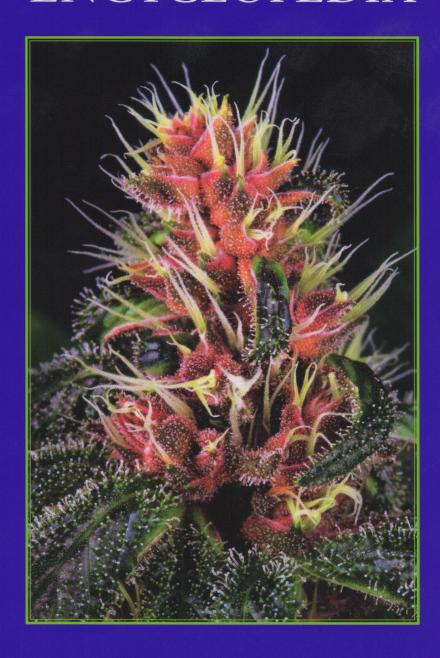
# The CANNABIS ENCYCLOPEDIA



Jorge Cervantes

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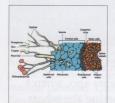
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www.marijuanagrowing.com



Cannabis growing in the Rif Mountains, Morocco

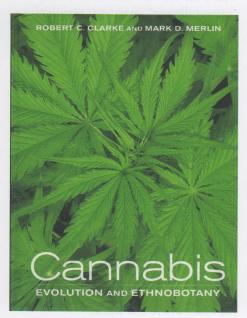


Conservationist and hemp activist David Bronner, president of Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps, inspects a field of industrial hemp in Colorado, 2013. See www.drbronner.com for more information.

#### Classification

Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus formally described *Cannabis sativa* in 1753. Thirty-two years later Jean-Baptiste Lamarck identified *Cannabis indica* as a second species. Experts continue to debate whether they should be classified as separate species or as separate varieties of one species. Extant populations of a possible third species, *Cannabis ruderalis*, may be a wild-type relic that descended from the ancestor of *C. sativa*.

Then came *That '70s Show*, when *Cannabis* taxonomy became embroiled in the US legal system. The ethnobotanist Richard Evans Schultes, a defense witness, asserted that narcotics laws referred to *C. sativa*, whereas the



Robert Clarke and Mark Merlin's book Cannabis Evolution and Ethnobotany

accused possessed *C. indica*, which was statutorily overlooked and technically legal. Ernest Small, a taxonomic botanist, argued for a single species on behalf of the plaintiffs.

Unfortunately, Schultes and his colleague Loren Anderson made subtle shifts in Cannabis taxonomy that departed from the original concepts of Linnaeus and Lamarck. They included drug plants as well as fiber-type plants within C. sativa. (We now know that the drug plants are rich in 9-tetrahydrocannabinol or THC, and the fiber-type plants are rich in cannabidiol or CBD.) Linnaeus's C. sativa specimens were examined by William Stern in 1974 and found to be "old cultivated hemp stock of northern Europe"—rope, not dope—CBD-dominant plants.

Schultes and Anderson delimited *C. indica* to plants that Schultes saw in Afghanistan. Thus they characterized "indica" as short, densely-branched plants with broad leaflets, and "sativa" along the lines of Lamarck's species—tall, laxly branched, with narrow leaflets. They spawned the vernacular taxonomy of "sativa" and "indica" that is in use to this day. With burgeoning interest in high-CBD plants, some of which are *C. sativa* in the Linnaean sense, the vernacular taxonomy has become truly muddled.

Botanist Karl Hillig segregates these populations: *C. sativa* represents CBD-dominant plants from Europe, either cultivated (*C. sativa* hemp biotype) or wild-type (*C. sativa* feral biotype).

C. indica represents THC-dominant plants from Asia, either Lamarck's plants from India—C. indica NLD ("narrow leaflet diameter," known as "sativa" in the vernacular) or plants from Afghanistan—C. indica WLD ("wild leaflet diameter," the vernacular "indica").

Naturalists Robert Clarke and Mark Merlin adopted Hillig's system and expanded it. Examining the worldwide distribution of *Cannabis* plants—wild, cultivated, and feral (once cultivated, again wild)—these experts conclude that:

Narrow-leaf hemp, *C. sativa*, subspecies *sativa*, was cultivated predominantly in Europe.

Broad-leaf hemp, *C. indica*, subspecies *chinensis*, was cultivated in China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

Narrow-leaf drug plants, *C. indica*, subspecies *indica*, were cultivated in South and Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

Broad-leaf drug plants, *C. indica*, subspecies *afghanica*, were cultivated in Northern Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Note that the widespread interbreeding and hybridization of narrow- and broad-leafletted plants has made the application of these terms botanically imprecise in many cases.

#### Medical Use before the Modern Era

All the famous Old-World cradles of civilization put cannabis to medical use—China, Mesopotamia, Greece, India, and maybe Egypt. The Scythians, a tribe of migrants who inhaled cannabisinfused steam for ritual purposes, migrated out of their Siberian homeland around 800 BC. They lacked a written language, but their word for Cannabis has been reconstructed as kanab, kanap, konaba, or kannabis. The Scythians influenced civilizations in China, India, and Mesopotamia at the cusp of history.

Physician and historian Ethan Russo has visited a tomb in the Yánghai burial ground that contained nearly a kilo of cannabis. It was crudely manicured—flowering tops, leaves, and seeds, and no stems. The grave did not contain hemp