

DIRTY FINGERNAILS AND ALL

It's not all smoke

BY SIOUX ROGERS



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Once a forbidden topic, cannabis now seems appropriate for dinner-table conversation—especially in the Applegate Valley. If you want to impress your dinner companions, here are some interesting facts to impart.

- In 1997, a hemp rope dating back to 26,900 BC was found in Czechoslovakia, making it the oldest known physical object to be associated with cannabis (mastersoffinen.com/eng/histoire).
- Hemp was outlawed in 1937, but saved the life of George Bush Sr. in 1944 when he was forced to parachute from his burning military airplane. Fortunately for Mr. Bush, hemp had been brought back into popularity in 1942 due to numerous military needs, and US-grown cannabis hemp had been used to create the webbing of his parachute. Fire hoses, rigging, and ropes of the ship that picked up Bush were woven from hemp, and parts of his military aircraft engine had most likely been lubricated with hemp seed oil. Cannabis hemp was also used to stitch military shoes like the ones Bush Sr. wore that day.



Basket made from hemp (s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com).

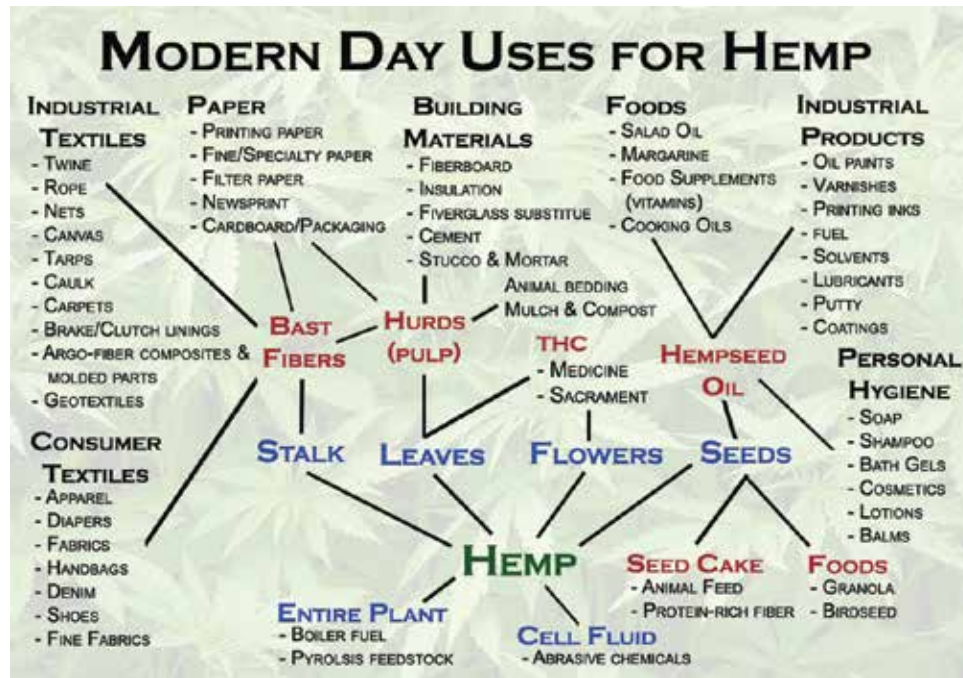


Diagram from azmarijuana.com/marijuana-info/what-is-hemp.

- Both hemp and marijuana come from the same cannabis species, but there is a major difference between the two: the levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). While hemp has virtually no trace of THC, pot has around 10 percent; some strains of marijuana can have as much as 27 percent. It's the THC in marijuana that gets people high. Hemp produces a cannabinoid called CBD, a non-psychoactive component of the cannabis plant that blocks the high typically associated with marijuana, according to the National Center for Biotechnology Information (livescience.com/24552-what-is-hemp.html).
- There are over 25,000 uses for hemp according to estimates by The North American Industrial Hemp Council. Hemp in its entirety—its fiber, seeds, and

- oil—is so versatile that it has been used in clothing and food and as an ingredient in building material. Hemp paper was also used for maps, logs, and even for Bibles that sailors brought on board ship.
- More than 120,000 pounds of hemp fiber was needed to rig the 44-gun USS Constitution, America's oldest navy ship, affectionately called "Old Ironsides."
- During the Revolutionary War the demand for hemp soared due to its durability, availability, and natural resistance to decay. The British colonies were legally required to grow hemp.
- "Hemp fiber was so important to the young republic that farmers were compelled by patriotic duty to grow it and were allowed to pay taxes with it. George Washington grew hemp and encouraged

- all citizens to sow hemp widely. Thomas Jefferson bred improved hemp varieties and invented a special brake for crushing the plant's stems during fiber processing" (farmcollector.com/farm-life/strategic-fibers).
 - The first hemp laws, passed in 1619, were "must grow" laws. If an American farmer did not grow hemp, the farmer would be jailed or kicked out of the country as a non-patriot.
 - From 1631 until the early 1800s, cannabis hemp was legal tender (money) in most of America (darcfoundation.org/history-of-hemp.html).
 - There were an estimated 8,400 hemp plantations in 1850.
 - The demise of hemp was cinched in 1937 when Congress passed the Marijuana Tax Law. This was clearly an ill-conceived law, as World War II presented numerous needs for hemp, as evidenced above.
 - Competing industries successfully managed numerous smear campaigns, linking marijuana and hemp as one and the same, calling it the "evil weed," but it was the 1936 radical propaganda film, *Reefer Madness*, that was the nail in the coffin of cannabis. Another movie, *Hemp for Victory*, released in 1942, encouraged patriotic farmers to re-start their hemp production.
 - Hemp is once again legally being grown in specific states. To verify where new legislation is encouraging industrial cannabis, visit this site: ncsl.org/research/agriculture-and-rural-development/state-industrial-hemp-statutes.aspx.
- Dirty Fingernails and All,
Sioux Rogers
541-846-7736
dirtyfingernails@fastmail.fm

Susan Bratt
Broker
cell: 541 951-9486
office: 541 482-8701
susan@brunnerwhiterealtor.com
www.brunnerwhiterealtor.com

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