

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT MARIJUANA



WEIRD WAYS TO USE HEMP

The marijuana plant isn't used only for smoking; its fibers can also be made into rope or fabric. Perhaps the oddest use of hemp rope on record is as a method for transporting giant stone statues. In 2012, archaeologists created reproductions of Easter Island's statues, trying to figure out how ancient people may have moved the iconic 9,600-lb.

HEMP VERSUS POT

Industrial hemp plants are the same species as marijuana plants, but they don't produce a substance called tetrahydrocannabinolic acid (THCA). This is the precursor to tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive ingredient in pot. Hemp plants fail to produce this substance because they lack a gene that makes an enzyme to produce THCA, according to University of Saskatchewan biochemist Jon Page.

GENDER-BENDER

Smoking up could be a very different experience for men and women, according to a 2014 study in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. In research on rats, Washington State University psychologist Rebecca Craft found that females were more sensitive to cannabis' painkilling qualities, but they were also more likely to develop a tolerance for the drug, which could contribute to negative side effects and dependence on marijuana.



POT FOR YOUR PETS?

People have used medicinal marijuana to ease everything from glaucoma to the side effects of chemotherapy. So why shouldn't man's best friend give medicinal pot a shot?

Pet owners are already using marijuana medicinally to help their suffering cats and dogs, according to a 2013 article in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*. Most of the time, animals that ingest pot get over the effects within a few hours, veterinarians say. But in large quantities, pot can be deadly to animals.

DOES YOUR HEART HATE POT?

Most of the debate about the health effects of marijuana centers on the brain changes that may come with using the drug, such as the drug's association with an increased risk of developing schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. But could smoking a bowl mess with your heart, too?

In an April 2014 study, researchers combed through 2,000 cases of medical complications from marijuana in France and found that 2 percent involved heart problems, including nine fatal heart attacks. The study wasn't designed to determine why pot use might occasionally lead to heart problems, but previous research has found that marijuana can increase heart rate and blood pressure, which could tip a vulnerable individual over into heart attack territory.



NAMING TRADITIONS

A wine lover might choose between a pinot noir, a sangiovese and a viognier to go with dinner. A pot connoisseur, on the other hand, could choose between strains with names like "purple haze," "chocolope" and "green crack."

Bizarre names are a time-honored tradition among pot growers, going back at least to the 1970s, when strains such as "Maui Wau" (from Hawaii, naturally) came onto the scene. Why such goofy names? Well, one reason might be the process behind the naming decisions.



BABY SOAP OOPS

In an unusual case, a hospital in North Carolina noticed an uptick in the number of newborns who were testing positive for marijuana in their urine, a finding that can suggest that mom has been smoking and can lead to social services getting involved. But it turns out that these babies weren't suffering from pot exposure. They were just soapy.

POT ISN'T NECESSARILY GREEN

Here's a bummer for the eco-conscious: Pot isn't all that "green." The energy needed to produce 2.2 pounds (1 kilogram) of marijuana indoors is equivalent to that needed to drive across the country five times in a car that gets 44 miles to the gallon, according to a 2011 report by a researcher at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. All those grow lights suck up a lot of electricity.



POT IS GETTING STRONGER

Marijuana's high is getting increasingly higher. In 2016, researchers measured the levels of marijuana's active ingredient, THC, in more than 38,600 samples of street marijuana seized by the Drug Enforcement Agency over 20 years. They found that the levels of THC rose from about 4 percent in 1995 to about 12 percent in 2014.

MARIJUANA METHODS

In November 2016, California, Massachusetts and Nevada joined Colorado, Alaska, Oregon and Washington in legalizing recreational pot. (Maine's legalization initiative narrowly passed, and opponents were attempting a recount in the week after the election.) An October 2016 study in the journal *Drug Records* suggests that legalization might not just influence the availability of pot, but how it's consumed.

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