

Highly Beneficial Hemp

Hemp, the low tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) strains of *Cannabis sativa*, has been considered highly beneficial throughout recorded history. From Asia and the Middle East to Europe and the Americas, hemp has played an important role in industry and the economy. Cultivated and used as currency in early America, plantation owners were required to sow both the “English” hemp brought over from England and the “Indian” hemp that was native to the land under an Act passed by the first Virginia House of Burgesses. *Hemp for Victory*, a film promoting hemp as a necessary crop to win the war was produced by the U.S. government in 1942.

Traditionally used for paper, clothing, rope, and livestock needs, hemp has always been of great value to people of all heritages. Industrially it is used in the production of a variety of products including clothing, rope, mulch, oils, in personal care products, plastics, cooking and as nutritional supplements.

Environmentally friendly, hemp grows well without herbicides, fungicides or pesticides whereas cotton consumes 50% of the pesticides sprayed in the entire world. Hemp provides longer natural soft fibers that are more absorbent, more mildew resistant, more insulative and more effective at blocking harmful UV rays. When blended with other fabrics, hemp contributes softness and durability. Hemp is also considered one of the faster growing biomasses known.

Hemp has the ability to clear impurities and toxins out of water and soil and has been used to clean contaminants at the Chernobyl nuclear disaster site. Because of its height, dense foliage and high planting density, hemp cultivation is a very effective method of killing tough weeds without chemicals.

Nutritionally, hemp seeds offer all eight essential amino acids in the proportions required by the human system. Hemp also offer Omega-6 and Omega-3 fatty acids at a balance very close to optimal for the human system. Another essential amino acid, Gamma Linolenic Acid (GLA) which stimulates hormone-type substances in the human system, has been considered very useful for some women searching for relief from pre-menstrual syndrome and extreme symptoms of menopause. The essential fatty acids found in hemp benefit the human system by increasing metabolism, lowering cholesterol, aiding better digestion, increasing general vigor, improving skin and hair condition, and boosting the immune system. There are no known allergies to hemp making it a valuable resource for the countless celiac disease and allergy plagued people.

Hemp’s versatility has made it a choice in the composite panels for automobiles since 2002. Biofuels can be produced from the oils in hemp seeds and the fermentation of the whole plant. Diesel engines can be powered purely by filtered hemp oil. The same oil that can move your vehicle can also be used in oil lamps making hemp oil versatile and eco-friendly. Considering hemp is environmentally friendly and one of the faster growing biomasses, it can be said the hemp is truly one of the “greenest” options we have for reducing our dependence on fossil fuels.

Whereas industrial hemp, hemp grown for non-drug use, is accepted in many parts of the world and U.S. consumers are buying up the products, industrial hemp production is still not allowed in America. Vermont and North Dakota passed laws enabling hemp licensure but are awaiting permission from the DEA to grow it. Fortunately, American consumers are able to benefit from this amazing plant. Unfortunately, our American farmers are not able to capitalize and benefit from producing it. What an evolution from the Virginia House of Burgesses requiring the growth of two kinds of hemp, to the government prohibiting the growth of hemp.

There is no disputing that hemp is one of the most eco-friendly and highly beneficial biomasses proven throughout time. With benefits ranging from better health to cleaner farming one has only to wonder when American production will be acknowledged once again as a benefit to our economy.

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