watt HPS

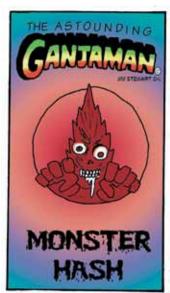
lamps are lower than for two 1000-watt HPS lamps. The 600-watt lamps produce more lumens for the same amount of money, plus they can be closer to plants. There are also three point sources of light, which evens out distribution.

A heat vent outlet around the bulb helps dissipate heat into the atmosphere. Excessive heat around the bulb causes premature burnout.

The studies show the light distribution of several types of light reflectors. The graphs clearly show that horizontal reflectors deliver many more lumens than vertical setups.

Check out the "Light Measurement Handbook" available free on the Internet. The 64-page technical book answers endless light questions. Download the book in a few minutes, photos and all: www.Intl-Light.com/handbook/.

This is an excerpt from Marijuana Horticulture: the Indoor/Outdoor Medical Grower's Bible by Jorge Cervantes, 512 pages 1120 full color photos and drawings, ISBN1-878823-23-X. The book is available in English and will be available in Spanish, German and Italian in the fall of 2006. For More information see: www.marijuanagrowing.com.











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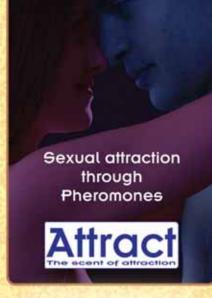
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Cheese

Big Buddha Seeds

By Mr. Fussy

Environment: 1200w
Method: Bonsai
Medium: Bio Biz All Mix
Nutrient: Bio Biz (full range)
Grow time: 20–30 days

Flower time: 70 days
Plant structure: indica/sativa
Bud structure: dense and sticky

Scent: Musky
Effect: Mellow
Yield: -

Yleiu: –

After hearing that Cheese is meant to be the stinkiest skunk around, we tried it out. Seedlings went straight



into All-Mix soil under a 400w lamp. They grew slowly at first until they were re-potted. After 4

weeks they all went under x2 600w lamps 12/12. Each plant had a mixed profile leaning on the indica side. The branches all stood at 45 degrees to the stem. The bases of each stem were very sturdy.

The leaves weren't like massive indica types, much more in-between indica and sativa. As the plants yellowed lots in late flower, it suggested that they could handle a more concentrated feed early in 12/12. Overall the females resembled a Skunk. They had dense buds with a high calyx to leaf ratio, and a good layer of sticky crystal all over. The smell wasn't a major issue when growing.

At 60-70 days a fresh bud was taken from the plant and squeezed to remove the watery chlorophyll. Then

worked in the hand to form a sticky black ball of hash. The plants when touched stank of 'cheese'. There was enough abundant resin to start harvesting the plants. The buds when dry had a musky taste. It was a lot like smoking the old-school Skunk that used to go around town.

For breeding Big Buddha's Cheese is really interesting. A male plant was used to fertilise x5 separate strains in the garden. These included an unknown Haze plant and a Flo (from Dutch Passion). The resulting seed all produced plants that when grown and smoked tasted half of Cheese and half of whatever they were crossed with. Cool.

Mummia

Growdoc Seeds

By Mr. Fussy

Environment: 400 –1200w

Method: Seed to standard

Medium: Bio Biz All Mix

Nutrient: Bio Biz (full range)

Grow time: 21 days
Flower time: 65 days
Plant structure: diamond shape
and cola

Bud structure: clusters of flowers
Scent: Stinky (petrol/skunky/

berry/spice)
Weird!

Effect: Weird! Yield: Nice

Mummia is labelled as Soma Rock Bud x Jack Herer. The seeds came in a multi-pack direct from Growdoc Seeds. From a packet of



ten Mummia only five were sown out into small cups of Bio Biz soil. Once the cotyledons open they went under a 400w bulb (on the edge). As the seedlings turned into plants they were placed directly under the lamp. In this vegetative stage they were given Bio-Biz Grow and Fish-Mix using the suggested Bio-Biz feed program. This feed program was used throughout.

When placed into flower Mummia grew big (like the Odalisk) with vigours hardy growth. The uniformity was middling with one plant much bushier, and one plant much skinnier, than the rest. x3 Mummia were female. The main leaf had a large indica style to them on a 75% indica type plant. The biggest fan-leaves developed a rough edge and feel like sandpaper to touch. The branch nodes where uniform and tight. They didn't shoot up massively in flower, about 50% of their height in veg.

Stem structure and the canopy of flowers was fairly good. The plants each developed into a diamond

shape, with a main cola on top.
After a while it was obvious that the Mummia were the plants that stank in the garden. All had a high resin structure on the buds and a good calyx to leaf ratio. The final buds were formed from lots of clusters of flowers. This made trimming a quick and easy job. The plants were then hung to dry, before placing them into better-wear boxes with the lids a jar.

The yield was nice and the clusters had a really stinky scent (a mix of petrol, skunk, berries and spices combined). To smoke Mummia is very strong with a more-ish like taste. The effects are weird! If you have a good stash of buds you can smoke lots of it (like Jack Herer). But if you smoke a little it's very strong (like Soma's Rock Bud) which is strange! Perhaps, when this strain is new to the system, its potency can really take you back?

Purple Haze

By Mr. Sneeze

Environment: outdoor/glasshouse Method: Standard

Medium: Compost
Nutrient: Grow time: 80 days
Flower time: early
Plant structure: big and leggy

Bud structure: big and leggy
Bud structure: small
Scent: Fruity-skunk
Effect: stoned
Yield: not much

grew tall quickly and needed to go into bigger pots. The stems were a split-colour red/purple and green with thick ridges at the joints all the way up. When they were dropped into larger containers of compost, the roots looked thick

and hairy.

As it got cold into winter the little white hairs started to show at the joints. The plants were put into the greenhouse and one of the plants started to smell of a fruity flavour. The sticky THC then was found around the little hairs. The big leaf then went darker with a purple edge.

The outdoor temp got cold that year so a glasshouse paraffin heater was lit at night to keep them warm. Due to security, the plants were hidden from the neighbours behind a large sheet of bubble-wrap. This helped insulate the glasshouse and hide them. The plants were harvested early. Chopped at the base. Each plant was about 5 foot tall. As the hairs dried out they were ready to smoke. Stoned everyday for weeks on the crop.



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The purple seeds were from a friend. He told us to sow them in pots of warm and moist compost inside in spring. Then take them outside as the big leaf started to break-out from the tops of the plants. At this point the plants were green. The 2 surviving plants

Science, or the lap of the gods?

By UK Grower

When Dan Brown first came up with the concept for his record-breaking novel The Da Vinci code, (and even though already established as a successful best selling author) he could never have wished for even a fraction of the success the book has basked in since its initial publication in 2003.

Widely renowned for its clever, intricate explanation into the theories behind the enigmatic smile portrayed by the Mona Lisa, Brown's sixth and by far most successful book is said to have sold some 45 million copies worldwide, helped no doubt by the widely documented (and in part at least, successful) lawsuit instigated by two aspiring authors, who claim Brown plagiarised their work in the creation of his best seller. The worldwide publicity guaranteed the success of the book, and history was written (and re-written).

But things haven't always been so rosy in the garden. An earlier book written by Dan Brown sold only a fraction of the sales recorded by The Da Vinci Code. Angels & Demons (2000) is a futuristic look into the roles science plays in everyday life.

Based around 20-30 years in the future, it tells of the struggle up and coming scientists had in the 14th, 15th & 16th centuries, with the Catholic Church, which was dead set on anything which flew in the face of religion. To the extent that a string of Popes had ordered the capture and execution of the men accused of (amongst other things) witchcraft.

In fear of their lives, pre-eminent scientists such as Galileo and Leonardo Da Vinci went underground to continue their research and experiments.

The church would not allow Da Vinci to experiment on dead bodies so he used animal organs from a butcher's shop to create graphically accurate representations of human organs.

So clear were his sketch's and illustrations, that 500 years later they are said to be accurate enough to use as blue prints for machinery designs, albeit rudimentary by today's standards.

In the meantime the research carried on, the results of which were often credited to a mythical and legendary secret society called The Illuminati

When a world renowned scientist is found murdered on the grounds of a medical research institution in Switzerland, with his body branded with the mark of the by now long forgotten Illuminati,well lets just say the shit hits the fan.

After reading the book it got me to thinking just how much science plays a part in all our lives. Especially so, as home growers!

It also made me realise how much a part religion plays in my own day to day growing.

I remember sitting on the motorway on many occasion's, traffic queued up for

miles in every direction, looking through a rain-streaked windscreen at the brake lights of the car in front whilst whispering to myself, "Please God". "Just let them still be standing by the time I get there, and I promise I will water them more often". If you're smiling, then you'll know what I mean.

Unlike the 17th century Catholic Church, I've managed to find space for religion as well as a goodly dose of science in my own grow room.

By abiding by a few, simple scientific rules it's possible to make the growers life so much easier. Let's have a look at some of them, as well as how they apply in and around the grow room.

Osmosis

Osmotic pressure, the pressure that develops in a solution separated from a solvent by a membrane permeable only to solvent, was first described by Abbé J.A. Nollet.

Osmosis was discovered by Nollet in 1748 with a container, filled to the brim with alcohol and closed shut by a pig's bladder. Prior to the experiment starting the pig's bladder had been soaked in water, to protect the alcohol against the entry of air.

The bladder had admitted the water into the container, but only very little alcohol had passed the other way. So water and alcohol were being exchanged, that is, the container closed shut with the pig's bladder contained water that was below the alcohol.

Also the pig's bladder extended concavely into the alcohol container, attracted by the osmotic pressure of the alcohol as it attempted to draw itself into the pigs bladder.

It had let water escape into the alcohol and yet had allowed only a little of the liquor to enter the bladder, (so only a semi, semi permeable membrane, as it were =).

His discovery of the osmosis of water through a bladder into alcohol was the starting-point of that branch of physics. Since then a lot has been learnt about how osmosis works for us when we grow our plants. It is (after all) how roots do their stuff and also how the internal transport

and distribution system works. But how can the information above help us to improve our growing?

If you're having problems with your EC rising at run off, this is a good theory to read up on.

In laymans terms, "The passage of "nutrients", through the semi-permeable membrane (the root outer), is controlled by the relative concentrations of individual nutrient elements on either side of the membrane".

So what I'm reading is this. If I feed my plants with an EC of 0.4 in coco, that sets the bar. The inert medium acquires the Ph and EC values relative to the nutrient mix. That's why we pre-soak (pre-treat) our cubes/slabs right?

If I then increase my feed strength to 0.6, the medium changes its Ph/EC values to match the new solution, yet the EC within the roots is still at the previous (lower) value.

As the roots grow and move through the medium or solution, osmosis kicks in and in a bid to equalise the concentrations of the nutrients both in the nutrient solution and within the roots, osmotic energy transports the nutrients whichever way is necessary to equalise the concentrations. Science rocks, doesn't it?

If you did your sums right, you get it flowing the right way. If you got it wrong and nutrient is flowing the other way, your plant will die quickly, unless action is taken.

So if your EC is RISING at run-off, chances are there are some issues which need your urgent attention.

The NFT (nutrient film technique) method is renowned for spectacularly fast growth. I've personally watched a plant grow 4 inch's in a day, and another grower I know said he witnessed 7 inch's on one particularly gnarly tropical sativa. 7 inch's?

How rad is that?

Given unlimited amounts of everything, (CO2, food, water etc) and with no root restraint and it becomes easy to see how just 1 weeks NFT growth can match 4 weeks in compost.

But as if equalised by osmosis itself, the high good value is reflected with a high

bad value, and this is what stops people getting into NFT.

When using the NFT method, and as a result of the fast growth, problems manifest fast too. It seems like everything is running at fast-forward speed. So by the time the problem has manifested itself on the leaves, it's often too late to react as the condition has become terminal at the roots

There's nothing more frustrating for a grower, than knowing you have provided everything the plant needs, but it still won't feed.

Unfortunately the knee jerk reaction tends to be to throw more lotions and potions at the plant in a bid to cure the unknown ailment, which for the most part merely serves to make things worse until the original symptoms become masked, as the plant tries to deal with all this new "stuff".

But an even easier way to deal with this condition is not to let it happen in the first place.

By adding another ten minutes to your daily routine in the grow room, its possible to head off all of these issues in one fell swoop.

By taking daily Ph and EC measures it's possible to find out what's happening within the plant, before the problem has a chance to manifest itself on the leaves. And by adding the measurement of your EC/Ph at run off to your daily chores, you can see exactly what the plant thinks of its diet and act quickly once the results are in.

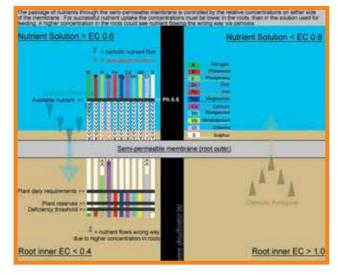
Then you can sit back and listen, as the plants (almost) audibly rustle, as they grow and grow and grow.

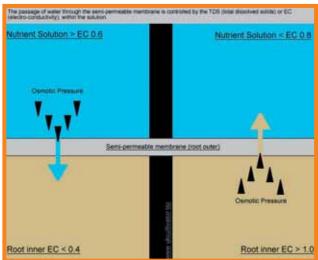
In closing, one of the most regularly asked questions heard online is "can I grow my plants without an EC measuring device"?

The answer is yes. Of course you can. But if/when problems arise its very hard to correctly diagnose the issue if you are unable to take readings. It's like missing one of your "senses".

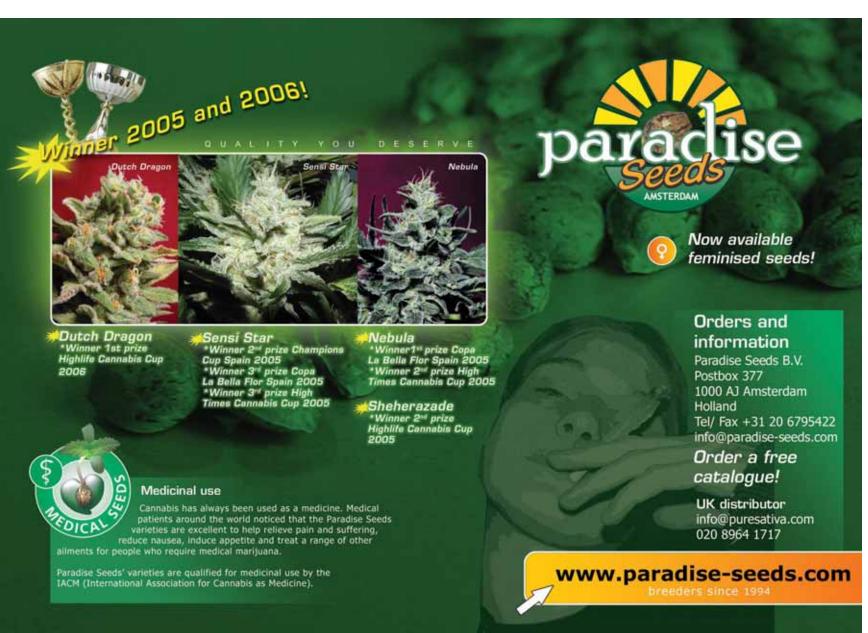
If you ask online, the answer will be the same. "We can't advise without knowing what your EC/Ph readings are so put a truncheon on your Christmas list, and listen to the plants grow.

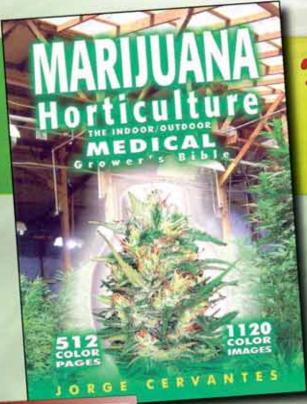
More "Science in the grow room" next time.











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Medicinal Marijuana Activist American Grower Todd McCormick

By Lazystrain

Todd McCormick isn't your everyday cannabis activist. As a small child Todd was diagnosed with a form of childhood cancer nine times before the age of ten. Although benign, Todd was subjected to a course of chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery as a child. To combat nausea Todd's mother secretly introduced him to medicinal applications of marijuana in hospital and Todd survived.

To this day Todd promotes awareness about the medicinal properties of marijuana and has openly set out to help people discover the medicinal benefits of cannabis. In July 1997, despite California's Proposition 215 which allows Californians the use of marijuana for pain-relief, Todd was arrested at his "Medical

Marijuana Mansion" in Bel Air by the DEA for "manufacturing a controlled substance" (growing cannabis plants... at home). Todd's buddy, the Hollywood actor Woody Harreleson stepped up with an astrological \$500,000 to pay the excessive bail fee, while Todd still faced a life sentence in jail.

Dedicated medicinal marijuana activist and author of his own book 'How To Grow Medicinal Marijuana' Todd McCormick agreed to share some of his experiences with the readers of Soft Secrets.

SSUK: Todd, how did you first discover the medicinal properties of cannabis?

The first time I discovered the medical effects of cannabis I was in a car driving home from a radiation and chemotherapy session with my mother. I was experiencing my ninth major bout with cancer and it was in soft tissue for the first time, which itself gave a very grim prognosis; the year was 1979 and

given to me back in 1972 when I was only a two-year-old baby.

When/where did you first start growing your own marijuana as

Cannabis has always been medical at least to me; I started growing cannabis when I was 13 years old. As a child I had always been given a lot of models of cars and airplanes and motorcycles in which to

There really is no wrong way to grow cannabis, depending on the environmental situation will determine what tools I choose to use.

I was nine years old, my mother had read in a major American magazine called Good Housekeeping that cancer patients were benefiting from cannabis use and she decided to have me give it a try, actually, she told me to sip the joint as if it were a straw, a few sips later I was not feeling nauseous and by the time we got home I was actually hungry, which was of course a major turnaround. I continue to use cannabis post cancer for pain reduction due to a five vertebrae spinal fusion that was

build while passing time in my hospital bed, so I was very good at following directions and putting things together. I started selling pot when I was only 12 years old, I had access to my mothers stash, she was like an old-school housedealer. When she would be at work her friends would often call and I would meet them at the back door with either a 20 or 40 dollar bag. By the time I was 13 I was selling to some of my own friends. One day we went over to my friend Fred's house, he was my best friend's older

brother; he was 19 and living on his own with his girlfriend. When we arrived Fred had just completed building a plywood grow closet in his living room, straight out of Mel Frank and Ed Rosenthal's Closet Cultivator, once I saw the book it was all over, my future was shaped forever. I forced him to give me the book in exchange for the bag of pot he wanted to front. I took it home, cleaned out my closet, and I literally found everything I needed to grow already in the house; the tube lights came from my grandmother's workbench, the timer came from her picture window, the pots and soil I found the backyard, the pulleys I used for the ropes that I hung the lights with so that I would have adjustment capabilities I found on the clothesline that we no longer used. The only thing I went out and purchased was plant food.

I followed the directions and I'm happy to say that I haphazardly sold most of my very first harvest to my friend Mark who was my dealer; back in 1982 most people had not seen fresh cannabis grown locally, so it looked awesome with its crystals and its untouched beauty. Even though it was loose spindly buds because of the fluorescent light it was still great

grass. My own mother didn't find out I was growing cannabis for almost a year and when my grandmother found my grow room she could not believe that A) I grew these plants in a closet, and B) that there wasn't anything I was going to dip it in, spray on it, mix it with, or somehow change the simple flower to turn it into a "drug". When I told her that I only dried it and smoked it she was astonished and told me that if it was that simple it wouldn't

What is your favourite variety of marijuana to grow?

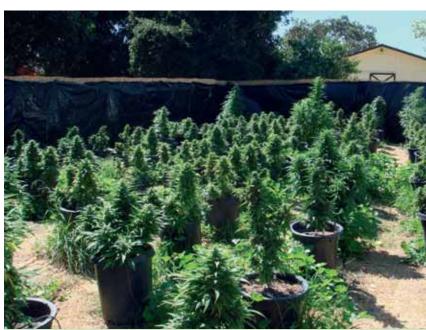
I am a big fan of Haze: Neville, if you're reading this, THANK YOU! He holds a Haze male that is responsible for the Haze in NL5 X Haze, Super Silver Haze and of course Neville's Haze just to name a few. I am forever grateful for breeders like him and Simon at Serious Seeds, speaking specifically about Serious Seed's Kali Mist, breeders who can take these ultra tropical plants, in Simon's case a 16 week Haze, and bring it down to a manageable 10 week hybrid.

Do you prefer working with sativa or indica, landrace or cultivated, variéties?

I definitely prefer clear motivational highs and cannabis that reduces pain. I think that trying to categorize it so simply with Sativa or Indica takes away from the complexity of the nuances that can be created by the grower simply by harvesting early or late. I prefer Afghans that are harvested early, but then again I prefer tropical varieties that are harvested late. After hanging out with Rob Clarke during my time in Amsterdam I learned that we should be focusing on cannabinoid content and the synergistic effect THC, CBD, CBN, etc. has on different conditions, be it recreational or medical use.

Which method(s) of cultivation do you employ most?

I started off growing in soil, but these days I very much appreciate the mechanism of hydroponics and the ability to leave my plants and not have to worry about somebody watering or over-watering them while I'm away. Depending on circumstances will take dictate on what



California medicinal harvest 2006, Southern California





Todd at what he does best: growing top-class marijuana

kind of garden I construct. Right now it is harvest season in California, I have plants that I am harvesting which I grew in an organic soil mix, I also have a nursery that is mostly hydroponics. I do all my pre-growing on a flood table, depending on where the plane is going to go will depend on whether or not it remains in hydroponics. When I flower indoors I like to use hydroponics under lights, when I flower outdoors there's no question on them being in the ground.

There really is no wrong way to grow cannabis, depending on the environmental situation will determine what tools I choose to use. I urge people to grow organically regardless of their medium. With the plethora of chemicals and available nutrients there really is no need to poison yourself or the people who will use your product.

Which methods of self-medication do you use? Smoke or ingestion?

I tend to like joints; I like being able to self titrate so easily. I have a couple volcanoes that I keep very close to my desk and in my living room, but I find myself being a little old school in my appreciation for a simple joint. I like getting the full range of cannabinoids that a joint provides.

How do you suggest medicinal users best grow medicinal plants?

With patience and dedication, not to over-water and to start with a good soil combination that is not too rich in fertilizers. I believe cannabis is the most over cared for and over-fertilized plant on the planet. Start with a good strain and get as much information as you can.

My role in growing cannabis strains is more that of a spectator, I have met true geniuses; guys like Sam the skunk man (the breeder of Skunk No.1) and Neville (in my opinion the true "king of cannabis") have contributed enormously to what we grow and know as modern-day strains. If I could just collect everything they've made I would be a happy man. And knowing many of the top breeders as I do, I realized that unless you know what specific traits the breeder was intending you don't really know the plant. For instance; people who buy Kali Mist from Serious Seeds and bring home their seed pack only to choose one of the fast, fat flowering phenotypes from their seed bag are really not getting the cannabis that was intended. What Simon (owner of Serious Seeds – ed.) was trying to do was take a 16 week Haze female and bring her to a more manageable flowering time while retaining her taste, scent and high. He did it most marvellously I might add in creating a 10 week plant that has all the subtleties of her 16 week mother.

It was my goal to collect and identify, the many fantastic and incredibly different varieties that are floating around the globe today. At the time of my arrest I was juggling over 50 strains of cannabis and over 4000 living plants. More of my focus was in doing cannabinoid research and in doing so trying to get a five



dimensional look into the plant. Trying to compare cannabinoid profiles and the effects created. If this is really going to be thought of as medicine it has to be consistent. The only place were going find true consistency is on the chemical level. In my opinion California was in the dark ages when proposition 215 past; people would ask for "marijuana", not for

When I got out of prison I started a company called "Select Strains" and we started distributing cuttings like OG Kush, Super Silver Haze, Sensi Star, Dawg, Hog, and a few other California classics to the clubs all over the state. Personally, I am really sick and tired of marginal cannabis being the only thing that is availably traded in cloned form; most

Knowing many of the top breeders as I do, I realized that unless you know what specific traits the breeder was intending you don't really know the plant.

specific strains, can you imagine walking up to a bar and asking the bartender to give you anything alcohol? You could get a shot a whiskey, maybe wine, perhaps a beer, or maybe a shot a grain alcohol, all very different, all still just alcohol. In many ways cannabis is still that simplified, though with education and the Internet it won't be that way much longer.

What made you think about writing 'How To Grow Medical Marijuana'?

I have seen a lot of grow books that simply copy from a book about how to grow plants and stick in the word marijuana. I wanted to write a book that would better describe in a more simplistic way how easy it could be for anybody to grow cannabis. I wanted to try to bring the Epiphany of self reliance to more people, I was cut off in the middle of writing the book by the arrest and alas, it is not the book I wanted to put out. I'm working on revising it and inserting strain specific growing techniques.

What are your future aspirations from here? Any new projects?

Well I ended up going to prison in the year 2000 for what ended up being 87 1/2 percent of a five-year sentence; that translates into four years in prison and six months in a halfway house. What I did not expect at the time of my arrest was that at the time of my trial I would not be allowed to raise any defence. I am now a bit more sceptical of the whole system of (in)justice, I am not naïve and with our current American administration being run by oil companies I have little hope for a change in federal law anytime soon.

of the truly desired varieties are never released to the general public because of greed by the growers who hold them. So I'm doing what I can to help spread the best herb I can find.

I also started a company called Just Shoot Me LLC, which I use for my photography, it actually came out of my probation officer wanting me to get a job, my initial reaction was; "Aw, just shoot me, what else do you want?" Hence the name of my company, I mostly shoot cannabis, but what started out as a joke has now landed my photographs in places like GQ magazine.

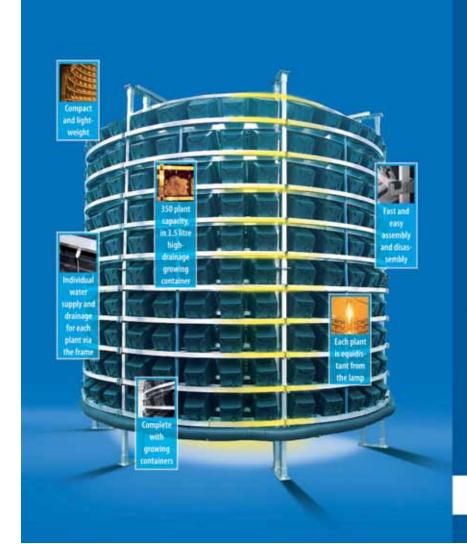
I am also working on a project called Artists Helping End Marihuana Prohibition; a crude site is up at www.ahemp.org After networking with a lot of Woody's peers I got motivated and wanted to find a way to bring them all together, which is of course easier said than done. This movement needs more of a voice, we need more people who are intelligent, wealthy, and successful to step up and come out of the closet. People like Richard Branson, Anita Roddick, Hugh Hefner, Paul McCartney and others should be doing a whole lot more to help end this futile prohibition instead of just getting high in their mansions and proselytizing about all the good they do, while in reality, even with all their wealth, they are afraid to simply plant a seed in soil and stand by it while it grows. I have gladly traded my liberty for the fate of a flower to grow, for often the simplest of causes is the most noble.

Tim Leary had it only half right; my motto is: Turn on, Tune in and Take Over!



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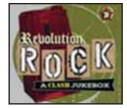
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MUSIC

Compilation 'Revolution Rock. A Clash Jukebox'

(Trojan Records)



This ace selection of tunes covered by The Clash has been compiled the band's own bass guitarist,

Paul Simonon. "I used to go over to Joe's squat and look at these great albums of Bo Diddley and Ronnie Hawkins, but they never had the records in them. Years later when I had the money, I actually went out and bought them." While many Punk bands idolised the Stooges or MC5, The Clash's roots lay closer to the old school ska and reggae of Trojan, 50's rock'n'roll and 60's soul/R&B. Throughout their groundbreaking existence, The Clash regularly covered old hits and lost classics. Some were released, some were rehearsed, and others were played live. Now many of them are gathered here on one CD. Some of their favourite tunes were recorded by The Clash to such powerful effect that many fans assumed they were written by Joe Strummer and Mick Jones, notably Bobby Fuller's 'I Fought The Law' and Vince Taylor's "Brand New Cadillac - both tunes are included here along with other classics such as 'Armagideon Time" and "Police and Thieves". This release is a must for Clash fans everywhere.

Akli D. 'Ma Yela' -Because Music.



Ma Yela, produced by Manu Chao, is Akli D.'s second album. With gentleness and melancholia, between laughter and

humour, he tells his own story by singing his own travels, his pains and those of his times. Reflecting his broad life experience and musical influence, Akli D. fuses his native Algerian styles of Kabylia and Chaabi, with visions of the Mississippi delta, Jamaica and Mali whilst also lending an attentive ear to the protest songs of Bob Dylan and Neil Young. Always surrounded by music in his small village home in Kabylia. Algeria, as a young man in the early 80's he was forced to flee to France following Algerian repression of Kabylia's demands for recognition. His subsequent politicisation along with his love of diversity, freedom and individuality is at the root of all his music. Meeting Manu Chao, who found him performing his Kabyl poetry over folk, gypsy jazz and Chaabi music in a typical Menilmontant café, a place of musical enchantment and spontaneous encounters such as all night guitar, bendir and derbouka jams, an artistic collboration began which led to Chao producing this album. In the opening track 'Salam', words are mixed together, Salam in Arabic, Shalom in Hebrew, Alikum shalom for peace and fraternity in this evocation of a dream land where populations meet as simply as words. 'C.Facile', Hispanic music with gypsy sounds, is a tribute to all the

By Kaz Peet A STONED SELECTION

nomads of the world, a song full of smiles about immigration, exile and uprooting. 'Tchetchenia' is the cry of a child of war unable to understand the horrors surrounding him and even less what might justify them. Brimming with compassion the lyrics speak of peace, fraternity and love and are passionately delivered by an artist, whose chief identity is human, backed by an outsized, engrossing musical universe.

Acoustic Ladyland Skinny Grin



This LP follows on from the much-lorded 'Last Chance Disco' and is a further advancement of their mayerick vision. It

is hard to really begin to explain the parameters within which they try to work; the incessant primitive drumming verges on speed metal, combining with a sax sound distorted and deconstructed to resemble the chord progression of guitar. One of the tracks - 'Salt Water' is graced by sax legend James Chance, whilst the use of guest female vocalists humanizes the sound. The post punk aesthetic that underlies this music remains startlingly innovative; imagine a collision between Hendrix, The Velvets, Coltrane, Blurt, John Zorn, Pil and Napalm Death if you have the imagination. If not, listen to this reaffirming record, with a Scott Walker remix, proof of the stratosphere they aim

Sol Seppy - 'Pssscheeow' (Gronland)

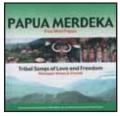


This mini album from Sol Seppy follows the release of her critically acclaimed debut album 'The Bells Of 1 2'. A classically

trained cellist and pianist, Sophie Michalitsianos's, aka. Sol Seppy, music is hauntingly beautiful and possesses a poignant depth that draws the listener in to the very heart. Her voice is that of an angel but she does not feast on the sugary sweet. In 'Dining Alone' she describes a lone woman's drunken evening sliding into selfdelusion and the closing track 'Hafiz A Mime', written following the death of her father, depicts the experience of dying without fear as a humble and grateful celebration. Those with a more searching attitude towards music and life will not be able to resist her.

Wimagan Wewo & Friends - 'Papua Merdeka - Tribal Songs of Love and Freedom'

(www.FreeWestPapua.org)



This revelatory and revolutionary album is a clarion call for the very survival of the artist's tribal homeland of West Papua,

once a land of vast rainforests where the indigenous people lived in total harmony with nature and now threatened with annihilation from Indonesia and the massacring pressure of global capitalism. The album, recorded in County Sligo in Ireland features 13 tribal ballads from the pacific jungles (where this music is banned) accompanied by Irish traditional musicians. Not so much a fusion as a tribal council through music, the album introduces us to sweet melodies and Pacific rhythms that blend eloquently with elements of the chill out, world and Irish music genres. The songs range from impassioned pleas to Tony Blair to 'Stop Selling Arms to Indonesia' to traditional love songs like 'Yiowae Waowa e' sung by the Lani tribe. Some songs are deeply downbeat and melancholy whilst others are vibrant blends of Papuan and Irish traditions. Wimagan Wewo is a tribesman from one of the last living civilizations on earth. His name translates as 'one who walks through wars' and he has had no shortage of opportunity to live up to it.

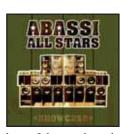
Mick Harvey - 'Motion Picture Music '94-'05' (mute)



Mick Harvey; founder member of The Birthday Party, and the musical foil to Nick Caves vocal vision has latterly immersed

himself in the world of sound tracks. His second compilation of his works spans documentaries, shorts and the music for the infamous 'Chopper'. Many of the tracks are mere snippets of music to evoke mood and tension; the cornerstone of his sound remains piano and guitar with occasional flourishes of violin, double bass and clarinet. These minimal yet strangely Baroque pieces show a master at work, able to transform mood at will. A brilliant compilation that showcases his mastery of this format.

Abassi All stars -'Showcase' (Universal Egg)



Featuring the cream of the crop from the first four Deep Root EP releases for the Abassi All stars and the

best of the unreleased tracks recorded in 2004/2005, 'Showcase' is the debut album for the project. Strictly roots and culture but with an outernational perspective Abassi All Stars come to tell stories from around the world. The CD issue of this release features a video, compiled and mixed by the Echolab VJ team, showing the Abassi Hi Power system in action alongside all the artists from the All Stars Project.

Pandit Shivkumar Sharma - Santoor

(Saregama)

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The first LP recording from this outstanding artist comes as part of a series released by Saregama, one of

music companies, dedicated to the invaluable task of re-issuing debut solo LP recordings by some of the countries most revered and talented musical maestro's, creating a rare opportunity to treasure these immortal performances. This is the music of the gods! No less than a divine manifestation of heaven on earth. being so lovely to the ear that it defies metaphor or description. Player of the santoor, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma elevated the instrument from its comparatively lowly status of a folk instrument from the Kashmir valley to its current classical status and reverential indispensability on the concert platform thus, single-handed, creating history in the world of music. In the late 1950's, a rebel of his time, he made important changes to this hundred stringed instrument, like a new chromatic arrangement of notes and increased range to cover three full octaves. He also created a new way of playing with which he could sustain notes and maintain a more gliding sound continuity. Possessing a creative impulse that bestows, with infinite subtlety that which is noble and wonderful. Shivkumar Sharma's technical execution of this inner drive is staggering. Together, these two factors generate an exquisite sonic experience of both complete physical well-being and pure hemisphere harmonization. Music, he believes, is food for the soul. Sharma has performed many concerts with renowned musicians such as the tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain and renowned flautist Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia with whom he formed a group called Shiv-Hari for composing Hindi film music. The first work of both of these artists is available in this series. As an excellent accompaniment to this music, build up a big spliff (or chillum) of Parvati's finest and allow Lord Shiva to dance within you. Bom!

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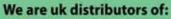
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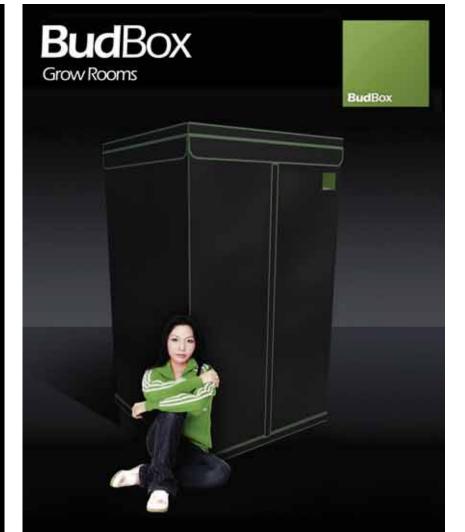
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Arthur in a patch of one of his guerilla gardens, in the middle of a corn field



Arthur and his black outdoor weed

Text & photos by Smiley Grass

In this series for the organic grower each issue will feature another weed farmer from the Netherlands. This time it is the turn of Arthur, a 38-year-old bricklayer from a region around Nijmegen, in the South of the country. Not under the rays of an artificial light, but in the full glory of sun light. He shares his outdoor experiences here with SSUK.

"The biggest difference between growing weed outdoors and growing it indoors is of course that you can only harvest your crop once in a year. It is in principle anxious work, because the closer you get to the harvest period, the more nervous you become. I'm not just talking about myself; practically half the village does. That mostly comes from the light aircraft that sometimes fly so low that you can read the badges of the national police force members inside. They know everything and brought everything under their surveillance by photographing the entire district.

We have a little bit of luck on our side. We mostly grow '*Double Powerplay*' (double purple) and this is much harder to

almost lost a complete harvest, because mould struck thanks to the air moisture being too high. The plant comes in nature from areas where the autumn is warm and dry, whilst here we often have to contend with a damp and cold autumn. That is precisely the opposite. You have a much greater chance of mould infection here, and if it does strike you have to harvest immediately. That is the disadvantage of outdoor weed. It can happen that you have to harvest before the crop really hasn't fully ripened. But you've got to so it, or else everything will just rot away. Then you end up with not such good quality. You are always dependent on nature. Last summer was a really lovely one, but the end of summer and autumn

You should never bring your buds in if it is wet weather. If the buds are full of water then I guarantee that at least half of your harvest will rot.

recognise from the sky as a weed plant. For as long as it lasts at least. We can always hang artificial roses among the plants as it gets close to harvest time.

Growing weed outdoors is in itself not a source of great stress. You put the plants in and you then have pretty much nothing more to bother about. So long as you prepared the soil in advance a bit, to get things just to your plants' liking.

The real work starts again in autumn: the harvesting, the drying and the trimming. You have to keep a close watch on the weather and the various weather stations during autumn. Once I

were great too. These are the kind of conditions that lead to a marvellous, ripe weed. But we do still get bad years and then the weight of the weed is negligible.

'Powerplay' and especially the 'Double Powerplay' is sacred to us. This plant is to my eyes the variety with the best resistance to all kinds of sickness. The result is always perfect and above all it is a plant that you can harvest before most other varieties – it's ready by the end of September, mid-October or even later. I find it better than any other variety and I have tried quite a few in the 20 years that I have been growing.

One other big difference to growing indoors is the large quantity that needs drying and trimming all at the same time. People who try and raise a field of weed for the first time outdoors underestimate this part of the process. If it is the first time you have planted outdoors, try not to grow more than 50 plants, is my advice. Some people begin with a couple of hundred or more. Then when it comes to harvest time, they discover what a huge amount of painstaking work is involved.

Harvesting

Come harvest time, first of all we remove the crown buds, so that the side buds can still spend a bit more time ripening. Before we start hanging them up to dry, we pluck the large leaves off. Actually, this part is a really social bit of the job is. We set to work in a large group of us, sometimes we have around 20 trimmers. going at it at the same time. Having said that, I should point out that the last time we did have around 600 plants to get through. That was a bit over the top; it was also just a try out. Thanks to the lovely autumn we were able to harvest in three slices. First the crown buds, and then working from the top downwards. It was simply a question of each day taking a walk through the field and snipping off only the ripe buds. As long as the weather allowed us to, at least.

Just before the planned harvest I take a close look at the plants to see how ripe they are. The riper the better. I have been known to be dumb enough in the past as to harvest too early, but of course I do have take account of the weather. If I hear on the forecast that there is expected to be

a period of rain, with a week of 80-90% chance of rain, and the buds are already pretty well ripened, then I just gather them in

You should never bring your buds in if it is wet weather. If the buds are full of water then I guarantee that at least half of your harvest will rot. And this happens quickly; within just a couple of days it'll be gone. If I think it's going to be wet for a couple of days and they still need a short while, then I usually gamble on leaving it until a sunny period afterwards. The last week of September, the first week of October are the most favourable weeks in which to harvest. When this time comes around, it is incredibly busy. Then the whole village is busy trimming.

I don't just check to see if the little hairs are already brown, but also at whether the seed cases are ripe. If the Purple has been allowed to really ripen well, then I reckon there is not better outdoor weed around. Then it can be almost black. I do not know exactly what the percentage of Sativa and Indica this variety contains. That is a secret that the breeder of the original let me in on.

Theft and industry

What you also have to take account of when growing outdoors is the theft of your almost-ripe buds. We had a lot of trouble with this in the year just gone. When we began here growing outdoor weed, only the people in the immediate vicinity knew about it. But in the 'weed world' it often goes that as soon as a few people know that weed is being grown somewhere, then half the world soon knows it too. I'm talking mainly about people from the big cities. And not just those around here, such as Eindhoven, Nijmegen and Den Bosch, but people even make their way from Arnhem in to the countryside to take a look around and see if they can uncover a few fields. Then they return for the almost ripe buds.

Holiday makers from Amsterdam for example are also involved in this. They only come here in the Summer and spend their weekends sitting around on a camping site. This is something we never used to have to deal with, and we are getting a bit pissed off with it. Criminality goes up because of it. Out here in the sticks we want to keep the weed trade nice and relaxed, without any hassle. The kids from round here do not go pinching buds. Their dads or mums often have a patch of their own, so they can get hold of their weed from home.

We are also getting problem with industrialscale weed. This is going to be the biggest single problem in the future. A couple of village down the road have got a couple of hectares under this industrial stuff. Despite being a good ten kilometres or so away, we can notice it here. Sometimes when there is a south-easterly wind blowing, several fields here in this area get pollinated by the male pollen. It just has to blow once in the wrong direction and your plants end up only producing seed. In Eindhoven and even as far as Den Bosch they're having to deal with this. The weed is no longer sellable, there's so much seed in it. We are the only growers who so far have managed to stay reasonably seed-free.

The soil

It is really important where exactly you live in Holland. Where we live happens to be really good. We are located on sandy ground, on the moraine of a prehistoric glacier. It is a sandy spit with a layer of loam under it. That sand has the same structure, composition and deficiencies as the plant is used to in nature. Actually it is heath land. Once it was all heath here, but that has been ploughed up and made into agricultural land. It is by nature pretty infertile soil. When we plant new weed plants in the sandy soil, in a patch of earth where there has never previously been weed plants raised, then in the first year you should do nothing to it. Do not fertilize, nothing, and then the plant will always

The worst thing in the whole growth cycle that you can encounter is that the soil becomes really dry, and that you have to give them water at the beginning. On top of the nutrients present they also get a lot of nutrition and at the same time make new mother plants. From these plants we eventually take the clones we need as well as those we share with a couple of other farmers. We plant these around mid-May outdoors.

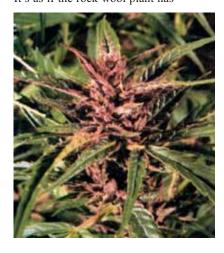
If you want to grow for several years after each other in the same place then you have to make sure that the soil is adequately compensated. Your soil gets increasingly depleted of nutrients so you have to process the soil and enrich. The best way is actually the classic way, fresh cow dung spread over your growing patch before the beginning of winter. I am fortunate in having a stall with a few goats, chickens and pot-bellied pigs. I mix their manure up with some bird guano that I get from a couple of friendly pigeon fanciers, and then just leave it to ferment. Preferably for three years, so that it breaks down nicely. Look, you have to look at it as everything that I fertilize today is not going to do its good work until a year later. That changes the structure and the biological life of the soil. The ground

manure around over it. Preferably I'll leave the roots from the previous crop in the ground too, for the nitrogen, but because of the annoyance of legal evidence we no longer do that any more. In the spring I give the soil a good turning over. Then it is clear how nice and granular and healthy it is. Sometimes I toss some pigeon guano around for the large quantities of lime it contains. That keeps the soil nice and neutral. The majority of weed farmers, if they want to go the whole hog and really do things right, spread calf manure, cow manure and horse manure together. Everything from a dairy farm. My brother also experimented for a couple of years with digging rabbit droppings into his garden. His plants were more than three metres high! Thanks to the high concentration of nitrates they shot up like rockets. We had to saw them down! Except the buds also grew upwards in the air and so the eventual harvest was sadly no bigger than usual.

Pots

For pots on balconies in the city it is of course a bit harder to make use of the pungent brown gold from a dairy farm. So too guano, whether Peruvian seagull poop or bat shit, can stink quite badly when it is used. In order to fill your pots you can more easily use the complete mixes from the grow shop, or on compost made for geraniums or a compost that you dilute by a couple of percent with clay mixed in to it, or an ordinary compost with clay and some lime mixed in to get a neutral pH of 6.8 to 7.0. In order to get relatively good be of 20 litres or more. The bigger the size you use it has good drainage, by for example filling the base with hydrogranules or Perlite. Your babies will not like wet feet at all. They don't like it in the countryside and they won't like it at your place in the city either.

Double Powerplay is actually a very soil. Particularly with clones, the plant The rooting takes place twice as fast. Certainly when there's a dry spring you can run into problems when using rock It's as if the rock wool plant has



difficulty in getting used to the soil. You can get very nice clones off the mother plant, but sadly not many of them.

I prefer to plant the clones in the wind. Between the rows in maize fields is ideal. Both the planting and the harvesting of the maize take place at the same time as the weed. By the constant movement of the wind, the roots develop a good firm grip and you get a nice sturdy plant. The plants are woodier, and it does look as if they are better able to fight off diseases as a result. An additional advantage is that the plants, especially in spring, have al their moisture dried off them thanks to the blowing of the wind through and around them. This of course gives moulds less chance of establishing a foot hold.

Yields

The yield varies. If the plants stay short, are put in late, and the summer is a bit dry throughout, then you have to reckon on about 180-200 grams per plant. That is actually very poor. But if everything works well during the summer you can easily count on double that. I reckon 500 grams a plant is possible. Certainly if you give the plants a bit of space. At the most one plant per square meter, but preferably one-and-a-half square meters per plant. Actually it's the same story when growing indoors. If you give them enough soil, it'll turn out right.

The loveliest plant that I ever had gave me 750 grams of fantastic weed. In general, you can reckon on, with a bit of knowledge and understanding of the soil and your garden, getting 400 grams off each plant without any problem. On a balcony it is certainly possible to get 100 grams per plant. At least, if you take it a bit seriously that is. But whatever the pot, tub or vat you choose to use, it can never be as marvellous as the yields you can get off growing in real earth. That has, I reckon, mostly to do with the moisture-holding qualities of the soil. You simply can not imitate that. The self-regulation of the plant is maximised by this ability.

The best thing you can do is take a sample of the soil in your garden.. before you are due to set out on your grand, hemp-growing adventure, and have it analysed at a laboratory in order to know how things sit in your garden and what you can expect in the coming vears. Not everyone is so fortunate as to have such good soil in their plot. Now there is something I believe we have been very lucky with."



Take the used-up soil from indoor grow-ops, either by your or friends who grow indoors, and dump it over your garden. Add a bit of lime and blood meal and you have the perfect soil.

out of the air. We try to not give them any water at all. Only in the first two or three days, just until they get a good start. As soon as you can see that they are going to make it, don't give them any more water. Even if they look as if they might be a bit short, just let them get on with it, because then they will be nice and busy sending out roots to go look for it. The deeper the better. This is what produces the loveliest plants. The roots go off in search, they are active and go deep in to the ground.

The main tap root gets into the loam layer, which is usually found at a depth of 50 to 80 centimetres. This loam has such a compact structure that water is trapped here for a long time. With many other soil types this is not the case, and water runs easily away, so that in a dry summer you are forced to give water to your plants. Luckily we have that loam laver, which works as a buffer. Loam is even finer than clay and has the same buffering qualities as regards nutrient salts. As well as this loam holds water for longer than clay for example or just sandy soil alone. Of course, you don't want too wet a summer though, otherwise the water has trouble running off. Then you get puddles lying around on the surface, and this is not good.

Ciones

I do not use seed; only clones. We keep the mother plants during the winter in a greenhouse round at a friend's place, where we use extra light to create a constant 18 hours of sunlight each day. They need that in order to be able to remain in the vegetative stage. Then we also know that soon after winter the whole field is going to filled with female plants. We don't need to do any further checks on them. At the end of the winter we clone the mother plants

becomes more grainy, and just better for the purpose we have in mind..

Another possibility is to take the usedup soil from indoor grow-ops, either by your or friends who grow indoors, and dump it over your garden. Add a bit of lime and blood meal and you have the perfect soil. What I also use sometimes is osmocote, a total fertilizer used in the garden industry that works for a good five months. This is a granule that lets its nutrients slowly dissolve, with nutrients in a 14-9-15 NPK ratio. It's very good for using when making up the soil for tub-grown plants, for weed you want to grow on a balcony, for example. But not for indoor growing, because the majority of the nutrients will only become available when the indoor plant does not actually want any more nutrient, after eight weeks of bloom and shortly before harvest time.

Nor should you use dry cow dung, not directly at least. It's fine to use as a preparation for a nice garden next year. Or for the years thereafter, because it will be a good five years before it has been totally removed from the soil. Then the fresh cow dung is actually a bit better for being taken up immediately thanks to the presence of urea (urine). The best option then is to mulch your garden in advance in order to avoid having to add extra nutrients during the growing process. Then you can pretty much leave the plants unattended for the whole summer. If you do it well, you will end up barely being able to squeeze through the plants even with one plant per square meter. Just let nature take her course.

After the harvest, I first of all leave the ground to rest for a while and just do nothing. In November, December I rake it totally clean and spread some

even put together your own recipe based plants then the contents of the pots must better also applies in this case. A cement tub is ideal. Do make sure that whatever

easy cloner, certainly when grown on reacts better to soil than rock wool. wool because the moisture from the rock wool is sucked into the soil rather than vice versa. What's 's more the plants just take off quicker, which can quickly make up a week's difference.



Tel: 020 8502 7722 Unit 6, The Acorn Centre, Roebuck Road, Essex, IG6 3TU Opening Times: Monday - Friday 10am - 5pm Saturday 10am - 4pm Sunday Closed



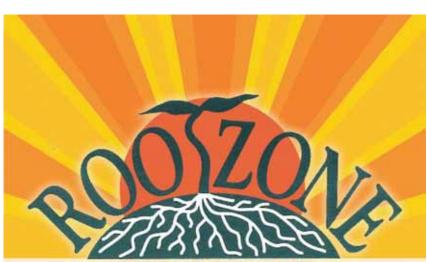
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Made-to-measure nutrients from Ferro



In the picturesque town of Huisseling in the Dutch province of North Brabant, the Ferro plant nutrient maker has had its base for nine years already. The company started out making nutrients for the greenhouse and market-gardening industry, but quickly discovered that there were other kinds of growers who Ferro could help with their harvests as well. In the meantime, the brand has grown to become a well-established name and it's hard to imagine a garden centre without its green jerry cans. Ferro's success is has not gone unnoticed over the years by Soft Secrets. That is why we have chosen to take this opportunity to give its readers a glimpse behind the scenes.

The Ferro factory is clearly divided up. On the left hand side of the hall is the production line, and the right hand side is for storage. Here and there you can make out labelled PVC-pipes running all over, taking the raw materials from place to place before eventually arriving at the filling station.

Now you are naturally curious as to what goes in to the famous green cans. OK, at Ferro we make three basic types of nutrient; the standard nutrient, the regional nutrient and the analysis nutrient. We can assume that it is self-explanatory what the standard nutrient is made up of. This is just a nutrient that's got all the basics covered. So we'll tell you what the other two nutrients are, starting with the regional nutrient. Ferro has been working on this for a number of years now and it is becoming ever more popular in the UK. As an illustration, loads that are sent over to the UK are often sold out before they even arrive there! But anyway, what is in this regional nutrient then? It came about when Ferro tested the mains water supplies of a number of regions, such as in Greater London, after which a nutrient

was produced that was optimal for every grower in this region. Using it therefore, you can be sure that your plants will get absolutely everything they need.

Analysis nutrient goes a step further. For this, the grower needs to send a sample of the water that he plans to use on his plants to Ferro. This is analysed in the laboratory and is then based on the measured EC-value the ideal nutrient is put together for this specific grower. This nutrient is therefore even more perfectly suited to the individual grower.

This all sounds very high tech and indeed it is. Ferro is moving with the times. The factory is also as fully-automised as possible. The mixing of the nutrients is fully computer-controlled so that no mistakes can creep in. What is more, the production line is set up so that workers never come in to direct contact with the substances used to make the nutrients. Many of the raw materials are used in concentrated form and are quite aggressive substances, and so our motto is by no means misplaced: safety first!

As you can now see, Ferro is a highly professional company with years' of experience. Many growers have been already been convinced by the quality of the standard nutrient. Now increasing numbers of people are discovering the benefits of growing with the regional and analysis nutrients. The future is looking rosy for Ferro. Give your plants a rosy future too, and switch over to Ferro for a maximised harvest.





Ferro, Hamstraat 8, 5371 NP Ravenstein (NL) Tel: +31 (0) 486 416 959 Fax: +31 (0) 486 416 962

www.ferro.nu // info@ferro.nu

The Doors Palace, Amsterdam



Fans of Jim know there's only one place in Amsterdam to 'light their fire', and that's The Doors Palace on Spuistraat, a bar-coffee shop combo that's an unofficial shrine to the seminal 60s band.

The secret of the place's appeal lies in the name. "It's amazing how incredibly popular the Doors and Jim Morrison still are," says owner Hans. Many of them see this place as a sort of museum or tribute to the band, he says, putting the bar up there with Pere Lachaise cemetery on the list of Things to Visit in Europe for many Doors fans.

This is reflected by the café's public: around 85% are tourists – or should that be

pilgrims? Being slap in the middle of the hotel and hostel-rich city centre, The Doors is often the first place many visitors find their way to after checking in.

The Doors is a bar rather than a coffee shop. There's no dope booth or obvious selling point, no prominent cannabis icons or weed symbols, but a discrete menu behind the bar which customers have to request. The choice is usually between 4-5 (Morroccan) hashes and 4-5 weeds, the varieties varying with market conditions.

For some stoned distraction, there are two pinball machines and a PhotoPlay games machine, table football downstairs and two immaculate, full-sized pool tables upstairs in the more chilled part of the café. There's also a coin-operated Internet connection, so the newly arrived can reassure their friends and family that they are in Amsterdam and still standing.

The Doors Palace Spuistraat 46, Amsterdam Tel: +31 (0) 2 625 0996 www.doorspalace.nl

Open: daily until 1.00 am; Friday and Saturday until 3.00 am

The Home Grower, Oldbury

The Homer Grower has been trading for the past 18 months. In this time the business has gown and so an upgraded into a new industrial unit in Oak Court was needed. The new shop is twice the size of the old unit and is still situated at Sandwell Business Park. With loads of out-front parking, the friendly team, Ad Craig and Rob, are at hand six days a week. The Homer Grower is also happy to open on Sundays by appointment.

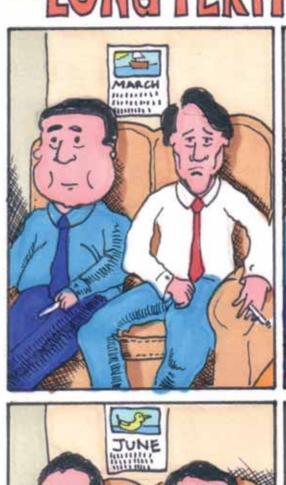
The shop stocks an extensive range of hydro and bio supplies including many favorites like, Bio-Biz, B'cuzz, Growdan and Advance Nutrients. "Vita-link is booming at the moment and soil has really taken-off in the last 12 months" says Ad. The Home Grower also supplies a nice display of American feed supplements including Open Sesame. A full range of lamps, grow units and horticultural accessories can also be found in store.

The customer service at The Homer Grower is excellent. With home growers travelling from both far a field and close by, the friendly staff, even when busy, are keen to give advice. Centrally located just off Junction 2 of the M5, you'll find The Home Grower fits all homegrowing needs.

The Home Grower Unit 13, Oak Court, Sandwell Business Park, Crystal Drive, Oldbury B66 1QG Tel – 0121 5411446

Open: Mon - Fri 10.15 - 5.00. Sat 10.30 - 4.00. Sun (by appointment only)

LONG TERMEFFECTS ARDUANA



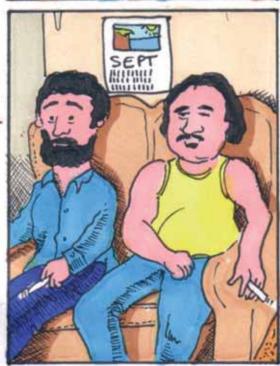


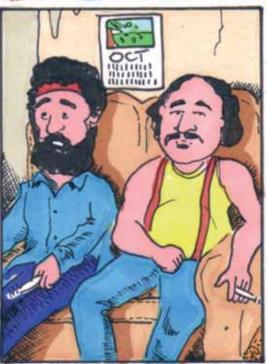


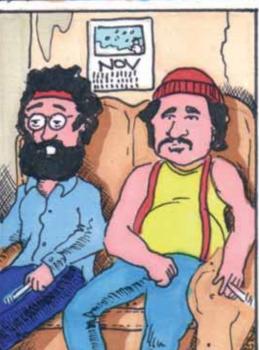














Arjan's Ultra Haze #1

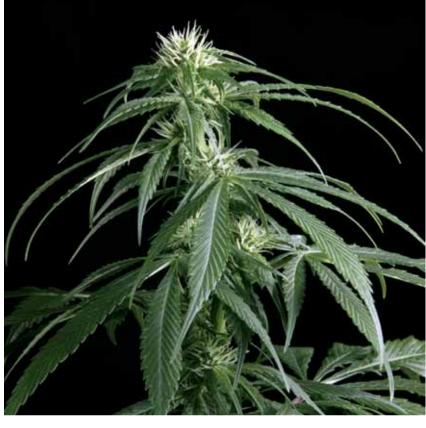
The 2006 Cannabis Cup ultimate crop

Preparing a Cannabis Cup crop is no ordinary task at the Green House. It is the most important crop of the whole year, the one that requires the best resources and the most passion and commitment. Perfect quality is the ultimate goal. Back in December 2005, in the aftermaths of the previous Cannabis Cup, Arjan started consulting his managers to decide the strain for the 2006 event. The process requires a few months of thinking and talking, with careful evaluation of the taste and trends in the market. By February 2006 a decision was made: Arjan's Ultra Haze #1 will be the Green House entry for the 2006 High Times Cannabis Cup, the most important cannabis competition on the planet.

Arjan's Ultra Haze #1 is a mighty sativa with a very woody-hazy smell and a full forest-musky flavor, a true clean uplifting psychedelic high and a well balanced body effect. The plant

flowers for 12 and up to 13 weeks, and it requires a certain development for exploiting the full potential of production. The genetics come from Neville's Haze crossed with Cambodian and Laos, a true sativa wild breed. It is a strain that balances the carachteristics of a true sativa with the exciting fresh flavor of a new cross.

In March 2006 the clones for the Cannabis Cup crop were cut from the original mother plants, rooted in rockwool cubes under TL lights (18 hours of light), and then planted in small pots with a very special soil mix, rich in turf, fibers and micro-elements. The plants were grown in the small pots for a week before being transplanted into 20 liters containers and moved into the 2 identical adjacent growrooms especially prepared for them. The growrooms were fitted with a special climate control unit, to maintain ideal conditions at all times.



Each of the two growrooms had 6 lamps of 1000 watt, for a total of 12000 watt. The walls were fitted with special rolls of black cloth to be used when filming or shooting.

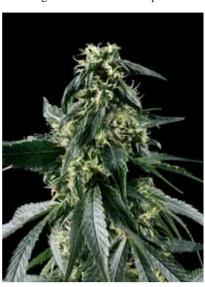
For the first time in history, a cannabis cup crop was going to be filmed and broadcasted online during its production. Another Green House treat for the High Times Judges waiting for the next cup! Between April and July the plants were filmed weekly, and the whole experience has been visible on the websites www.myspace.com/greenhouseseeds and www.myspace.com/green_house

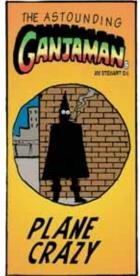
During the first weeks of vegetative growth the plants were given a feeding solution with a pH of 5.7-5.8, and an EC of 1.6-1.7. Temperature was kept at 26 degrees Celsius during the day and at 18 degrees at night.

During flowering the pH was raised to 6.2-6.4 and the EC to 1.8-2.0, before the final flushing to clean up the traces of fertilizer from the metabolism of the plants. The cannabis cup crop has to be the sweetest and most potent of all, but strictly organic!

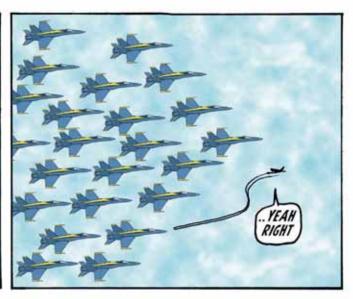
When every THC gland was finally ripe, the plants were harvested and dried in a controlled environment, very slowly. The drying process took over 3 weeks, then the plants were cured for an extra 2 months in closed containers. After curing the buds were manicured and packed for storage and final curing.

The best of the best, for the judges of the 2006 High Times Cannabis Cup!

















Wastewater

By Lazystrain

In the last copy of Soft Secrets UK we looked at the ecological implications of growing cannabis indoors. In this issue we shall take a closer look at the ecological implications surrounding water use and irrigation techniques implemented in the UK. Irrigation is the practise of managing water for agricultural and horticultural application. The use of water by both indoor and outdoor gardeners is one of the most important aspects of growing. Plants need water in order to survive - so as to photosynthesise. In a holistic sense, water is also one of the principle elements (like wind and fire). It is then surprising to learn that many gardeners view water as just another unconditional resource.

Water and Photosynthesis

Water uptake is essential to plant-life that transpires. In cannabis plants *photosynthesis* governs that water is absorbed via the plants' root system and then evaporated from the plants' leaves via the *transpiration stream*. Conversely, the leaves also absorb some moisture and root systems transpire gases into the soil. The water that remains in the plant is used in photosynthesis.

To conserve water, say when a plant's root system becomes too arid, the transpiration stream is disrupted and the plants stomata (leaf pores) close. Likewise, at the point when a plant's leaf-panels become too hot or too cold, stomata close and water uptake is temporarily disrupted. The transpiration stream then regulates the amount of water that a plant can absorb in relation to its rate of transpiration. Respiration (breathing air) in cannabis takes place all the time, although photosynthesis stops at night. Without a regular supply/ source of water, cannabis plants cannot survive.

Plants then take up water fluids through the roots into the main stem and distribute this water (and nutrients) branch by branch into the flowers and leaves with growth. Cannabis plants prefer a clean supply of water that has a balanced pH (often close to neutral). In nature, soil substrates do the majority of the work, converting water pH and EC levels based upon soil type, geology and the surrounding water table. (For this reason some outdoor spots are more suited to cannabis cultivation than others!) Indoors however plants are usually fed water from the nearest most available source.

Water Sources

The source of water, upon which plantlife feed, directly relates to the health, wellbeing, and status of a crop. Finding a clean supply of water is then one of the most essential parts of gardening. We are after-all what we eat. Water may come from one of several sources depending upon individual supply. These might include; *treated mains supply water* (domestic use), *untreated mains supply water* (industrial use), *rainstorm drain water* (industrial/amenity use), and *drawn water* from wells, rivers and lakes (amenity use).

Treated Mains Supply Water - is the most available and most expensive sources of water, straight from the tap (how ignorance is bliss)! Tap water contains stuff like - (off the top of my head) - chlorine, fluoride, parasites and lead! Obviously, this depends upon the age of the pipes (and state of repair) between the mains and the tap. If your not happy with your tap water, you can always request the local water authority carry out one of those 'water test'. Most serious practitioners, however suggest that treated tap water should be stood for 24 hours before use. This helps remove the chlorine, which mostly evaporates, although the fluoride, worms and lead remain. On a small scale treated mains water can be further "treated" by filtering (with a water filter) to remove such impurities.

Untreated Mains Supply Water - is not safe for general consumption. Typically, water that isn't from designated drinking water taps contains many unknown microbial-bacteria parasites and diseases (all found at the bathroom tap)! Water tanks that sit in lofts are introduced with fresh flushes of dirty bacterium on a daily basis (every time you brush your teeth, wash your hands or flush the toilet!). In turn untreated water is liable to infect soil and plant-life (more so than the treated stuff). Unfortunately, cannabis grown in an industrial environment is usually fed this grade of water, which often contains higher traces of metals, like lead.

Rainstorm drain water - is the most ecological way of watering outdoor gardens, period! Rainwater has a near neutral pH. When fresh (not stagnated) and filtered, this type of water can also be used on indoor crops safely enough. Rainstorm drain water that has travelled any distance through old underground or terrestrial piping is however likely to pick up many impurities on route (see '(Un)-Treated Mains Supply Water' above). The supply of rainstorm water is also liable to run dry in summer and/or freezes up in winter frosts.

Water Treatment

Having substantiated a supply of water, many gardeners next choose a course of water treatment. Sometimes adding extra nutrients, beyond those already represent in the water. For example, water from the (treated) 'Cold Tap' has an EC that fluctuates between 0.4 and 0.6, whereas water from the (untreated) 'Hot Tap' has an EC of 0.8.

The organic grower who holds little to no regards for pH and EC levels

might at this point want to think again. Simply adding a homemade worm cast/guano tea and/or a dose of organic nutrients to feed doesn't discount the non-holistic properties the water holds already. If investing in a pH kit and EC truncheon and a filtration system is the answer - so be it – you'll then be growing in a much greener and cleaner way.

This article, if you hadn't already guessed, is pretty much aimed at 'The Other'. 'The Hydro-Grower' - who while holding the most utmost respect for the value of pH counts and EC levels (in the tank), happens to place all his/her Waste Water straight down the drain with every flush!

Wastewater

Wastewater is a funny term. To waste quite literally means - 'using something in an extravagant way or without getting enough results (Oxford Dictionary). To put it another way, waste represents a failure to use something. But then again wastewater is something we throw away (?) The fact is many hydroponic methods resolve around a system of water renewal and exchange- of wasting water. Hydroponic tanks are always in need of a periodical flush with fresh water to relieve systems of excess salts and nutrients. Toxins typically build-up quicker in non-organic substrates than within organic mediums, especially when using chemical nutrients and application fertilisers.

At the point when a water-solution is no longer reaching its required EC or pH, hydroponic tanks are habitually emptied as 'wastewater' - into the nearest available drain. Any chemical nutrients that have not been used up by the plants at this stage (often the reason for flushing in the first place) enter the water system, about which we have already explained isn't completely fit for human consumption, even when treated. Perhaps this explains why the tap puts out different readings of EC on different days (?)

Water Conservation

Conserving water isn't just about turning the tap off between brushing and spitting. It has much more to do with the ecology of the water itself – thus ultimately the quality of the water we make available to our plants. Chemists and horticultural scientists have long since understood that adding too much non-organic watersoluble fertiliser to our water systems is bad news. It screws with the ecology of everything in the long term. The effects of too much agricultural nitrogen and pesticides have already polluted many European waterways, destroying natural habitat as silt deposits shift into once thriving wetland areas - choking animal and plant-life in the process. Perhaps the clearest sign that the water we draw life from is polluted, is the fact that we must now treat almost every source of lowland water in the UK before drinking.

Conclusion

More recently, those concerned with water management in the UK have started to clean up their act. Migratory fish stocks are slowly starting to rise, as are the number of sightings of otters (both clear signs that our watercourses are becoming cleaner). Ecological pressure from the people in green wellies slowly debates (with the people in clean shoes), what's right and what's wrong? But there is still such a long way to go before our water is fit for drinking.

With the current trend in hydroponic cultivation in the UK it makes us wonder if this process is set to reverse? Thousands of amateur (and commercial) horticulturists' pour thousands of litres of wasted, old, and/or disused nutrients, toxic salts, pH buffers, and pesticides down the drain every day without ever thinking where it all ends up. This isn't to say that all hydroponic growers are harming the earth. It's just that a very large percentage of them are (even if they are oblivious to the fact in process)!

Luckily the hydroponic industry is slowly backtracking on original thoughts. Ebbing towards hydroponic systems and substrates capable or running organic component feed (which when dumped down the drain causes far fewer problems in the long term). Ultimately, even the conscientiously minded organic grower, who falls foul to the sources of water with which they are presented, might want to pop out and snatch an EC truncheon and a pH pen and do some testing. Understanding the value of the water we use is as fundamental to our survival and existence, just as it is in plants. Please don't forget this.

When you set out to grow big marihuana plants in the ground for the first time, it is important that you first of all dig a large hole. The soil that is excavated is placed in a separate pile. We then fill the hole with an enriched soil mix and add fertiliser to it. The most heav9ily enriched soil is the first layer shovelled back into the hole, so that the roots of the plants will have immediate access to well-enriched under-soil. The soil that was first dug up came from deep in the hole and is usually of poor quality (contains too little humus). This soil is left to one side, or we can use it to cover up the richly fertilised soil layer.





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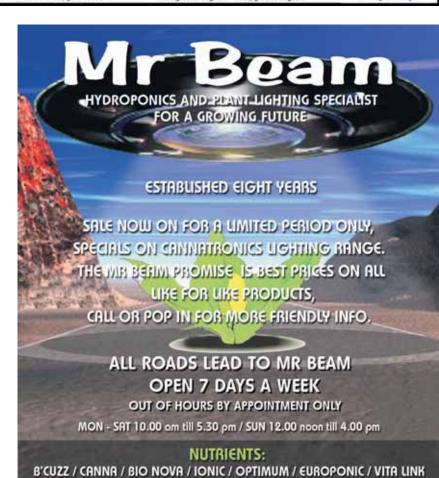
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Ry Kristie Szalanski

Ed Rosenthal Super Bud Release party

Tired of all the boring bud in your neighbourhood? Looking for something brand new to grow at home? Sensi Seeds has just released a sativa dominant strain called *Ed Rosenthal Super Bud* in order to pay homage to one of the more famous teachers of Cannabis cultivation. As part of the High Times Cannabis Cup 2006, the Sensi Hash Marijuana Hemp Museum and Cannabis College got together to host the Sensi Seeds product release party, at which Rosenthal was honoured with a namesake of the green and flowery variety. Familiar faces abounded, as the best and brightest of the Cannabis industry gathered to usher in a new variety of weed.



Ed Rosenthal (right) is being honoured by Sensi Seeds' Ben Dronkers

Monday at 4:20 PM, 20 November, 2006, a new member of the Sensi ladies was unveiled: Ed Rosenthal Super Bud from Sensi Seeds. Anyone who knows anything about breeding will realise that this "new strain has been in the works for years before its release, combining decades of knowledge with multiple generations of some of the hardiest and most interesting genetics collected within the industry. The Super Bud borrows some of the strongest traits from unique sativas such as Caribbean, Central American, African, and South Eastern Asian plants, plus packing an indica punch for those seeking heavy flowering crops. A fruity pineapple scent and flavour will satisfy smokers craving

a sativa buzz with an indica flavour, and the specially-selected hybrid will provide a satisfying yield for those who need to pay the rent. The flower formation seems to be what separates this new treat from old stand-bys, as there will be some visual difference between plants which may be either more sativa or indica dominant, combining the density of indica buds with the lengthened colas of the sativa family. According to the seed company, there is really not much other phenotypic variation, a relief to those with limited space, time, or of limited experience. During the pre-flower stage the Super Bud will occasionally experience a small growth spurt, as is typical with many

equatorial strains and actually lends to a slightly higher yield, due to elongation between internodes. Sensi Seeds claims the plants will increase their height by about 150%, although "sea of green" and super-cropping are possible with this new lady on the scene.

Ed Rosenthal, perhaps most famously known for his many grow books and "Ask Ed" column in *High Times* magazine (next year also in Soft Secrets!), has been a close friend of Sensi Seeds founder Ben Dronkers for two decades. Together these two have educated the public as to how to produce the best and heaviest buds possible, as well as Ben providing these same growers with excellent reliable seed stock. Ed has been a journalist, professor, researcher, and teacher of Cannabis for nearly 35 years, and Ben thought it only fitting to honour him with a powerful strain of weed carrying his name.

Dronkers delivered a speech expressing his gratitude towards the man whom, as he puts it, "is not only the man who writes about it, not only the guy who talks about it; he was right there," referring to a time in the early days when Ben invited Ed over to his first greenhouse for some advice. It seems Ben had been unable to visit the plants for some days, and due to the closed windows, mould had rampaged the garden, which highly embarrassed the student in front of his teacher. Instead of standing idly by and just offering information, Ed "jumped right in" and started helping with the plants. Dronkers pointed out that in this day of the egotistical grower who may be more concerned with status and cash than in helping educate his fellow gardeners, it's nice that the Cannabis community still has a few dedicated teachers on which to rely; those who aren't afraid to get their hands dirty. These father figures not only offer information to the cultivating masses, they also provide some of the very strongest and most stable genetics available. In 1981 some seeds were supplied by Rosenthal to a breeder who grew them out, ranging from equatorial African, Mexican, Thai, Afghani, Kush, and Afganai-Durban strains from pure stock. Within the five years that followed over 12 generations of seeds were produced hybrids were created based on yield and potency of each strain. According to Ed. "There wasn't a plant there that you wouldn't want to smoke...." Unfortunately only around 1500 seeds







were available and quickly sold out. In the early 90's the Dutch police increased their priority towards busting greenhouses, forcing the industry indoors. Limited space meant that Sensi was forced to focus on creating reliable F1 strains with consistent yields for indoor growers instead of experimenting with unusual and unique crosses grown more for flavour or effect.

Due to the limited space and the harsh penalties incurred upon large-scale growers, the development of the genetics was not so much put on hold as slowed down, which is why the Super Bud was just released, even though the seed stock dates back to the early 80's. Worth the wait? You be the judge; pick up a pack of the new Ed Rosenthal Super Bud and grow your own. Problems? Ask Ed!









Soft Secrets CANNABIS CULTURE

Cannabis Ruderalis

A Rare Strain By Markus Berger Photos: Sensi Seed Bank

Cannabis Ruderalis is probably vaguely known by name only, to most Soft Secrets readers. It is also known as primeval weed because this particular strain of cannabis has been used since prehistoric times. It still grows today, mostly in the wilds and it is often used as a parent plant when breeding new and mainly outdoor strains because it is so naturally robust. Soft Secrets provides some fundamental information about this hardly known hemp strain.

It is still a moot point whether the genus Cannabis consists of three differing Cannabis types or one type with a variety ranging from it. Such differences in opinion are also held with regard to plants such as Datura (Thornapple), Lophophora (Peyote) and some fungi in the Psilocybe family. Cannabis expert, Matthias Bröckers declares, "It is only recently that Science makes premises of single types from which variations develop. This can be seen with regard to differences in climatic conditions for the wild growth of Cannabis Ruderalis compared to the resin rich Cannabis Indica." And further, "The question whether the genus Cannabis exists in many types or are all derived from one strain is highly controversial. The three strains Cannabis Sativa, Cannabis Indica and Cannabis Ruderalis can be partly differentiated by sub subdividing two groups under Cannabis Sativa, with Indica as the second or by subdividing two groups under Cannabis Indica with Sativa as the second." Consider this from the book 'Plants of the Gods' by Schultes and Hofman, "By just raising the question of how many varieties of Cannabis sorts exist, it soon becomes debatable whether the genus is a single strain that encompasses a large variety or whether there are definitive differences that separate the sorts. Currently the evidence seems to point towards three distinctive strains. Cannabis Indica, Cannabis Ruderalis and Cannabis Sativa can all be classified with differences in their elementary fibres."

Characteristics and nicknames

Cannabis Ruderalis was first formally described by the Russian botanist, Janischewski. It originates in Southeast Russia but currently grows wild from the Caucuses right up into China. The name Ruderalis is derived from the tough, stony places on the plains where this sturdy little plant prefers to take hold. These places are known as 'ruderal' and so Ruderalis indicates a plant that can even survive on building rubble.

Ruderalis is short and stocky with a maximum height during flowering between 30 and 60 centimetres. In comparison with Indian hemp, Indica, Ruderalis has very small short leaves, hardly any branches and it produces one small firm flower, right on its main growth stem. The seed casing shows a difference in the outer covering tissue, which appears wrinkly and almost spotty. These seeds are usually smaller than their Sativa counterparts but are still larger than those of Indica.

Traditional nicknames for Ruderalis are Anascha, Konopli, Mimea, Momea, Mumeea, Penka, Penscha, Ruderalhanf, Russian Hemp, Primeval hemp, Wild Hemp, Rough Hemp, Hemp and Weedy

Botanical synonyms are Cannabis Intersita SOJAK, C. sativa LINNÉ ssp.

spontanea SEREBR. ex. SEREBR. et SIZOV, C. sativa LINNÉ var. Ruderalis (JANISCHEWSKY), C. sativa LINNÉ var. spontanea MANSFIELD und Cannabis spontanea MANSFIELD.

The history of primeval hemp

The Greek historian, Herodotus of Halikarnassus (490-430 BC) describes the use of Ruderalis hemp for burial rituals practised by the Scythians. A tent would be constructed from sticks and folds of felt cloth above a fire place, then everyone would gather under the tent and throw Ruderalis seeds onto the glowing rocks and embers, whilst deeply inhaling the rising fumes. Archaeological finds have confirmed Herodotus by uncovering incense holders and leather pouches full of hemp seeds that date back 2400 years and were found in Scythian burial mounds around Mongolia. The following text was found amongst his notes that were uncovered at his burial site. "Both vats contained a large amount of hemp seeds and these were placed next to the aforementioned large stones. The seeds found were Cannabis Sativa L. of the strain Cannabis Ruderalis, described by Janisch. Hemp seeds were also discovered inside a heavy leather bottle that was attached to the base of a large vat in the form of a Scythian cauldron. The stones in the smoking vats were burned and some of the remaining seeds were carbonised.

Apart from its use in burial rituals, the Scythians used this strain of hemp as their favourite tranquilliser. In Central Asia, Cannabis Ruderalis has been used since prehistoric times by shamans for rituals and that still happens today in parts of Russia and Mongolia.

Cannabis Ruderalis as folk medicine

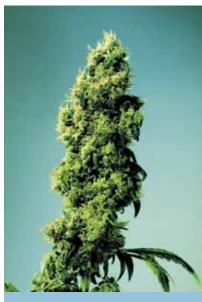
In both Mongolia and Russia, Cannabis Ruderalis is widely used as an antidepressant. A Mongolian 'bagashun' or a Russian 'mummio' is a tonic against any and all diseases and ills. It is probably created out of a mix Ruderalis, juniper berries and bat shit. The Mongolians identify two strains of cannabis, that is Cannabis Sativa, which is usually used for it's oil whilst Ruderalis is usually used for its psychotropic side effects. Jettmar believes that it is very likely that Mongolian shamans use Ruderalis with juniper berries to induce trance states.

Chemical composition

Ruderalis contains about the same amount of cannabinoids as its counterparts. That includes the three main components for THC (delta9-Tetrahydrocannabinol), CBD (Cannabidiol) en CBN (Cannabinol). The quantity of THC in Ruderalis is set at about 40%. In comparison analysis shows that Cannabis Sativa contains up to 70%



Ruderalis Indica near a highway



Sensi's exquisite Ruderalis hybrid Four Way



Sensi Seeds' Ruderalis Skunk

Ed Rosenthal has this to say about the psychoactive effects of Ruderalis, "The high from Ruderalis is more of a zoom that quickly descends into a headache. Hybrids and cross breeding on the other hand, often produce a very respectable high." With cross breeds, Rosenthal is referring to modern cannabis hybrids that have evolved due to selective breeding between the Ruderalis hemp plant and a Cannabis Sativa or Indica or already established hybrid. To conclude, let's have a quick look at some of these interesting developments.

Modern hybrids founded with Ruderalis.

For outdoor growing, Cannabis Ruderalis can best be crossed with plants derived from Cannabis Indica. Both types are small and robust and have a hearty immune system, (the influence of Ruderalis) and produce a potent high (the influence of Indica). These factors are very important for the successful cross cultivator. Cross breeding with Sativa produces hybrids with an average high content.

Ruderalis Indica and Ruderalis Skunk are outdoors strains produced by the Sensi Seed Company. Ruderalis Indica, as the name implies, is a cross between Ruderalis crossed with an Indica cross which originated from Hungary and the former Soviet Union. The producers advertise this strain as being a fast and early bloomer that is still a potent hybrid.

With the early bloomer, Ruderalis Skunk, great care was taken to maintain the original characteristics of the Ruderalis strain. This hybrid is also exceptional from its primeval

origin in that it is able to flower regardless of daylight hours. It will just start when it reaches a certain age. For this reason they are very popular as a beginners plant. One of Sensi Seeds more exquisite sorts is the Fourway, which is made up of 25% of Indica, Ruderalis, Northern Light and Skunk and is perfect for either indoor or outdoor cultivation.

The Canadian seed company, Mighty Mite Strains, produces two of their own hybrids alongside a purebred Cannabis Ruderalis. The program reads - Ruderalis Skunk crossed with Indica (for indoor and outdoor cultivation) and Mighty Mite crossed with Ruderalis for outdoor cultivation. Their top achiever is the strain Mighty Mite, an Indica strain originating in the Himalayas. Also to be found in Canada, is the Heritage Seed Company who created the Ben Johnson strain, which is an Indica, crossed with a Ruderalis hybrid. Jason King's 'Cannabible', came up with a

Ruderalis – Strawberry cross. Strawberry is derived from 75% Indica and 25% Sativa. North American Willi Jack Seeds produces an interesting cross between Northern Lights and Ruderalis. The original Northern Lights is a Indica hybrid with a very high potency and is the hallmark of Sensi Seed

All these different kinds are evidence of how interesting games between genetic properties and conditions can be. As different as all these individual strains of hemp are in appearance and form, so they are also different in their effect, in smell, taste and vegetative habits and preferences. Cannabis Ruderalis is important to cultivators, not only for its hardiness but also for its exceptional flowering ability.







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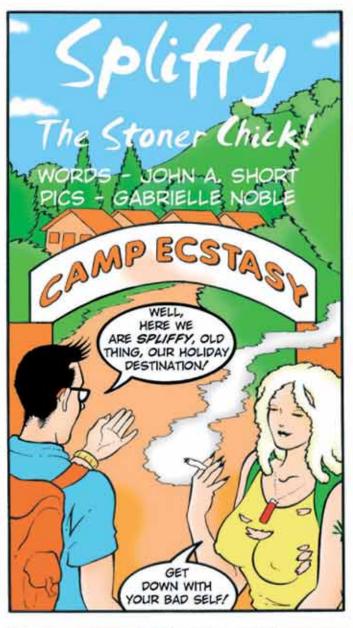
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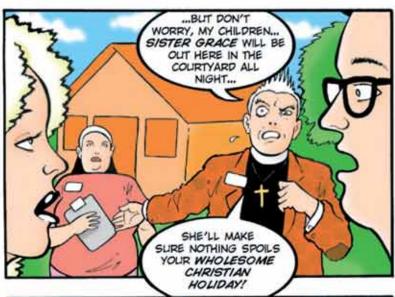
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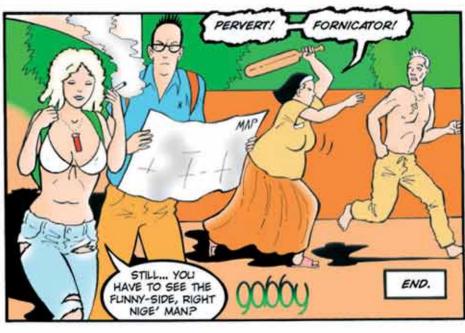








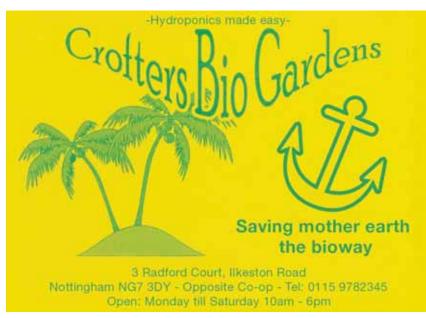


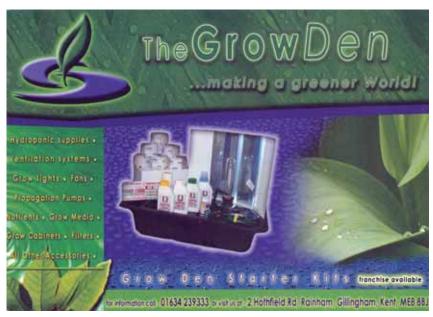




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Basildon Echo

Wednesday 11, October 2006

Jury told defendants thought they were smuggling tobacco

ed £5m dop Dad's Ar

By GINA MARDEN

A GANG accused of smug-£5million pounds gling worth of cannabis inside rolls of carpet are more like Dad's Army than Boyz in the Hood, a court was told.

Michael Lawson, 59, Lee Adderson, 47, of Ingatestone, Darren Roberts, 45, Derek Johnson, 54, and Donald Jones, 51, allegedly arranged for 912 kilograms of the drug to be stashed in specially made smell-proof compartments.

The consignment was allegedly driven from Belgium to a warehouse in Basildon watched by National Crime Squad officers who pounced when the drugs were delivered.

Lawson, of Sevenoaks, Kent, is said to be the organiser, but the gang claim they believed they were bringing tobacco into the country and not cannabis.

They say they were duped by another man into bringing the shipment in, not realising the carpets contained drugs until they were opened.

In his closing speech at Snaresbrook Crown Court, defence counsel for Adderson David Whitehouse QC. told the jury to look at the middle-aged defendants in the dock.

He said: "Not one of them has a conviction for drugs. They are not Boyz in the Hood, are they?

"They are Dad's Army. They are the sort of blokes who would be prepared to smuggle tobacco into this country."

Lawson, Adderson, Johnson, of Hayward's Heath, West Sussex, Roberts, of Orpington, Kent, and Jones, of Wanstead, East London. all deny conspiracy to smuggle cannabis.

The trial continues.

Evening Gazette (Colchester) Tuesday 10, October 2006

Cannabis g

FIREFIGHTERS uncov-"significant a cannabis factory" when they went to tackle a serious home blaze in a village.

Every room of the chalet bungalow in Tolleshunt D'Arcy was crammed with

by DANYELLE GARSIDE

> danyelle.garside@ nge.com

cannabis plants and cultivating equipment.

Chief Insp Craig Robertson, of Maldon police, said some plants were destroyed in the fire but estimated several hundred had been growing at the property.

He said: "We will never be able to ascertain exactly how much there was, as some has been burnt away, but it was definitely a lot and would have been worth a substantial amount of money.



Look what we've found - firefighters look at the cannabis factory they discovered.

Daily Mail Saturday 14, October 2006

The pot plant that

By Beth Hale

LOVINGLY tended in a tidy border of greenery, this enormous plant was obviously one gardener's pride and Joy.

Unfortunately for the owner, police who spotted it poking over the fence were not so impressed – as the 8ft-tall monster is, in fact, a cannabis plant.

After discovering it while walking the beat in Shoebury, Southend, the two community support officers raised the alarm.

Shortly after, officers raided the property In the area of well-kept terraced houses and found that several more specimens were lurking in the garden.

Understandably, the 6ft officer standing next to the bush in this picture - Just before it was chopped down - is looking rather pleased with the find.

Inspector Jeff Appleby, of Southend Police, said: 'It's not so much a plant as a tree.

'It's surprising. They can grow outside, but It's probably down to the hot weather we've had.'

Four people were arrested on suspicious of producing cannabis and possession of the drug with intent to supply. They were later released on police ball.

The seizure follows a nationwide opera-tion to crack down on drug dealers.

And it will no doubt come as a great disappointment to the mystery man who called Essex Police last week to bemoan the lack of <u>cannabis</u> in the area - and ask where he could find some. Guernsey Press & Star Wednesday 4, October 2006

turned into cannabis patch

A MINI cannabis farm in the loft of a man's flat earned him a three-year prison sentence vesterday.

In the attic space of his flat in Tower Hill, St Peter Port, Shaun Fallaize had plants drying, others growing under 400watt lamps, a regular watering chart, plant food and seeds, the Royal Court heard.

When police called with a warrant, they noticed the smell of cannabis and that the hatch to the loft had been left open. Inside were 10 plants drying and 16 still growing.

A check with the Electricity Board revealed that the use in the flat had nearly doubled since Fallaize moved in.

Fallaize, 31, who had been living there for a year, had grown enough to keep an average user in their habit for a year-and-a-half.

It was worth up to £8,000. But he claimed that due to chronic back pain and limited painkiller prescriptions because of a history of substance abuse, he would get through two ounces a week and so his stash would last him less than two months.

Fallaize, who had numerous previous convictions up to 2004, including drug offences, told officers that the cultivation was for his own use. He pleaded guilty to the cultivation of 26 plants.

Lt-Bailiff Russell Finch said that the claim of personal use would not attract a reduced sentence.

He rejected a submission for a suspended sentence, saying it was inappropriate for what was a sophisticated effort. organised and fruitful and requiring significant outlay.

The Independent Saturday 14, October 2006

Liberal approach pays off as use of cannabis drops to 10-year low

By Jason Bennetto

Crime Correspondent

The popularity of cannabis plummeted with 600,000 fewer people smoking or eating marijuana than three years ago.

The new figures for England and Wales contradict claims that the current, more liberal approach to the drug, introduced nearly three years ago, has resulted in rising cannabis use. Figures released yester-

day by the Home Office reveal that overall drug use in England and Wales has dropped, although the abuse of cocaine has risen. The consumption of other class A substances, such as heroin, has remained static. Possible explanations for the decrease include the growing awareness that cannabis can cause mental health problems, and that marijuana abuse is being replaced by binge drinking.

An estimated 2.775 million people aged from 16 to 59 in England and Wales used <u>cannabis</u> in the year up to April 2006 - 8.7 per cent of that age group. This

is the lowest level in the past 10 years when figures have been collected by the British Crime Survey.

The biggest decline has taken place since 2002-03 when it was found that 10.9 per cent (8.4 million) of 16 to 59-year-olds had taken cannabis in the past year. In 1998 the figure was 10.3 per cent, or about 3.1 million.

Even in 16 to 24-year-olds, where drug abuse is more commonplace, the use of cannabis has significantly declined. In 1998, 28.2 per cent of that age group were estimated to have taken cannabis. That figure has dropped to 21.4 per cent, or 1.338 million, in the past year.

The penalties for possessing cannabis were relaxed in January 2004 when David Blunkett, as home secretary, downgraded the drug from class B to class C. The police have ceased to treat possession of cannabis as an arrestable offence in most situations. This change in the law led to claims that many young people were using cannabis because they wrongly believed it had been legalised. and that drug dealers were exploiting the confusion.

The Home Secretary has come under pressure to reverse the reclassification.

Martin Barnes, chief executive of the charity DrugScope, said: "The fact that cannabis use has continued to fall to its lowest level in nearly 10 years is further evidence that the decision to reclassify the drug to class C was sound. Some warned that the change would lead to an increase in cannabis use yet the reverse has happened, possibly because there is more awareness of the possible harms. The fact that cannabis has been linked with triggering mental conditions could have changed people's attitude towards the drug. Another possible explanation is the rise in binge drinking, which some people may be doing instead of taking cannabis."

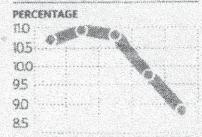
Cannabis remains the drug most likely to be used. In 2005-06, 8.7 per cent of 16 to 59-year-olds reported using cannabis in the past year. Cocaine is the next most commonly used drug with 2.4 per cent (776,000 people) claiming to have used it in the previous year. This is followed by ecstasy

at 16 per cent (502,000) and amphetamines at 1.3 per cent. Heroin (39,000) is far less popular.

The report, Drug Misuse Declared: Findings from the British Crime Survey 2005-06, estimated that about 11 million people aged 16 to 59 in England and Wales have used illicit drugs in their lifetime, while less than 3.5 million are estimated to have done so in the past year.

The Government has announced it intends to reclassify the drug crystal meth from class B to class A, the category for the most dangerous drugs. This would mean those caught dealing the drug could receive a life sentence while those found in possession could face up to seven years.

15/16 year olds reporting to have used cannabis



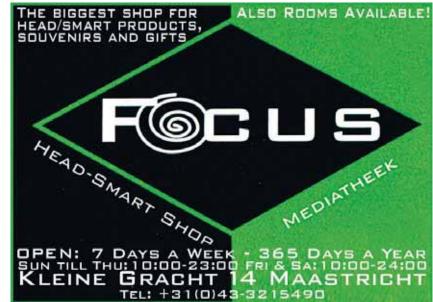
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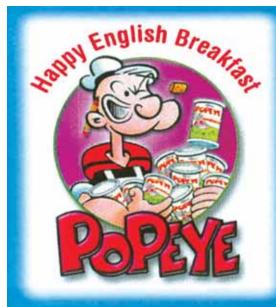


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FOR YOU TRIMMED

Leicester Mercury [City] Monday 25, September 2006

REFERRALS: GROWING NUMBER OF USERS NEED HELP

mabis is drug of choice for teenagers

by CIARAN FAGAN

SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

Cannabis has overtaken alcohol as the drug of choice among teenagers, according to experts.

A growing number of under-18s are being referred to Leicester Drug Advice Advice Drug Centre by parents or teachers after being caught smoking the drug.

Of the 81 teenagers referred to the New Walk centre in 2005/06, more than 40 were treated for cannabis use.

Young drinkers were in place for the first second time, with about 26 referrals.

Pauline Munroe, director of Leicestershire Community Projects Trust, which runs the centre's alcohol and drug programmes, said it was now planning more work in

schools and youth groups. She said: "We have definitely seen an increase in the number of young cannabis

,BINGE-2MOKING,

"Alcohol used to be the main problem area but cannabis appears to be the one now.

"A lot of them tell us that it's now a legal drug but of course that's wrong. Others will say 'it's only cannabis' because they don't see it as serious.

"In the past, most of our work has been on opiates, but now we are planning more work with schools and youth organisations on cannabis.

in June, Paul Conneally, who runs Leicester City Council's school's substance misuse team, said there was a growing problem of young people "binge-smoking" cannabis.

His team works with about 60 teenagers a year, mostly 13

to 16-year-olds, who have been identified by schools as having used drugs.

Mr Conneally was unavailable to comment. However, he said in June: "At the moment, it's a minority, but it's a growing minority.

A Leicestershire teacher, who asked not to be named, said: "I have not had to confiscate cannabis from a student yet, but that will happen one of these days.

"From the way they talk about it, I would say they see cannabis as a perfectly ac-ceptable and harmless drug and I think that is bad news for the future."

The father of a Leicester-shire heroin addict said: "My son started off on cannabis and it didn't take long for him to move on to heroin, which he is totally addicted to now.

"I don't care what people say, cannabis is a dangerous drug that can lead on to other drugs and can damage their

mental health."

A Freedom of Information request obtained by the Leicester Mercury showed that, on average, between 60 and 70 people under the age of 16 are arrested for drug offences in Leicestershire each year

The vast majority are arrested for cannabis possession. A Leicestershire police spokeswoman said: "The law in relation to young people is very simple.

"If you are 17 or under and you are found with cannabis in your possession, you will be arrested.

"If you're not under 17, you could still be arrested if you are found smoking cannabis in public, if you repeatedly offend, if cannabis use has been linked to other problems in the area, or if you are found in possession of cannabis close to youth premises.

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Daily Mail Thursday 5, October 2006

Stop going soft on cannabis, say JPs

By **Steve Doughty** Social Affairs Correspondent

MAGISTRATES have called for the downgrading of cannabis to be reversed.

Changing the legal status of the drug has sent the wrong message to the young and led to an increase in use, they say.

The JPs want their professional organisation to push for greater penalties for possession of cannabis.

This would repair the damage they believe was done when the drug was downgraded.

The proposal to push the Government to reclassify it will be debated at the Magistrates' Association's conference next month.

It was put forward by members of the association's youth courts branch, and said: 'The Impact of reclassifying cannabis from Class B to Class C has given out the wrong messages to young people

Link to mental

and led to greater use of the drug to the detriment of young people.'

Reclassification of cannabis was first mooted by the then Home Secretary David Blunkett after the 2001 election.

It went ahead in 2004 making the drug Class C rather than Class B. The downgrade meant police would not usually arrest adults found in possession.

But the change in law caused confusion about the drug's legality among the young. Concerns grew about the increasing numbers using the drug.

Last year ministers asked for advice on whether to reverse the reclassification because of mounting evidence that cannabis causes mental illness and has particular links to schizophrenia.

But they then decided any further change would simply cause more confusion.

Bristol Evening Post Thursday 12, October 2006

Police officers to face random drug tests

POLICE officers in Avon and Somerset are to be tested for drugs and could lose their jobs if illegal substances are found in their system.

The constabulary is to introduce random drug testing of all its officers from February next year, the Evening Post can reveal.

the Evening Post can reveal.

It is believed that the force is considering using tests which take a sample of hair from each officer, chosen at random.

chosen at random.

The tests would look for a variety of illegal substances, including heroin, cocaine and cannabis.

Other options include taking blood and urine samples.

Last night, officials refused to reveal how many of the force's officers had been suspended in recent years for taking illegal substances, although it is believed that at least one officer has been caught using them

using them.
Information released by the force under the Freedom of Information Act stated that random tests would be in place by February 2007.
The Post asked the force to

The *Post* asked the force to explain why the decision had been

taken to introduce the new system but had not received an explanation by this morning

by this morning.

The Avon and Somerset police federation, which represents rank-and-file officers, said it welcomed the introduction of random testing, in principle.

Chairman Paul Green said: "Our role in society means we have to be unimpeachable and these tests would just be an extension of that.

"It needs to be a fair and transparent system and only on that basis would it get our full support."

Evening Telegraph (Peterborough) Wednesday 4, October 2006

£90,000 of cannabis seized in latest raid

CANNABIS with a street value of £90,000 was seized when police raided a house in Peterborough today.

A team of 20 police officers targeted the property in Vere Road, New England, at about 7.30am, and a large number of cannabis plants were seized.

Meanwhile, three people were arrested and a large amount of a drug believed to be cannabis seized, following a vehicle stop on the A14 yesterday.

Officers stopped a Mercedes van at about 4.50pm on the A14 eastbound carriageway, close to Bar Hill, near Cambridge.

As part of the operation, a warrant was executed in Silver-wood Road, Millfield, Peterborough, where a large number of cannabis plants were also seized.

A 16-year-old boy, of no fixed address, a 33-year-old woman from London and a 42-year-old man from London, arrested on suspicion of possession of drugs with intent to supply, are currently being questioned.

Both the raid and the van stop were part of Operation Keymer – a two-week crackdown on cannabis factories.

Police have also raided homes in Northfield Road, Bourges Boulevard, Cambridge Avenue and Eastfield Road, Peterborough, over the past week, seizing cannabis plants from each.

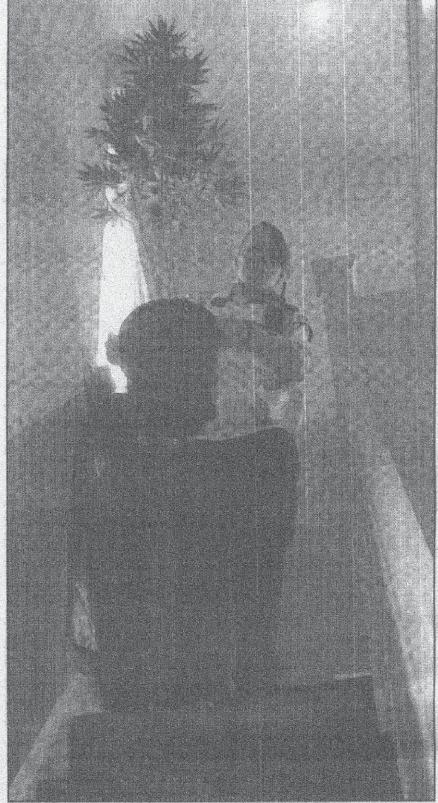
A man appeared in court yesterday in connection with an earlier cannabis raid.

Tuan Tran (36) was arrested following a police raid at a house in Bourges Boulevard, Peterborough, on Monday.

He is accused of one count of producing cannabis.

Tran briefly appeared at Peterborough Magistrates' Court yesterday, and confirmed his name and address through a Vietnamese interpreter.

The case was adjourned until Tuesday, when he will be committed to Peterborough Crown Court for trial.



GROWTH INDUSTRY: A policewoman removes a potted cannabis plant from a house in Vere Road, New England. (6AS1004014) Picture: ALAN STORER

The Herald [Glasgow] Saturday 2, September 2006

-turn ower cama osas police give out warnings

Anti-drugs campaigners angered by move

EXCLUSIVE

LUCY ADAMS

HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT lucy.adams@theherald.co.uk

SCOTTISH police forces are giving warnings to adults caught in possession of cannabis rather than passing on cases for prosecution.

With the agreement of the Crown Office, a number of forces have started offering formal warnings in pilot schemes.

The move, a policy U-turn by chief constables, has infuriated anti-drugs campaigners who believe it will send out the wrong message to young people.

When cannabis was reclassified from a class B to a class C drug in 2004, chief police officers and the Scottish Executive went to great lengths to publicise the fact that their stance on cannabis had not changed. They said it was an arrestable criminal offence and that all cases would be reported to procurators-fiscal.

Lothian and Borders is piloting the scheme in West Lothian and has already handed out 23 formal warnings to people over 16 caught with cannabis.

A spokesman for Lothian and Borders police said: "West Lothian is the only division where they use adult warnings.

"There is a pilot project agreed with procurators-fiscal. If we catch someone with cannabis worth £15 or less, we give out a formal police warning. If the person is caught

again, then they are charged." Fife constabulary has issued 40 warnings for possession of cannabis and say only two people have reoffended.

The force has reported 213 offenders to the fiscal for

cannabis possession.
Superintendent Stan McLeod, head of Fife's criminal justice department, said: "Warnings are generally issued for offences such as minor vandalism where full reparation has been made, and for possession of very small amounts of cannabis, often amounting to only a trace of the drug

"We believe the adult warning scheme formalises police warnings for minor offences in

INSIDE **Leader** Page 14

cases where the procurator-fiscal would have dealt with the case by letter.

"This reduces bureaucracy and frees up time and money, allowing the police to focus more of their resources on frontline services.

"The warning is also retained on the Scottish Criminal Records Office system, providing intelligence for police forces and other agencies."

All of Scotland's police forces have introduced adult warnings in the past year for minor first-time offences, such as urinating in public or low-level breaches of the peace.

The aim is to streamline the

system to allow prosecutors to concentrate on more serious offences and reduce the strain on the courts, but was not expected to include drugs offences.

Professor Neil McKeganey, from the centre for drug misuse research at Glasgow University, described the move as dan-

gerous and confusing.

He said: "Most members of the public are unclear as to the legal situation in relation to cannabis and that is why this is all the more dangerous.

Alistair Ramsay, of Drugwise, an educational consultancy, warned the change would further confuse people.

He said: "If this sends out the wrong message, compounded by the poor information about the reclassification, leading to young people believing that cannabis's legal status has been changed, then it is entirely wrong.

"There has already been a tremendous amount of confusion about the reclassification of what is a dangerous drug. The decision on this should be taken by the procurators-fiscal not the police.'

The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland said: "The police service in Scotland continues to take a robust stance on anybody caught in possession of drugs.

The projects in place in Fife and Lothian and Borders are in agreement with local procurators-fiscal and in the spirit of the criminal justice reform process."

The@Heral

A property of rock wool and mapito is that marihuana plants will often develop more quickly on them, both during the growth and bloom phases. It seems that the processes in the plants when growing on these substrates have a tendency to become speeded up. It is well known among growers that marihuana varieties grown on rock wool and mapito can often easily start blooming a week earlier than on a substrate such as soil.

Guernsey Press & Star Thursday 28, September 2006

ying drunk with cannabis

A MAN found lying drunk at the Weighbridge taxi rank had a lump of cannabis resin on him.

Shane White-Saunders, 21, of 6, Place des Arbres, Grand Bouet, St Peter Port, admitted the two offences when he appeared in the Magistrate's Court.

The court heard that White-Saunders was found asleep at the rank at 1.15am on 16 September. According to the prosecution, he was 'extremely drunk'.

A search found 5.5g of cannabis resin in White-Saunders's posses-

Advocate Samantha Bailey said that her client, who was subject to a bind over at the time of the offences, used the drug to alleviate pain in his knees and back.

Assistant-Magistrate Philip Robey imposed a £100 fine for being found lying drunk, £300 for cannabis possession and £200 for breaching the bind over.

Northern Echo Saturday 30, September 2006

Drugs farm secret that was hidden from prying eyes



To watch police footage of the cannabls operations, visit www.thenorthernecho.co.uk

By Catherine Jewitt

catherine.jewilt@nne.co.uk

TO the outside world they looked like ordinary homes - but behind the closed doors of three County Durham properties sophisticated cannabis farms had been created to yield crops with a potential street value of £200,000 a year each.

Targeted because of their cheap prices, the properties in Murphy Crescent, Bishop Auckland, High Street, West Cornforth, and Haig Terrace, Ferrybill, were bought by cannabis farmers.

When police searched the first property, on September 10 last year, they were aghast to discover row upon row of cannabis plants inside four of the rooms.

Officers recovered 180 young plants, bags of plant material and compost.

In a raid in Haig Terrace, 361 plants were found, and 454 were seized from the property in High Street.

Detective Sergeant Lee Herridge said: "The first house was a surprise, but it wasn't until our investigations led us to the other properties we realised the scale of the operation.

The equipment was exactly the same in each house and we're certain that items and hundreds of seedlings recovered from other properties would have been used to set up another.

"These were serious factories. We recken it was about £40,000 to buy a house and £12,000 to £14,000 invested in equipment."

Each property was rigged with high-powered lighting and heating systems powered by electricity that was rerouted from the mains supply.

Extraction fans and huge ducting systems were installed to direct the pungent smell – which has earned the drug its nickname skunk – out through the chimney

The curtains were drawn and plastic sheets pinned up against

the windows to keep out prying eyes.

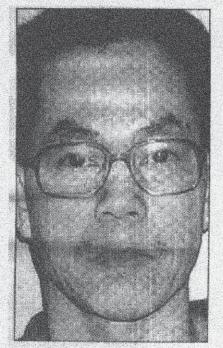
Lamps set on a timer were placed on the window sills to make it look as if someone was living inside.

The people running the houses even installed false doors at the properties in Murphy Crescent and Haig Terrace so that if visitors called, they would not be able to see inside.

Although police believed they discovered the operation in its infancy and cannabis from the three properties was not sold in County Durham, they say the public were at risk.

Det Sgt Herridge, of Newton Aycliffe police, said: "These properties were extremely dangerous.

"The electricity metres had been bypassed, there were dozens of high-watt lights and heating and massive vats of chemical nutrients. If a fire started, the whole street could have



FLED VIETNAM: Hai Van Tran

gone up. The properties were so humid that there was a real risk of legionnaires disease spreading to neighbouring properties.

"And frighteningly, there are certainly links with serious organised crime, probably in London."

Each drug factory conceals the stories of desperate caretakers who were employed by people further up the operation to tend to the crops.

Newcastle Crown Court heard that Hai Van Tran, 55, described himself as a simple sailor, who was sent to the North-East to work off his debt to a gang in London. He fled Vietnam after he and his late wife were arrested for political activity and believes his wife was beaten to death.

Teenage gardener Nam Nguyen worked as a cannabis gardener in Middlesex then County Durham to pay off £8,000 his mother paid for him to be brought to England illegally.

Thien Nguyen, 24, came to the UK as an illegal immigrant two years ago, believing he would find well-paid work and build a good life.

But he was refused legal entry and fell into the black market of jobs that included the single delivery of cannabis-growing equipment to the North-East.

Many of those further up the hierarchy also had remarkable life stories.

Kuay Khin Dip, 47, could have been made for life after winning £200,000 at a Sunderland casino.

But because he invested his winnings in the illegal activities in Haig Terrace, he has lost the chance ever to see his elderly father, who lives in the US.

Thai Thi Vu, 45, says she married Quang Xuan Vu, 21 years her junior, so she could have a man's protection after the eldest of her five children went to university.

But while she slept downstairs at their home in Collingwood Street, Coundon, her husband had a bed in the loft.

She had a relationship with 42year-old Than Van Liu and together they have a young son, who is seriously ill and has needed a series of operations for digestive problems.

After sentencing the pair to custody, Judge Michael Cartlidge said: "I feel it is tragic from the point of view of Mrs Vu's children, but there is no alternative to custody."



























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Evening Gazette (Colchester) Thursday 12, October 2006

Up to 500 plants removed from isolated property

Fire-hit house 'a cannabis factory'

THE number of cannabis plants recovered from a rural drugs factory is close to 500, police revealed today.

Firefighters stumbled on a major haul of plants as they tackled a blaze at an isolated bungalow in Kelvedon Road, Tolleshunt D'Arcy, earlier this week.

A huge police operation has since been launched, and - after the fire-damaged property was made safe - officers have been able to fully assess the size of the operation.

by DANYELLE GARSIDE

danyelle.garside@ nge.com

A spokesman said: "We have removed between 450 and 500 cannabis plants from the property, as well as an extensive assortment of equipment associated with the cultivation of drugs."

It will never be known exactly how many plants were originally at the chalet-style bungalow, as some are thought to have been destroyed in the fire.

Police have said the "significant cannabis factory" would have required a massive amount of electricity to run, and it is believed faulty wiring of bright lights used in the cultivation of the plants could have been to blame for Monday's blaze.

Investigating officers have appealed for help tracing a man who tried to flag down a car in Kelvedon at about the time the fire started, just before 7.30am on Monday.

He spoke little English and the woman he tried to stop drove off as she could not understand him.

The man is described as of Oriental appearance, about 5ft 5ins tall, in his mid-twenties, clean-shaven with a baby face and black spiky hair.

He was grubby-looking and wore a maroon puffed jacket and tracksuit bottoms.

Information to Maldon CID on 01621 852255.

A 34-year-old man from north London, arrested on suspicion of cultivating, or allowing the cultivation, of illegal drugs, has been released on bail until the New Year.

The Herald (Glasgow) Saturday 2, September 2006

Cannabis offences

Legal framework needs to be clear and consistent

ROUND 450BC Herodotus was giving cannabis a rave review for its positive effects on Sythian tribesmen. "The Syths, delighted, shout for joy," he reported. In 1894, the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission recorded "no injurious effects on the mind". The first common myth about cannabis is that it is harmless. The second is that it is legal. When former Home Secretary David Blunkett reclassified cannabis from Class B to Class C in the hierarchy of harmfulness in January 2004, police in England and Wales began giving formal cautions to those found in possession of small amounts of cannabis, then sent them on their way. The net result was confusion. Cannabis had not been decriminalised but many people believed it had.

At the time, the sanction of a formal caution was not available in Scotland and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (Acpos) was quite explicit. Its policy on cannabis would not change. All those caught in possession would be reported to the procurator-fiscal. When "adult warnings" were introduced in Scotland last year, it was expected that they would apply to first-time minor offences such as urinating in public, but not to drugs offences. However, as The Herald reveals today, without any formal consultation or political debate, several police forces are now giving warnings for cannabis possession, rather than passing on cases for prosecution. This merely deepens the confusion surrounding this drug and introduces an element of geographical lottery. So someone smoking a spliff could be the subject of a verbal rap over the knuckles in Glenrothes but a fine in Glasgow. The Scottish

Executive may have no control over the classification of a drug, as this is a reserved matter, but criminal justice does fall within its remit and urgent action is needed to restore consistency in this area.

There have been two significant developments in relation to cannabis since 2004. The first is that the change in its legal status appears to have produced an explosion in its popularity. In Scotland, police have reported a dramatic rise in both the use and cultivation of cannabis among all age groups, with many Scots not realising they were still liable to prosecution. This included a 13% increase in the number of arrests of under-16s for drug-related offences. This is particularly alarming because the second development has been an increasing body of evidence that long-term cannabis use does significant damage, especially in those who acquire the habit in their early teens.

The issue of causality is a vexed one. A following B does not necessarily mean that A caused B. But many professionals in the field are now convinced that a cannabis habit can trigger an earlier onset of psychosis, especially in predisposed people, and worsen the progress and outcome of the illness. This applies particularly to those using skunk, the most powerful form of the drug, and to those who develop the habit while their brains are still maturing.

to those who develop the habit while their brains are still maturing.

Better education to alert people, especially young people, to the health risks of long-term cannabis use is necessary, but this must be supported by a clear and consistent legal framework. The unevenhandedness of current disparities undermines respect for the criminal justice system.

Yorkshire Post Tuesday 26, September 2006



Out: A policeman carries cannabis plants and pots from the Sheffield house.

Swoop on house nets more than 100 plants

Lucy Harvey

MORE than 100 cannabis plants were recovered from a house in Sheffield on the first day of the national crackdown on drug factories.

South Yorkshire Police found a sophisticated hydroponics system cultivating scores of plants in every room at a semi-detached house in Cemetery Road, Sharrow, yesterday.

Officers, who estimate the haul of high-strength "skunk" to be worth around £30,000, also found evidence people had been living at the address as mattresses, drink cans and food wrappers were scattered around.

No-one was inside at the time and last night no arrests had been made.

Police have carried out nine similar raids since July on properties in the Wincobank, Sharrow, Broomhall, Burngreave and Park areas of the city and found more than 4,000 cannabis plants with a street value of more than £1.4m. The 10 people arrested in connection with production of cannabis are all Vietnamese or Chinese.

Det Supt Tony Thompson said: "We recovered around 100 plants from these premises. No-one was in but there were clear signs it was in production and it has been cropped recently.

"It is a typical property for a factory – a large studentstyle house, sub-let by the landlord and not under too much scrutiny. The bathroom was used to mix the nutrients and the kitchen used for the water supply and the rest of the house, floor to ceiling, was used to grow cannabis." Evening Standard Thursday 28, September 2006

1,000 cannabis plants seized in Wisteria Avenue

RICHARD EDWARDS Crime Reporter

POLICE launched dawn raids today in a crackdown on multimillion-pound cannabis

Officers stormed two semidetached houses in north London, finding up to 1,000 cannabis plants packed into bedrooms, living rooms and garages

They could have supplied about £500,000 of highly potent "skunk" a year.

Police believe Vietnamese organised crime gangs are operating thousands of factories

across the country, generating millions.

Today's raids are part of a nationwide initiative codenamed Operation Keymer.

The first was at a three bedroom semi-detached house in a cul-de-sac in Ponders End. Enfield.

Officers ran down a garden path to the front of a well-kept

house, with neat hedgerows and wisteria climbing up it.

Inside it had been converted into a skunk factory -- with the front room and three bedrooms packed with 335 plants and sophisticated heat and lighting systems.

Police arrested a Vietnamese man in his twenties trying to flee from the second raided house, in Enfield Island Village.

It was only days from being "harvested" by the cannabis "gardener" and had been operating since April. The front room was adorned with leather sofas, an expensive TV, ornate chandeliers - and a mattress.

Upstairs, all three bedrooms had been stripped to hold hundreds of plants and fitted with powerful 600-watt lights.

Cables hung precariously from the ceilings and an officer said both properties were "wired up" and dangerous to enter deterrent to trespassers.

It is believed the Island Village house, in Manton Road,

was rented for about £1,200 a month from a private landlord. an Egyptian who never visited the premises and was paid cash.

Neighbour Tom Young, 49, watched the raid in amazement. He said "I've never met or even seen the neighbours, I only noticed their car outside sometimes. I never realised what they were doing inside. Its a shock for this kind of thing to be going on in such a quiet residential area."

Last year, an Evening Standard investigation was the first

to uncover the extraordinary scale of the cannabis racket. It found:

Police closed down 700 factories in London in the past 12 months but described that as: only the "tip of the iceberg"

Dp to 60 per cent of the skunk on Britain's streets — which is five times the strength of normal cannabis — is home grown. The ringleaders are sometimes using illegal Vietnamese

immigrants, including children, to look after the harvest.

Evening Telegraph Tuesday 10, October 2006



CRACKDOWN: Police remove cannabis plants from a property in Oxford Rd, Millfield. (6AS1009105)

Picture: ALAN STORER

Police fell another cannabis forest

HUNDREDS of cannabis plants that would have been sold for £150,000 on the streets of Peterborough have been seized from a city home.

Police officers discovered 380 plants growing in almost every room of a three-storey terrace house in Oxford Road, Millfield.

When officers from the Serious and Organised Crime Agency knocked on the door at 8pm on Sunday the male occu-

pant tried to escape via the rear garden. He was caught and arrested before he could jump a fence.

Yesterday two police vehicles were parked outside the home in Oxford Road while nine officers searched inside.

They dismantled lamps, fans and socket boards and chopped down cannabis plants. Row upon row of pots sat on blue plastic matting in the house. Officers were masks as they loaded the

cannabis plants into black bags.

DC Shanie Nayar said: "There were pots in every room, except a bedroom and kitchen. We estimate the plants have een growing here since the start of One neighbour said: "I saw the nolice

one neighbour said: "I saw the police pull up and knock on the door. A while later they were dragging someone out.

"We had no idea what was going on inside the house, or that drugs were involved. You don't think it will happen on your street."

One 46-year-old man of no fixed abode was arrested on suspicion of cultivating cannabis and remains in custody at Thorpe Wood police station.

The latest raid comes at the end of the nationwide Operation Keymer, a two-week crackdown on the cultivation and supply of cannabis.

The operation was set up to target criminal gangs who buy or rent homes and turn them into cannabis farms. Plants worth £2.7 million were seized in raids across Peterborough and 4,500 cannabis plants were recovered.

The first raid took place on September

28 When police discovered rows of plants worth £200,000 in a drugs den in Cam-

bridge Avenue, Peterborough.
A further eight raids took place across the city and it is believed that only the Metropolitan police in London seized

more cannabis as part of the operation.

A police spokesperson said that even though Operation Keymer had ended, drug raids would still happen across Peterborough and urged people with information to contact police.

Anyone who suspects a property is being used as a drugs factory should call police on 0845 456 4564, or Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555111.

By JONNY MUIR

jonny.muir@peterboroughtoday.co.uk

Western Morning News Wednesday 11, October 2006

Couple face trial on drug charges

A COUPLE charged with cannabis production and possession with intent to supply the drug with an estimated value of £250,000, are to face trial at Truro Crown Court. Harold Beck, 53, and Linda Jane Beck, 55, of Cuckoo Park, Whitecross, Newquay, appeared before magistrates in Bodmin yesterday charged with the production of the class C drug and possession of cannabis leaf with intent to supply. Harold Beck is also alleged to have acquired 30 rounds of .22 rifle ammunition without a certificate. No pleas were entered and both were granted unconditional bail until November 21 when the cases will be committed for trial.

East Anglian Daily Times Friday 6, October 2006

Man charged over cannabis at port

A 45-year-old man was last night charged after police seized more than six tonnes of cannabis at a

Suffolk port. Unemployed Robert Flook, of Blackfen, Sidcup, Kent, will appear in court today charged with conspiracy to supply 6.5 tonnes of the Class C drug. He is also charged with conspiracy to supply 169kg of cocaine

The cannabis haul was intercepted at Felixstowe, the Metropolitan Police said.Flook will appear at Central **London Magistrates Court today**

Liverpool Echo Tuesday 12, September 2006

burban des res hid cannabis plan

Tip-off leads to £100,000 drug haul

DRUGS worth £100,000 were seized in a series of raids on houses across Liverpool.

Swoops on five properties were sparked by a single tip-off from a drugs and the pare seized across the control of the

resident over suspictous activities at a house in Eldred Road, Childwall

Police entered the unoccupied house early yesterday morning and found 400 skunk cannabis

and found 400 skunk cannabis plants.

Two men, both in their 20s, were arrested at the house and officers also obtained evidence which led them to a house in Rufford Road, Kensington.

There they discovered more drugs, £10,000 cash and several computers believed to have been

drugs, £10,000 cash and several computers believed to have been used to produce fake identification documents.

Four more men were arrested and further evidence recovered from the scene led to a second house in Rufford Road, an address in Argyle Street in the city centre and a property in Old Hall Road, Maghull.

Inside the Argyle Street prop-

Inside the Argyle Street property were a further 300 skunk plants and police made a further

Inspector Shaun Bradbury of Al-"This all came about because of a single call to Crimestoppers.

"That person should feel rightly proud because, thanks to their

public spirited actions, a lot of drugs and the paraphernalia for drug dealing has been taken off the streets of Liverpool."

The raids supported the newly-launched Total Policing in-itiative, which concentrates police resources on a type of of-fending on a particular day. Chief constable Bernard Hogan-Howe has promised to use the tac-tic for two days every month in the war

riminals.
Inspector Bradbury added:
"These raids are part of our continuing war on drugs and were made possible by the Total Policing initiative.

"A year ago, we wouldn't have been able to achieve something like this at such notice.

"We have recovered drugs worth £100,000, a further £10,000 in cash and made seven arrests. This has been a very successful operation."

The seven men have been arrested in connection with production of skunk cannabis, one of the most potent strains of the drug, and pos-

potent strains of the drug, and possession with intent to supply.

They are being questioned at separate police stations in Mer-

Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555



Evening Telegraph (Peterborough) Wednesday 11, October 2006

Restaurant boss faces cannabis raid ch

THE director of a popular Peterborough nightspot has appeared in court charged with growing cannabis.

Kenneth Yin Koon Mak (34), who is a director at ToHo, in New Road, Peter borough, an upmarket Chinese restaurant and cocktail bar in the city centre. was arrested after the discovery of a large quantity of cannabis in a van in Bretton, on Friday

The seizure of the drugs led officers to carry out searches at ToHo and two addresses in Bretton.

Officers confiscated more than £1,500 in cash, including some from the city centre restaurant. Hundreds of cannabis plants were

also seized in raids at the two homes as part of Operation Keymer, a two week blitz on cannabis factories in the city, which has seen the seizure of more than £2.7million worth of plants

Mak (34), of Apex Court, in the city centre, appeared at Peterborough Mag-istrates' Court yesterday, where he was charged with three counts of producing cannabis.

Two other city men who were arrested following the discovery of cannabis in the van in Bretton also

appeared in front of Peterborough magistrates yesterday charged with similar offences.

Guo Xun (27), of New Road, was charged with one count of being con-cerned in the production of cannabis. And Jin Tan (25), of Swan Gardens, was charged with one count of being concerned in the production of cannabis.

Mak took over the running of ToHo, a two-storey building with space for up to 400 drinkers and diners, after it went into administration in August last year.

The restaurant, which has proved popular with young people, has one of the few cocktail bars in the city and is considered one of the biggest such venues outside London.

It was originally set up by Hong Kong-born entrepreneur Felix Chou, who also ran Hong Kong Gardens, in Whittlesey, which he opened in 2000 aged just 22.

Yesterday, Detective Constable Robert Davis appeared before magistrates, where he asked for the seized cash to be impounded under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Magistrates ruled that the money could be held for up to six months pending the outcome of the ongoing criminal investigations.

Customers at ToHo restaurant were turned away from the premises on Friday

A ToHo spokesman said the closure between 6pm and 9pm had been due to a power cut caused by an electrical

The restaurant is now open for business as usual.

By JACK GROVE

jack.grove@peterboroughtoday.co.uk



SEARCH: ToHo restaurant.

Western Morning News Wednesday 11, October 2006

£10m cannabis haul

CANNABIS with a street value of worth more than £10 million was seized from a warehouse in Northern Ireland yesterday. Up to four tonnes of the drug, in bars and packed onto pallets, were discovered when police and HM Revenue and Customs officers raided industrial premises at Newtownards, Co Down. It is thought the haul of cannabis, the biggest ever uncovered in the province, may have been destined for the Irish Republic. Two men arrested were being questioned last night by detectives involved in the operation.

Birmingham Post

Tuesday 5, September 2006 Gardener's cannabis 'would last ten years'

When police raided the 600-year-old listed country cottage of gardener Michael Spier they found enough cannabis to last him ten years and menus giving details of varieties of the drug and their effect, it was claimed yesterday.

Nearly seven-and-a-half kilogrammes of the drug were at his listed 15th century cottage in Lower Penn, near Wolverhampton, but Spier (48) claimed it was for his personal consumption, Stafford Crown Court was told.

But yesterday Judge Nicholas Mitchell accepted a defence submission that the cannabis was for personal use.

Peter Grice, prosecuting, said Spier, of Walnut Tree Cottage, Springhill Lane, spent £885 in one quarter on electricity to help grow the crop.

Spier admitted two charges of cultivating cannabis with a basis of plea that it was for his own use. He was fined £2,500 and ordered to forfeit £17.500.

He told the court he was a commercial gardener and had smoked cannabis since he was 17. He said he intended to keep the cannabis for five years.

"It was never my intention to sell the cannabis. I had no reason to. I had no idea how long the cannabis would last but I thought I might be selfsufficient for five years. I don't think it would have lasted for ten years."



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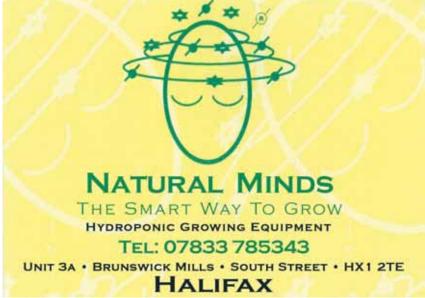


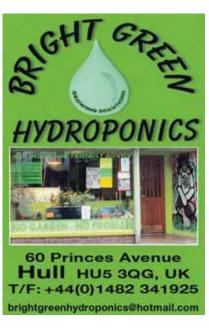


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Daily Mail Friday 6, October 2006

lice chiefs want rethink on cannabis

THE rules which tell police not to arrest cannabis smokers could be torn up, it emerged last night.

Police chiefs signalled a rethink after the 'softly, softly' approach was blamed for a senseless murder and an increase in hard

senseless murder and an increase in hard drug abuse.

Until now, both the Government and senior officers had steadfastly defended the decision to downgrade the drug from Class B to Class C in January 2004.

But the Association of Chief Police Officers has begun an official review of the guidelines, which state there should be a presumption against arrest of users.

The move came as a campaigner, Reverend George Hargreaves, prepared to lodge papers at the High Court today demanding a U-turn, citing evidence linking strong 'skunk' forms of the drug to schizophrenia.

Earlier this week, Mr Hargreaves, an

By James Slack and Tom Kelly

adviser to the Metropolitan Police, blamed skunk for the murder in East London of Nyembo-Ya-Muteba by a gang of thugs. He believes they were driven to kill the 40-year-old father of two after smoking the drug.

old father of two after smoking the drug.

Acpo's Cannabis Enforcement Guidance, issued in September 2003 ahead of the law changing in January 2004, said there should be 'a presumption against arrest' for those found in possession of the drug.

Only 15 per cent of those caught with the drug in London have since been charged.

Mr Hargreaves said: 'This guidance must be reversed. The only way to crack down on the problem is to return to arresting and prosecuting people carrying even small amount of cannabis.

'At the moment most dealers will only

'At the moment most dealers will only carry enough for personal use, so that they

are not arrested or charged if caught by a police officer. They keep the stash hidden at home or elsewhere.'

He said an an anonymous donor has provided £30,000 for the legal challenge,

The Government has ruled out cannabis being re-classified back to class B.

But Acpo has it in its power to advise officers that, despite cannabis being Class C, the presumption should once again be in favour of making an arrest.

Mary Brett, a spokesman for Europe Against Drugs, said Acpo should return cannabis to an arrestable crime:

What are the police waiting for? Since they talked about downgrading cannabis, admissions to mental health units have risen by 40 per cent.

A spokesman for Acpo said the review followed a change in the law earlier this year which makes all crimes, even litter-dropping, an arrestable crime.

When planting young seedlings or clones, always make sure that you have accounted for the fact that mari– huana can grow at a pretty rapid rate. So make sure that the plants have enough space in which to expand, without them getting in the way of each other.

Western Daily Press Tuesday 26, September 2006

Police close in on suburban drug factories

West officers at the forefront of fight against high-grade 'skunk'

By Tristan Cork t.cork@bepp.co.uk

MAJOR police crackdown on cannabis factories was launched yesterday with forces across Britain working together.

But of the 20 police forces taking part across England and Wales, only Wittshire police will be involved in the fortnight long operation targeting organised growing high-powered 'skunk' cannabis.

The operation follows the smashing of a cannabis factory network in Swindon earlier this summer, in which eight homes around the town and in surrounding villages were found packed with growing equipment and cannabis plants.

The full scale of the Swindon operation revealed to police the extent of the problem many of those arrested were from China and South East Asia, and it is alleged to have been the work of an Asian criminal gang network.

Police are acting after figures revealed that the powerful skunk weed now accounts for 60 percent of the cannabis used in Britain - a huge jump from just 10 per-cent in the mid-1990s.

And rather than drug traffickers importing the substance, it is largely homegrown with links to the criminal underworld and people trafficking

The operation, code-named

Keymer, will aim to close cannabis factories and disrupt and dismantle the criminal networks that run them.

The man in charge of the nationwide operation, Alan Gibson from the Association of Chief Police Officers, said: 'Cannabis cultivation is an increasing problem, which must be nipped in the bud.

'[It] is seen by criminals as a low-risk, high-profit in-dustry, but this operation will send out a clear message that cannabis production is a serious offence and that offenders will be brought to mistice.

"Not only is the money from cannabis cultivation ploughed back into serious crime, but the bypassing of the electricity needed to run the factories causes risk of fire and electrocution and they have already caused several devastating fires.

As part of the operation, police are expected to ask the public to look out for telltale signs of cannabis factories being run. These include the windows of a property being permanently covered, gar-dening equipment left out-side or a pungent smell emanating from inside.

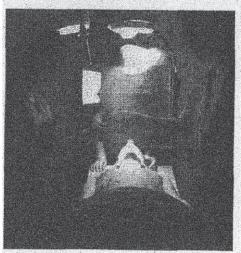
Police in London have been using thermal imaging cameras to reveal the locations of cannabis factories. The devices detect the heat caused by the lighting sys-tems used in the intensive rearing of marijuana plants.

Properties where cannabis is being grown will release 10 times the heat from an ordinary family home.

Northern Echo Tuesday 26, September 2006



BY DEBORAH JOHNSON eMAIL: deborah.johnson@nne.co.uk



Tough choice: in Bodyshock

A cautionary tale of drugs

Banged Up Abroad: Scott and Lucy's Story (C5) Bodyshock: Kill Me to Cure Me (C4)

LIMEY, she looks a bit ropey, I thought as Lucy appeared on the screen with no make-up, matted hair, and dirty clothes. Her, bloke, Scott, looked alright, but could have made a bit more of an effort.

And so my thoughts went while watching Banged Up Abroad, which told the cautionary tale of a young English couple living in Ibiza who were so penniless they agreed to go to Costa Rica. to bring two kilos of marijuana back to Amsterdam in return for 10,000 euros.

Everything went swimmingly for the couple, who had two weeks in the sun at the drug dealers' expense, until their bags were searched as they travelled via Mexico. Only then did they discover that they were, in fact, in possession of 17

kilos of pure cocaine. As Lucy said, possibly in one of the biggest understatements ever seen on TV: "I just thought oops."

The upshot of their Costa Rican jaunt was ten years each in a Mexican jail and only at the end of the show did you realise they were still there, hence why they looked so rough. Scott was the only British inmate in Mexico's toughest jail, and Lucy showered with the cockroaches as one of two Brits in an all-female prison, miles away from her boyfriend.

Despite initially being judgemental, and condemning the couple for their greed, their story - with the help of reconstructions, using actors much better looking than the real thing - really did; to an extent, win the sympathy vote.

Yes, they were stupid and very naive, but it was easy to see how they became irretrievably caught up in the scam after the Initial drunken conversation in an Amsterdam bar.

"We realised these men were obviously dodgy guys," said Scott after they'd received the drugs they had to take back to Amsterdam. Good observation Sherlock, but slightly too late to save him from the slammer.

Lucy - who annoyingly ended every sentence with "man" - said she was reading a book about a woman in a Thai jail, only days before she ended up in a similar predicament.

"You just don't think it will happen to you," she said. But then again, if you do carry drugs in your luggage through countries like Costa Rica and Mexico, who famously don't turn a blind eye to drugs, you are probably increasing your chances of getting nicked a million-fold.

In Bodyshock, poor old Brett Kehrer, who had a severe swelling on his brain, was faced with a bit of a dilemma: live with it and probably die, or have an operation where you might die. Hardly an enviable choice to make.

But Brett was about to undergo revolutionary surgery where doctors cool his body so much his heart stops in order to perform the brain operation more effectively.

Not so much a near-death experience for Pennsylvanian Brett as an actual one. Happily, he lived to tell the tale. But when he goes down the pub and tells his mates, who will believe him? "I actually died on the operating table today." "Yeah, sure you did." Poor bloke.

Basildon Echo Friday 29, September 2006

Cannabis factory uncovered in flat

POLICE stumbled on cannabis factory in a flat after they were called to a break-in at the property. Neighbours called police

after they saw four young men wearing hoodies bur-gling the flat in St Clare Meadow, Rochford, and dashing off with several bags

When officers arrived they discovered a mini cannabis factory and dozens of plants in the one-bedroom flat – but they believe many more may have been stolen.

PC Keith Draycott said: "When we arrived, we found a plant in the hallway that had been dropped by the burglars.

"We went into the flat and found the cultivation. There were seven or eight lamps in all, plus a ventilation system leading out of the windows.

"The water supply and lamps were on timers. We don't think anyone could have lived here.

A "mother plant" was in the bedroom and inside the lounge were the vast majority of the plants grown

from the original plant. With the wind windows blacked out, the timers on the lights had been set to falsely create the impression of two days within a 24-hour period, to make the plants grow faster.

Unlike many other drug factories, the electricity had not been bypassed and the huge amount of energy had been paid by a meter.

PC Draycott added: "It appears the thieves knew what was here and wanted to steal the plants.
"From the way it was set

up, it looks like three quarters of the plants were stolen - unless the suspect had recently harvested and sold off a batch.

"We believe a local man was responsible. We have a suspect in mind.

"It's guaranteed that someone will get nicked for

The acronvm NLX stands for Northern Lights eXtended, or also sometimes **Northern Lights x** X. This is an indication that the NLX is actually a cross between a Northern Lights and an X variant, which pretty much always means a Skunk variety.

www.softsecrets.nl **Back issues** for free!

Citizen Tuesday 3, October 2006

Cannabis case 'was a waste of your money'



■ POSSESSION: Allan Johnson

(left) who is wheelchair bound, with friend Jeff Ditchfield

By John Hawkins

news.citizen@glosmedia.co.uk

A MUSCULAR dystrophy sufferer who grew cannabis to relieve his chronic pain has been given a conditional dis-

charge.
Wheelchair-bound Allan Johnston called the hearing a waste of taxpayers' money after he was handed a 12-month conditional discharge for cultivating 61 cannabis plants between July 1 and July 22 last year.

The 41-year-old, of Ermin Park, Brockworth, pleaded guilty at Gloucester Crown Court. He also admitted a charge of possession of the class C drug.

Earlier this month Jeffrey Ditchfield, 46, of Rhyl, North Wales, was convicted at Mold Crown Court of supplying Johnson with cannabis capsules through his website 'Bud Buddies'. He was handed eight months imprisonment suspended for 18 months. He was also told to pay £7,000 costs

told to pay £7,000 costs.

The court heard that Johnson had started using cannabis 10 years ago because of its medicinal properties to treat limb-girdle muscular dystrophy and depression.

After sentencing Johnson said: "I suppose it's a fair sentence but at the end of the day it's totally unreasonable that I have to be here at all.

"It has cost the taxpayer a lot of money and it's a complete waste. This is simply going to force people with debilitating diseases back out onto the streets to mix with dealers."

Ditchfield said: "Bud Buddies was helping hundreds of people until it was closed down as something criminal. The legal system has

something criminal. The legal system has thrown seriously ill people into the arms of drug dealers.

"I have no intention of paying my costs

unless they show me the victim of my crime."
Ditchfield claims to supply 250 clients including those with multiple sclerosis and cancer who swear cannabis is the only thing that relieves their pain without side effects.

Doctors were banned from prescribing it in 1971 but last July it became possible to pre-scribe a form of the drug to be taken orally.

Johnson and Ditchfield were so keen to highlight what they claimed was injustice when they appeared at Cheltenham Magistrates' Court for an earlier hearing they made the unusual request to have reporting restrictions

Johnson has received cannabis from Bud

Buddies and also grown it for them.

He said: "Cannabis helps me massively.
Without it, it's horrendous but while I'm using it I don't get all the aches and pains and muscle tears.

"If you buy it off the street you don't know how it's been produced. It's a sad society we live in when people like Jeffrey risk being

Colofon

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Ed Rosenthal Super Bud © Sensi 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 pro- and anti-legalisation advocates. This assumes that the publisher does not necessarily agree with everything that appears in articles and advertisements. The publisher therefore distances himself explicitly from published statements or images that might give the impression that an endorsement is being made for the use or production of cannabis.

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