



Celebrating 150 years of agriculture

Cannabis: Agricultural, Medicinal and Industrial Development

Ernest Small, Ph.D.

Abstract:

In past centuries, the cannabis plant was one of the world's most admired crops, furnishing a range of indispensable goods. For most of the last century, however, fear of its abuse potential suppressed almost all legal cultivation. Recently, the constraints limiting cannabis commercialization have been loosened, a tidal wave of research and development has been unleashed, and cannabis is becoming a trillion dollar industry. In the last two decades, Canada has become the world leader in production of cannabis food and nutritional oilseed extracts, particularly because of research conducted for the last half century on Agriculture and Agri-Food's Central Experimental Farm. The expertise developed here has also been indispensable in guiding other government departments to formulate wise legislative and regulatory policies. Canada has also become a centre of medical research on cannabis, and is joining a very small number of nations where recreational marijuana is accepted. Despite its capacity for harm as a drug, cannabis has phenomenal potential for providing new products to benefit society, and for generating extensive employment and huge profits. This non-technical presentation provides a basic review of what is known about the cannabis plant and the merits of its products.

Biography:

Dr. Ernie Small is a specialist on the evolution, classification and genetics of agricultural plants. He has published hundreds of research articles, as well as 15 books, particularly on food, medicinal, and forage crops. Several of his books have won major honours, including the Lane Anderson Award, a \$10,000.00 prize for science popularization. Dr. Small has been an adjunct professor at several universities, and currently has this status at Ryerson University Toronto. He is widely known for his work on hemp and marijuana. His chemical classification of the cannabis plant has been adopted in Canada and most of the world as the basis for allowing low-intoxicant varieties to be cultivated. A standard high-intoxicant strain that he selected was the basis of all licensed medicinal marijuana in Canada for more than a decade, supplying over 100,000 patients.



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