

Hemp, Did You Know?

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I have to admit, I am most likely the only person who isn't familiar with hemp. Industrial hemp will have a level of .03% of THC or less where as Cannabis (marijuana ,10% or more of THC). You ask what is THC? *THC* is the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana that produces the feeling of being high.

There are so many ways to use industrial hemp. I had the chance to attend to the Hemp Growers Round Table on Jan. 22 in Morrisville, NY, hosted by Madison County CCE. New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Tim Sweeney, Larry Smart, Cornell University and Jennifer Gilbert Jenkins, Morrisville State College were the experts. The panel covered information from the expense of growing hemp to where to buy seeds and the good, the bad, and ugly of growing hemp. I came away with so much information and the desire to learn more. The following is a small sampling of what hemp has to offer, which I learned at the round table.

Hemp is the only plant that can feed you, house you, clothe you and heal you. Agricultural hemp, the non mind-altering cousin of cannabis (commonly known as marijuana) has dozens of uses. To start, hemp cellulose fiber is a good source for many plastics. Did you know hemp plastic is flame retardant, takes 10 weeks to decompose under the correct conditions, and can be compared to fiberglass? Hemp might be an alternative in furniture, skateboards, instruments, car doors and water bottles. Hemp is not a perfect replacement for plastic, but could be considered a good contender with 65-70% of cellulose. Hemp has promise due to its relative sustainability and low environmental impact and best of all hemp is renewable and naturally resistant to most pests.

My favorite use for hemp: infused into wine! Thank you to Sovereign Vines from Binghamton. What a great way to enjoy! Second, hemp seeds: mainly used as dietary products: can be eaten raw, ground into a meal or pressed into oil. Hemp seed oil can be used as salad dressing, paint, ink and a core ingredient in many body care products. Cannabis roots, for healing stiff joints, minor infections to skin inflammations. There are trace amounts of cannabinoids within the roots, but that is not the medicine that is wanted when preparing cannabis roots for consumption. We are after important terpenes: friedelin, pentacyclic, triterpene ketones and epifriedelanol, all have significant health benefits. Friedelin is an antioxidant that protects the liver; epifriedelanol has anti-tumor benefits; the other two have been shown to kill cancer cells, reduce inflammation, and relieve pain.

I am positive I have only touched on a few of the many benefits of hemp...for the farmer who is thinking of growing hemp. You can still apply to grow hemp for fiber or grain, but as for CBD the application is closed. This crop may not be the crop for you or then again it may be. Hemp has its up and downs as all crops do. There are so many ways to have hemp be a part of your life from growing to using it to improve your health.