



Cannabis and HIV/AIDS:

8. Tips for Growing Cannabis Safely

Included in this series of fact sheets on Cannabis and HIV/AIDS:

1. The Medicinal Use of Cannabis
2. How to Apply to Use Medicinal Cannabis Legally
3. How to Speak to your Doctor about Medicinal Cannabis
4. Information Sheet for Physicians
5. Where to Find Cannabis for Medicinal Purposes
6. A Few Tips for Safer Use and Better Health
7. Cooking with Cannabis
8. Tips for Growing Cannabis Safely
9. How to Deal with the Stigma and Discrimination of Cannabis Use

Contact Information:

These fact sheets have been prepared by the Canadian AIDS Society, in consultation with a National Steering Committee and a Legal Consultant. They are easily photocopied. We encourage you to distribute them widely.

For updates on these fact sheets, or for more information, please visit our web site at <www.cdn aids.ca/cannabis> or contact us at:

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Growing cannabis, especially for medicinal purposes, is a skill that requires knowledge, a good deal of trial and error and some special considerations to do it safely.

Get the Information First

BEFORE you start producing cannabis for your medicinal purposes, it is a good idea to read at least one book about growing cannabis. There are many books out there. Being informed will likely improve your success rate and prevent you from spending money on expensive equipment that may prove to be unnecessary. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Indoor Marijuana Horticulture: The Indoor Bible** by Jorge Cervantes
- **Marijuana Indoors: Five Easy Gardens** by Jorge Cervantes
- **Marijuana Outdoors: Guerilla Growing** by Jorge Cervantes
- **Growing Medical Marijuana Organically** by Jeff Mota and Frieda Weed
- **How to Grow Marijuana Indoors for Medicinal Use** by G. W. Carver
- **Marijuana Grower's Guide** by Mel Frank, L. P. Kallan and Oliver Williams (Illustrators)
- **How to Grow the Finest Marijuana Indoors Under Lights** by Joseph Carver
- **Marijuana Grower's Handbook : The Indoor High Yield Guide** by Ed Rosenthal
- **Cultivators Handbook of Marijuana** by William Drake
- **Indoor Marijuana Horticulture** by Jorge Cervantes
- **Primo Plant: Growing Marijuana Outdoors** by Carolyn Garcia
- **Ancient and Modern Methods of Growing Extraordinary Marijuana** by Adam Gottlieb and Larry Todd (Illustrator)
- **Sell Marijuana Legally**, by Wendy Little and Eric Nash, at <www.islandharvest.ca>
- **Ask Ed** – Ed Rosenthal's web site at <www.quicktrading.com/home.html>
- **Wo/Men's Alliance for Medical Marijuana** at <www.wamm.org/video.htm>

Know the Laws

Cannabis is a controlled substance. It is illegal to produce it UNLESS you have a License to Produce for medicinal purposes from Health Canada.

For more information on how to obtain such a license, please refer to the fact sheet on “How to Apply to Use Medicinal Cannabis Legally” in this series. Make sure you are familiar with what a License to Produce allows and does not allow you

to do. The number of plants you are allowed to produce will be based on the daily dose you require. This information will be given to you with your License to Produce.

Getting Seeds

When you apply for a License to Produce, you can also fill out Form E2 for a Health Canada supply of cannabis seeds.

You can also order seeds from a variety of web sites, or contact your local “head shop” or store that sells paraphernalia for cannabis. They may point you in the right direction. Be aware that **the sale and purchase of cannabis seeds is ILLEGAL in**

Canada and has recently been subject to police intervention. Some compassion clubs may have ways of providing you with seeds or clones (plant cuttings) too.

Setting Up Your Garden

Cannabis plants, like other plants, require light, water, nutrients, CO2 and mild temperatures. You will need some lights. Stores that sell equipment are usually well informed as to the equipment required to grow cannabis.

The best and most inexpensive lights are high intensity discharge (HID) lights. You will need a fan for ventilation as well as a humidistat and thermostat to monitor the air and to keep it cool and dry. Depending on your set up, you may need an air conditioner or a dehumidifier, and perhaps a heater.

The electrical supply is an essential component. It is a great idea to get a professional electrician to inspect your wiring and electrical panel, though use your judgment on this one. Remember, discretion is important when you are growing, even if you have a license to do so legally.

Securing Your Garden

Use common sense to secure your crop and protect it from break-ins or thefts.

Use good quality locks and doors. Alarm systems with motion detectors, fences, bright lights, dogs and a constant perceived presence around the location where you are growing can all add to the level of security. On the application for a License to Produce,

you will need to specify what security measures are in place to secure your garden.

Be discreet! The fewer people who know you are growing cannabis, the better. You do not want to attract unwanted attention.

Safe Cultivation

Some moulds and other contaminants may grow on your cannabis, whether the plant is still growing, or has been harvested and stored.

Some of these organisms are harmless and some are very toxic and dangerous to your health. They can cause serious lung infections, cancers or other health issues. People get infected by breathing them in when smoking or by contact with the mouth.

Moulds like a moist, dark, cool, acidic environment. There are some things you need to do to prevent moulds from growing. They are easy to control in an indoor grow room by ensuring constant air circulation and low humidity.

- Raise the temperature of your indoor garden to at least 24° C (75 ° F).
- Use a dehumidifier to dry the air. Keep the humidity down to 50-55%.
- Moulds prefer acidic conditions. You can use some alkaline water, with a pH of 7.5 or 8, by adding potassium bicarbonate to your water, or using products such as “pH Up”.

- Use a ventilation fan to keep the air circulating in your garden room.
- Air conditioners condense water vapour into water as they cool the air, making the air drier. Dehumidifiers heat the room as they condense water vapour into water. You will need to determine your needs based on where you are growing and what time of year it is and what the temperature control requirements are.
- For more information on moulds, please refer to the fact sheet on “The Medicinal Use of Cannabis”, under “Contamination of Cannabis”.
- Look into methods of cultivation that do not require the use of pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, chemicals or synthetic fertilizers.

