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RECLASSIFICATION
OF MARIJUANA**

**LEGAL SECTION BY
A.J. HARRINGTON**

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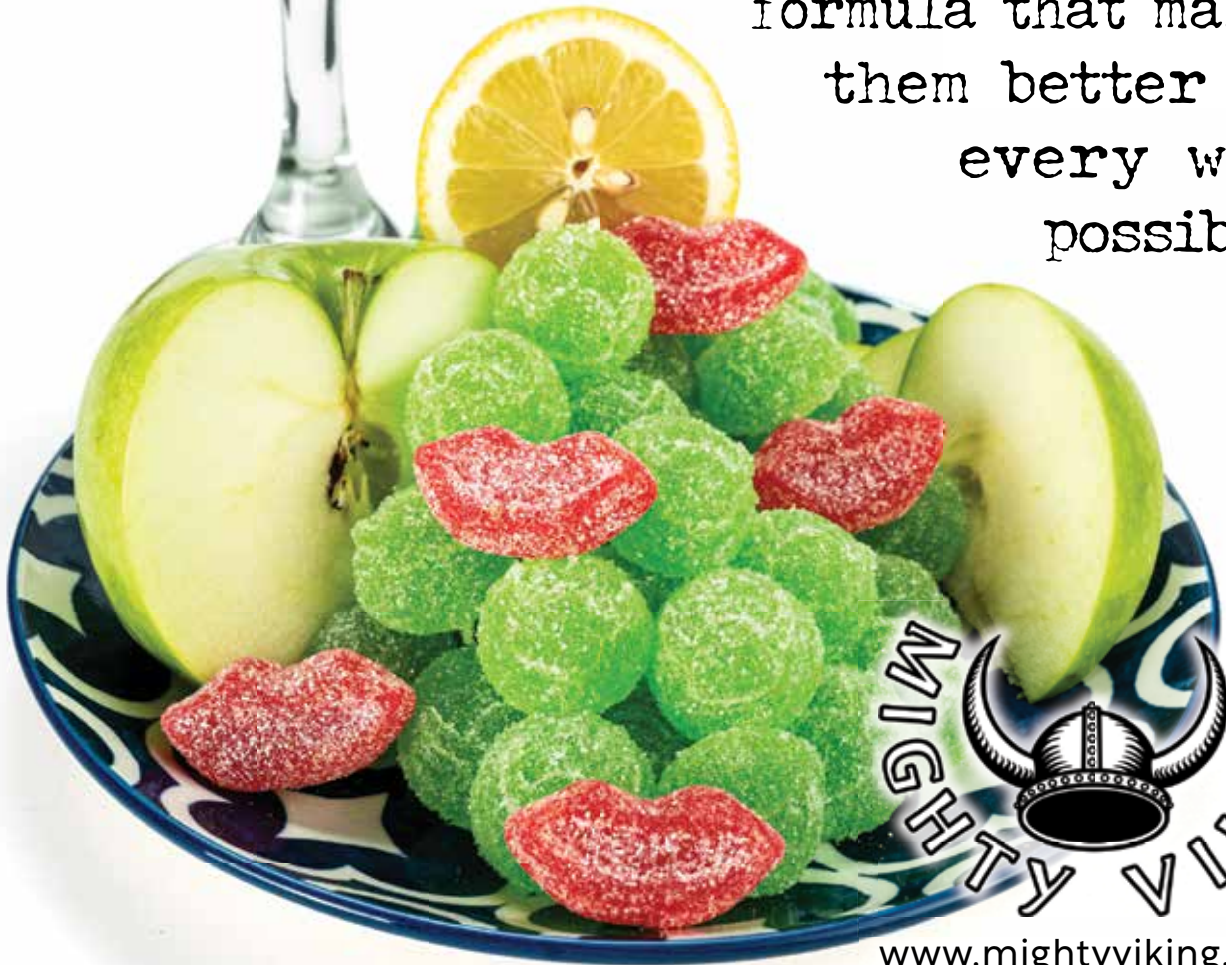
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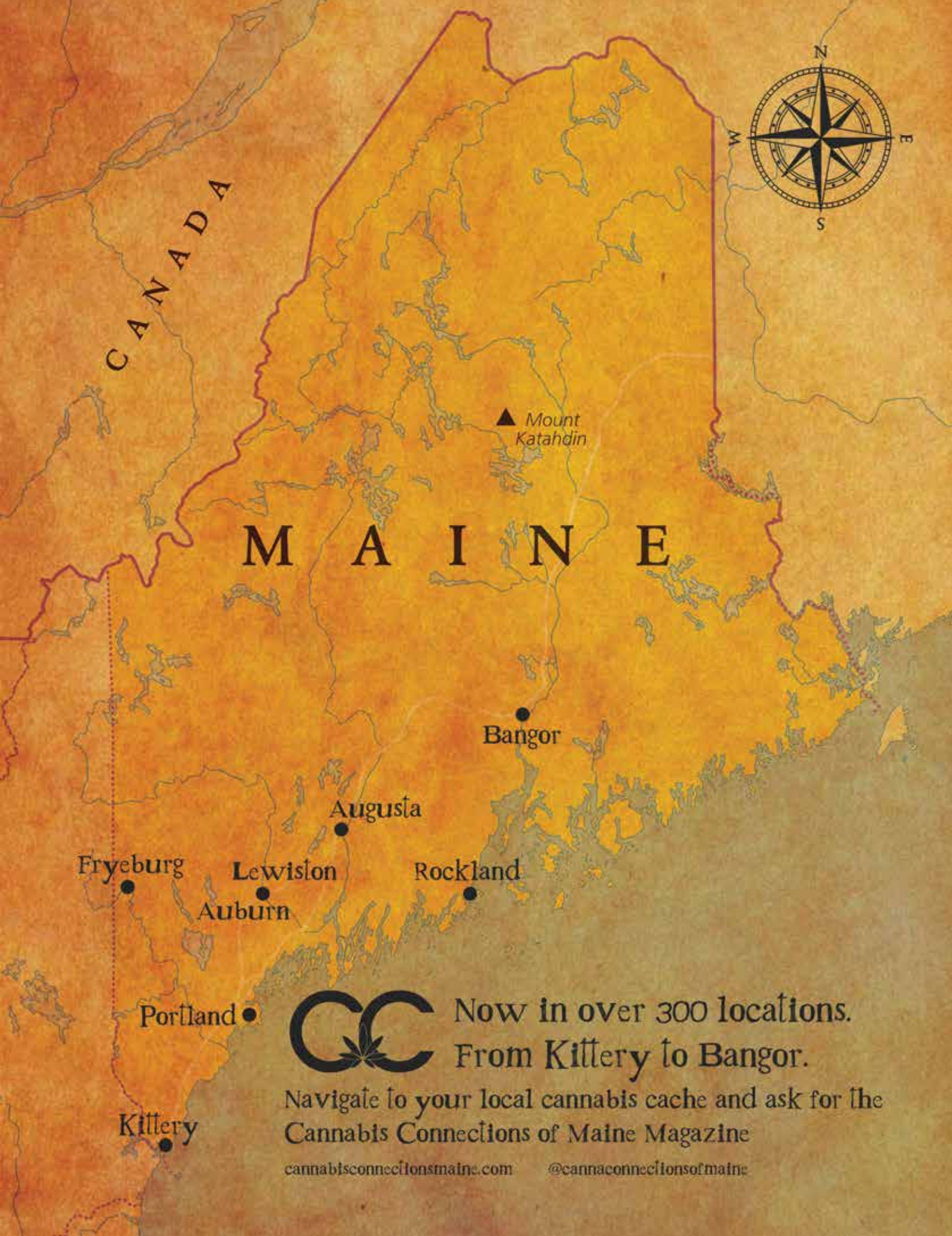
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SMOKE

Blowin'

with Jeff Cutler

Looking for Weed Wisdom? *Trust the Local Expert*

By Jeff Cutler



Many of us have that one friend who can fix any engine; who knows how to rewire a ceiling fan so it doesn't rattle; has installed a weather station *with only a multi-tool*; and knows how many, many things work.

For me, that friend is my college roommate Matthew. He's a font of knowledge on pretty much every topic. While he's currently solving problems somewhere in Upstate New York, his resourcefulness would definitely be welcome here in Maine.

Matthew's *engineering degree*, and his training in airplane and motorcycle repair, have shaped his ability to

give direction on a variety of topics from diesel engines to crafting a delicious beer. In addition to knowing the processes, he has taken the time to learn the history behind certain technological advances.

Guides are necessary

Without instructions, you're probably going to put the headboard to your new bedframe on backward. Without proper counsel, you might believe something is gluten-free when it's really a gluten-laden cluster bomb for your gut.

Now that I've emphasized the value of accurate details and trusted resources, let's look at the cannabis universe.



Specifically what to do if you're new to this world. **Without proper advice** from your local budtender, you're probably wasting time and money. And that's pretty silly when every penny counts these days.

I've even started to coordinate my calendar with the 'special' days at local pot shops to save a little cash.

I'm hoping that will help my budget in the same way grocery lists can keep anyone on task when shopping for food. No more tossing **Ring Dings into the cart**; no more four-packs or fun looking cans of beer; no more - and I mean it - kale!

I say this proudly because I've started to make a list before I go shopping for pot.

I usually go to a certain store for edibles; another store for specific disposable vapes; and others for flower or prerolls. So, having a list helps save on electrons (I have an **electric car**) and time.

It's not a truly scientific process, but the one constant is I'm only going to cannabis shops that know their products inside and out. I want to talk to people who have tried the stuff they have in the case.

For example, the first shop I went to when I moved up to **Maine was Farley's Cannabis Farm**. They were (and are) delightful. I was having trouble sleeping; I needed a Maine medical card; and I had just moved to Bath.

I knew nothing about the brands, the regulations, or the prices and **Farley's became my guide**. I got my medical card quickly with their guidance and I was steered to some sleep-friendly gummies.

In just one visit, my sleep issues were addressed and **I had found my new favorite store**. They listened to what I needed and then, without any flourishes or ceremony, told me what had worked for others, what they knew about the product, and how I should use it.

Happily for me, most of the **places I go in Midcoast Maine** have smart people behind the counter. It's odd, but I think in the four years I've been in Maine - and using medical marijuana - AND shopping everywhere from Kittery to Cutler - I have had every product question answered.

I know it seems crazy, but across the entire state I have asked all the questions and **gotten all the answers**.

For example:

Taste profiles of prerolls or cartridges... somebody in the store has tried it;

Strength of a gummy or other edible... provided in real world terms - how it hits and how long it lasts;

Issues with **disposable vapes**... advice on how to keep distillate flowing in cold weather without getting a lava plug in the back of your throat;

Best ways to consume diamonds, shatter, badder and sugar;

And even casually mentioning **what days** would be best for my specific product purchases.

Using this information, I believe I've been able to treat my anxiety and **Crohn's Disease** more effectively than if I'd been only using pharmaceutical products. And there are thousands who feel this way. Without a trusted resource, how do you learn about this stuff.

Knowledge is power

Ultimately, **you can shop anywhere** based on price. You can shop anywhere based on brand names. But in the grand scheme, my goal (and perhaps yours too) is to use cannabis to enrich my life.

I'm feeling better and enjoying every day more than I would have without marijuana. I only think this has been possible because of the resources around me. I know so much more **because of stores like Farley's** and their expertise...it's invaluable.

If you want more return on your cannabis investment, take a good look at what you're buying and where you're buying it. Finding a trusted resource could be **the next best step**, especially if they can steer you to more effective doses; deals and products.

Let me know about your marijuana adventures with a letter to the editor.

Another fun, Blowin' Smoke **opinion column** next issue!



HERBALIST

Corner

High Season:

A Fourth-Generation Herbalist's Unapologetic Love Letter to Cannabis Tourism in Maine

By Beverly Ann Soucy

Let me tell you something about the state of Maine that took me a long time to be able to say out loud without feeling the complicated mix of pride and protectiveness that locals carry around like a second coat this time of year: we have become a four season recreational destination. Not just for the lighthouses and the lobster and the Appalachian Trail's final triumphant or the miles to Katahdin though all of that still very much applies but for something newer, something that is reshaping the whole conversation about what a Maine vacation can actually look and feel like.

Cannabis tourism has arrived. And honey, it arrived with good taste.

I say this as a fourth-generation herbalist who has spent her entire life in relationship with plants. The many medicinal plants, the food plants, the wild plants that push up through the rotting leaf-litter in May without asking anyone's permission. I want to be clear that I am not the least bit surprised that cannabis culture and Maine tourism found each other. They were always going to. This land invites a certain quality of presence, a willingness to slow down and actually feel where you are, and let's just say, the best cannabis experiences do exactly the same thing. The combination was not accidental. It was almost inevitable.

So let's talk about it. The season is opening, the out of state license plates are lining up on the turnpike, and if you are one of the many thousands of people planning to make Maine your destination this year, I want you to have the full picture not the brochure version, but the real one, from someone who has been watching this place do what it does for her entire life.

Before we get to the good stuff and yes, there is so much good stuff I want to acknowledge something that those of us who live here understand in our bones even when we don't always say it at the gas station in June when the line is twelve cars long: tourism is the lifeblood of this state's economy, and we would be in serious trouble without it.

Maine's tourism industry generates billions of dollars annually,

and it flows into the hands of people like myself, who genuinely need it. The small restaurant owners, outdoor guides, innkeepers, artists, farmers, shop owners and every small mom and pop store, in towns that have been surviving on hope, resilience and pure stubbornness for decades. When visitors pour into the state between May and October, they are keeping things alive that would otherwise go dark. That matters deeply to us locals. The local woman selling hand-thrown pottery from her barn, the guy running kayak rentals at the river's boat launch, or the family farm that opened its greenhouse stand for the season at the end of mud season. Your tourism dollars are what makes their year possible. So when you are out and about, please spend freely and spend your money with intention.

What has changed in recent years is that cannabis tourism has added a genuinely interest and new layer to that economic picture. Dispensaries are now part of the fabric of Maine's visitor economy in ways that continue to grow (no pun intended.) People are building itineraries around them. They are pairing cannabis experiences with hiking and long coastal drives and farm-to-table dinners in ways that make the whole trip much richer. And the tax revenue generated by adult-use cannabis sales? It goes back into the communities that need it. This is good news by every measure I know how to look at.

Here is where I need you to set down whatever image you have of Maine in your head, the one from the L.L. Bean catalog, the one from your grandmother's calendar, the one from the fabricated brochures and let me replace it with something more complete. Maine is not one thing. This is the first and most important thing to understand if you are planning a trip and you want to do it right. We are all the things! Yes, we have the coast. The rockbound, glacier-scraped, fog-soaked, soul-altering coast, miles and miles of coast, from the beaches of York to the bold headlands of Downeast, where the pink granite of Eastport drops straight into cold green water with a force that feels almost personal. Standing on those rocks in Eastport, with a clear head or a pleasantly altered one and watching the Atlantic do what the Atlantic does is an experience I have never once gotten tired of, and I have been doing it my entire life.



But Maine is also the western mountains. The Rangeley Lakes sitting up in the high country like pieces of broken mirror. The Androscoggin River Valley, where I live, carved out over millennia and still breathtaking in every season. The lake regions in the middle of the state where moose meander through the shallows at dawn as if they have a meeting to get to. The forests, and I mean real forest, the kind that goes on long enough that the road noise disappears completely and you start to understand why people fall silent in them.

We have a trail system that is frankly staggering. The Appalachian Trail enters Maine at the Mahoosuc Range and runs north to the summit of Katahdin in Baxter State Park, which is one of the most profoundly moving landscapes on the East Coast. But you do not need to be a through-hiker to find extraordinary walking here. Every region has trails suited to every level of ability, from flat riverside paths lined with fiddle-head ferns and an occasional chipmunk, to hikes up open ridge lines that reward you with views that take your breath away and make the world feel enormous and your problems feel appropriately small. Then there's the ice cream. We have

exceptional ice cream. The soft-serve stand and the homemade hard serve opening for the season is a community event in Maine, and I say this with complete sincerity. Stop for it. Get the black raspberry or the grapenut. Take your time and don't forget the pup cup.

All of this, the coast, the mountains, the trails, the farms, the rivers, the unbelievable quality of the light on a clear May morning is the backdrop against which cannabis tourism in Maine is playing out. And that backdrop matters enormously because the best cannabis experiences are always about places. They are about being present somewhere and actually feeling it, for letting the walls come down and the beauty in. And Maine is very, very good at beauty.

May is the start of early tourist season. Visitors who time their trip to arrive in late May and early June are catching Maine at one of its most electric moments. A season where everything still smells earthy as we move out of mud season that still lingers and you can almost, not quite, catch the smell of summer in the air. It is when the whole state seems to shake off the long winter and come back to life all at once.



The brooks go riotous fro the late spring thaw. The roadsides go insanely green seemingly overnight. The farmers open their greenhouses, the dispensaries stock their spring selections, and the air has that particular quality us locals look forward to every single year, cool and resinous and thick with the smell of wet earth, that makes you want to be outside and stay there.

The wildflowers are doing something miraculous in the woods right now. Trout lilies carpet the forest floor. Trillium opens in the shaded hollows. Bloodroot pushes up through the leaf litter in flowers so white and brief. Those little beauties last maybe three days if the weather holds and if you are lucky, you'll catch a glimpse. The daffodils are everywhere. And the birds are returning. These things happen every year whether anyone is watching or not, but if you're here for it, if you've made the trip and you're walking a trail in western Maine or along a coastal path or through the hemlock groves near one of the lakes, you will see them, and they will hit differently. That's just the truth. And of course, if you are a true Mainer, you know that Fiddleheads are a season all to their own with

most locals coveting secret spots for picking. Fiddleheads, the curled young fronds of the ostrich fern, appear in Spring, near stream edges and in low, wet woods. These are not just picturesque. They are food. They are medicine. They are a direct, edible conversation with this landscape that local folks have been having in this part of the world for thousands of years and one that we still look forward to every single spring. And if you have an upon a roadside stand that selling fiddleheads grab a bag or two bring them home throw them in a pan with a little bit of butter and sauté them. You'll thank me.

There's a reason the cannabis cultivators who work with terpene profiles talk about the land the way we herbalists do. Terroir, that French wine concept meaning the specific character of a place embedded in what grows there, is very real, and you can feel it here. The Maine air, the Maine light, the particular quality of being far from any city, these things change how experience lands. They amplify it. They make the good things better.

As for cannabis and what you really need to know if you are heading this way on vacation, let me give you the real lay of the



land, because Maine's adult-use cannabis market has developed into something genuinely impressive and it would be a shame to come all this way and not engage with it thoughtfully. Maine legalized recreational cannabis for adults 21 and older, (yes, you need your ID). The dispensary culture that has grown up since is a far cry from the anonymous, and stigmatized, transactional spaces people sometimes imagine. Many of Maine's cannabis retailers are beautiful, professionally designed environments staffed by exceptional, knowledgeable people. They are the budtenders who will sit with you, ask real questions about your experience level and what you're hoping to feel, explain the difference between an indica-leaning hybrid and a sativa-dominant one, and walk you through the product categories with genuine expertise. For anyone who has been curious but intimidated, this is the place to start. Maine's cannabis professionals are some of the most welcoming and informed, and they take their responsibility to educate seriously.

The product range available at Maine dispensaries now is extraordinary. Flower, of course, and the quality of what is being grown here is worth making a specific trip for. Concentrates for

the experienced consumer. Edibles in every format from gummies to chocolates to beverages, dosed precisely and labeled clearly. Tinctures and oils that land somewhere between cannabis medicine and cannabis wellness in a way that speaks directly to my herbalist sensibility. Add topicals, ointments, salves, balms, and creams infused with CBD and sometimes THC that have no psychoactive effect but deliver genuine relief to sore muscles and inflamed joints and the kind of banged-up, overworked body that tends to accumulate over the course of an active Maine vacation and you have real remedies.

A few things every visitor needs to know before they walk through the door: You must be 21 or older and you will need a valid ID. You cannot consume cannabis in public spaces, Maine law is clear on this, and it matters. Your rental cottage, your campsite, a private porch looking out over the water, these are your spaces. And please, please do not drive while impaired. Maine's roads include some genuinely beautiful stretches and also some genuinely challenging ones with bumpy winding two-laners through the mountains, coastal routes where the scenery is aggressively distracting even sober and the only



responsible approach is to plan your transportation accordingly. Designate a driver. Use a car service. Walk to wherever you're going or just plan to stay where you are at. The dispensary staff can help you think through timing and dosing so you're making smart choices. For the cannabis-curious visitor who has never consumed before or who hasn't in a long time, here are some words to live by: start low, go slow, and don't let anyone rush you and if you are eating edibles, give them time to kick in before even thinking about doing another one. The budtenders will say the same thing. A low-dose edible or a mild tincture in your rental by the lake is a very different experience from overconsumption, and the former is what makes for the kind of evening you will talk about fondly for years.

Here is how I would tell a first-time cannabis tourist to think about their Maine trip, from someone who has lived this landscape and loves it fiercely. Start with the dispensary visit early in your trip, not as an afterthought on your last night. Go in when you're rested and clear-headed, ask questions, take your time, and buy thoughtfully. Get a small variety, something for activity, something for the evening, maybe a topical for the hiking days. Let the staff guide

you. This is what they are there for. Then build the rest of your days around what Maine actually offers, which is staggering in its range. And include time to relax and just be. A morning hike on any of the trail systems through the western mountains or along the coastal headlands, followed by a gentle afternoon at whatever lakeside or oceanside spot you've found and this is already an exceptional day. Add a mindful, modest cannabis experience in the early evening at a safe private space, sitting with the sound of whatever water is nearest to you or next to a campfire with a few cold beverages and you have something that most people don't find on ordinary vacations. You have presence. You have the actual sensation of being exactly where you are with no desire to be anywhere else.

The Maine farmers markets are running now, and they deserve a visit on any cannabis tourism itinerary because the food available here is genuinely exceptional. Local cheese, the best fresh sourdough bread, ramps and fiddleheads in season, farm eggs, early greens, jams and jelly's, honey from local hives. This is not grocery store food. This is food with a direct and traceable relationship to the land it came from, and it tastes profoundly different. A market morning

followed by a long afternoon cooking in a rental kitchen with good local ingredients and a pleasant cannabis experience is, I will argue, one of the finest vacation days available in New England.

Stop at the greenhouses. The local farm greenhouses are opening right now for the season, and they are worth your time. They are warm and green and fragrant with turned soil in the middle of what can still be cool spring air. Buy tomato starts to take home. Buy all the herb plants you can fit in your car. Ask the farmer what they are excited about this year. These conversations are part of what Maine is, and they cost nothing but time, which is the thing you came here to have more of and our growers appreciate your questions and love your conversations. It is exactly what gets us all through the long main winters.

Get to the coast. Wherever you are based, get to the ocean at least once, and do it at a time of day when it's not crowded, very early morning, or late afternoon and I only suggested that so you will find parking. The light on the water at those hours is something that cannabis enhances in the most uncomplicated, joyful way. The color, the motion, the sound of it, the feel of sand in your toes, it's all already extraordinary. A gentle, clearheaded cannabis experience lets you be fully inside it rather than partially outside it looking in, the way our busy minds usually keep us.

Eat the ice cream. Eat ice cream everywhere you find it. And go looking for lobster rolls, and steamed clams and fresh cut beef and blueberry pie. We want you to experience everything that Maine has to offer in tourist season because we want you to remember it when you go back home so that you'll come back and visit us again.

Here is the one unavoidably practical note in this piece, and I promise it leads somewhere good. It's the 'tick talk.' As an herbalist I have to speak to this piece. Ticks are a real and present concern in Maine and have been for years. The blacklegged tick, and the deer tick, vectors of Lyme disease, is active in every month of the year now, and in spring it's the nymphs you need to worry about: tiny, poppy-seed-sized, and disinclined to announce themselves. If you are hiking Maine's trails, walking through meadows, sitting in long grass, or doing anything that puts you in contact with vegetation, you need to check yourself carefully when you come in. You need to check your pets carefully including ears and between the paws. That said, do not let this keep you off the trails. The woods are worth it. Just go in prepared.

Here is the bug and tick repellent I make every spring and reach for every single time I go outside between now and October. It's plant-based, it smells genuinely lovely and rose geranium essential oil in particular has real research behind it as a tick deterrent.





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My very own herbalist's "Bog Spray"

By Beverly Ann Soucy

Makes approximately 4 oz, which will be enough for the whole trip, and while I prepare my own oils from my medicinal gardens, you can purchase any of these oils from any natural food store or online. I also use tansy, [Tanacetum vulgare] but am not including that in this easy-to-prepare recipe as there are some studies that deem this plant toxic. However, I have found it is hugely effective as a tick deterrent. Do your own research.

- 2 oz witch hazel
- 1 oz distilled water
- 1 oz aloe vera gel (optional, adds skin conditioning)
- 30 drops rose geranium essential oil (the MVP well-studied for tick deterrence)
- 20 drops eucalyptus essential oil
- 15 drops lavender essential oil
- 10 drops cedarwood essential oil
- 10 drops peppermint essential oil

To make: Combine everything in a 4 oz glass spray bottle. Shake well before each use; the oils will separate from the water, which is normal and expected. Apply to clothing and exposed skin before heading out, avoiding the face. Reapply every couple of hours when in heavy brush. Rose geranium is non-negotiable. If you are simplifying, keep that one and adjust the others as you like. Check yourself when you come in. Check your children and your dog. Finding a tick within the first few hours and removing it promptly is enormously effective at preventing transmission of anything you don't want to transmit. This is not a crisis for those of us who live here; it's just a habit.

I want to be honest with you about Maine's trails and what they will do to the body of someone who has been sitting at a desk for most of the winter. They will humble you but not cruelly. Maine's trails are magnificent, and the views they deliver are worth every step but your knees will suddenly have opinions, particularly on the descent, and your hands will dry out from the combination of

soil and wind and all those rocks you grabbed to pull yourself up the last pitch not to mention the ones filling your pockets. This is where the cannabis topicals I mentioned earlier become your best friends, and where my herbalist self and my cannabis enthusiast self-meet in complete agreement.

A good CBD or THC topical applied to aching knees and sore quads after a long hiking day delivers anti-inflammatory benefits right where you need it. No systemic effect, no impairment, just the localized relief of cannabinoids working on the tissue that needs them. Pick one up at the dispensary when you make your visit. Ask specifically for something formulated for muscle and joint recovery. The staff will point you in exactly the right direction.

For the home remedy version and I include this because some of you are going to want to make something before your trip or when you get back

Trail Recovery Ointment for Sore Knees and Muscles

Start with an arnica-infused oil as your base; arnica is one of the most well-researched plants for bruising, deep tissue soreness, and overuse inflammation. You can find pre-made arnica oil at most natural food stores or make your own from dried arnica flowers in olive oil over several weeks. To a cup of arnica oil, add:

15 drops wintergreen essential oil (methyl salicylate, the original plant-based aspirin relative)

10 drops peppermint essential oil (the cooling sensation gives immediate feedback that something helpful is happening)

A CBD-infused oil blended in, if you have it (this is exactly the application where it earns its place)

To make the ointment: warm your combined oils gently over very low heat and add one ounce of beeswax per cup of oil, stirring until melted. Adjust consistency to preference, more wax for a firmer product, less for a softer balm. Pour into tins, let cool undisturbed, label. Apply generously to sore areas and massage well.

Your hands are the other casualty of an active Maine vacation, and here the advice is both practical and almost philosophical: wear your gardening or hiking gloves. I know you won't always. I don't always. But a good shea-and-comfrey hand salve kept in your bag and applied every time you come in from outside will make a real difference by the end of the week. Comfrey is called knitbone in the old herbals, and it is one of the plants that I have worked with for many years. There is much to love about this plant. It supports skin repair in a way that works; it is great for bruising, breaks, and

wrinkles, but that is another story for another issue. It will help with your dry, cracked hands, which can be both uncomfortable and unnecessary.

I've been trying for years to explain what it is about this state that keeps people coming back, and why I cannot imagine living anywhere else. They keep coming back, sometimes for generations, sometimes in the form of families who vacationed here as children and are now bringing their own children, who will someday bring theirs. It's not just the scenery, though the scenery is extraordinary. It's not just the food, though the food is exceptional. It's not even the cannabis, though while it is a new, legal industry, the cannabis is increasingly excellent. It is the quality of presence that Maine demands of you, and delivers to you, simultaneously. There is something about being in a landscape that is genuinely wild, not managed wildness, not wilderness-lite, but the actual thing that changes the quality of your attention. The forests here are old and vast and indifferent to your schedule. The ocean has been doing what it does to that granite for ten thousand years and will do it for ten thousand more. The loon calling across the lake in the dark is not performing it is calling its mate to head home after a day on the water. The moose, if you are lucky enough to see one, wading through the shallows at dawn has not been placed there for your Instagram.

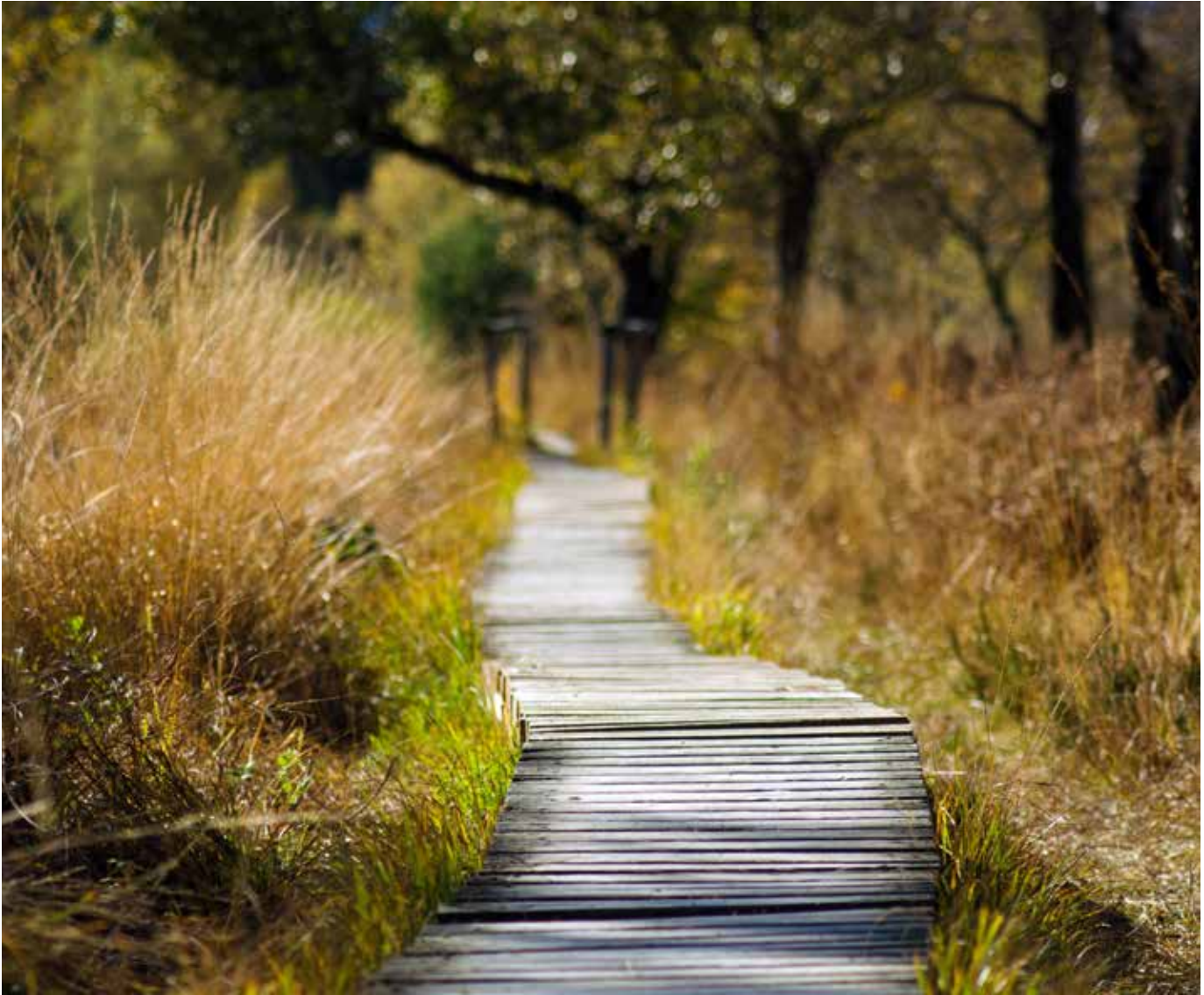
All of this is very real. And while there are days with many of us taking this for granted, we still realize how magical it is. And when it's working, when you've hiked something beautiful and eaten something local and you're sitting somewhere with a view and a little cannabis clarity and the sound of whatever water is nearest to you whether it is a little brook in the woods or the ocean, Maine has a way of making you feel briefly, profoundly okay. That is not a small thing. That is, for a lot of people, exactly what they drove twelve hours to find.

And from an herbalist's perspective, let me tell you: that feeling is medicine. The Japanese have a name for time spent in forests, "Shinrin-yoku," forest bathing, and they have the research to support its benefits to cortisol levels, immune function, blood pressure, and yes, mood. What Maine offers is Shinrin-yoku on a scale that most people have no access to in their daily lives. Combined with the right cannabis experience and the time to actually be present in it, this is not a vacation. This is a recalibration. A reset of sorts.

That is what we have here. And we are genuinely glad you've come for it.

Here are a few things you should know before you go. Since I started writing for this magazine, I have considered it my job to be





honest with you, and I always try to write with the same passion for how I truly feel about this place I call home and that commitment does not stop here. So, before you pack the car to head home: please support our local small businesses with intention and go back and support them several times while you are here; it means everything. The dispensaries, yes, but also the farms, the diners, the small shops on the main streets of towns that are fighting hard to stay alive as small towns. Buy something from a local maker. Buy art. Throw money at a local musician. Eat at the place that's been there for thirty years. Leave a good review for the kayak guide who pointed out the osprey nest or the loons. These things matter more than you know.

Most of all, respect our land. Don't leave your trash behind, in fact don't leave any evidence that you were there because that keeps us all protecting this beautiful state. Maine's trails and coastlines absorb an enormous amount of foot traffic, and the people who

maintain them are largely volunteers. Stay on the marked paths, pack out everything you pack in, and for the love of everything that is beautiful in this world, do not leave anything at the trailhead that didn't start there.

Be patient with us. We love that you're here, but we also live here, and sometimes the line at the post office is going to be long, and the road into town is going to be backed up, and we are all going to take a breath and remember that the tourism dollars keep the lights on. We know this. We hold it. Just remember to be kind to us, and we will be absolutely wonderful to you.

And come back. Seriously. Come back in the fall when our hillsides are on fire, and the air is crisp, and the sunset does things to our mountains that painters have been trying to capture for two centuries. Come on back in winter if you are



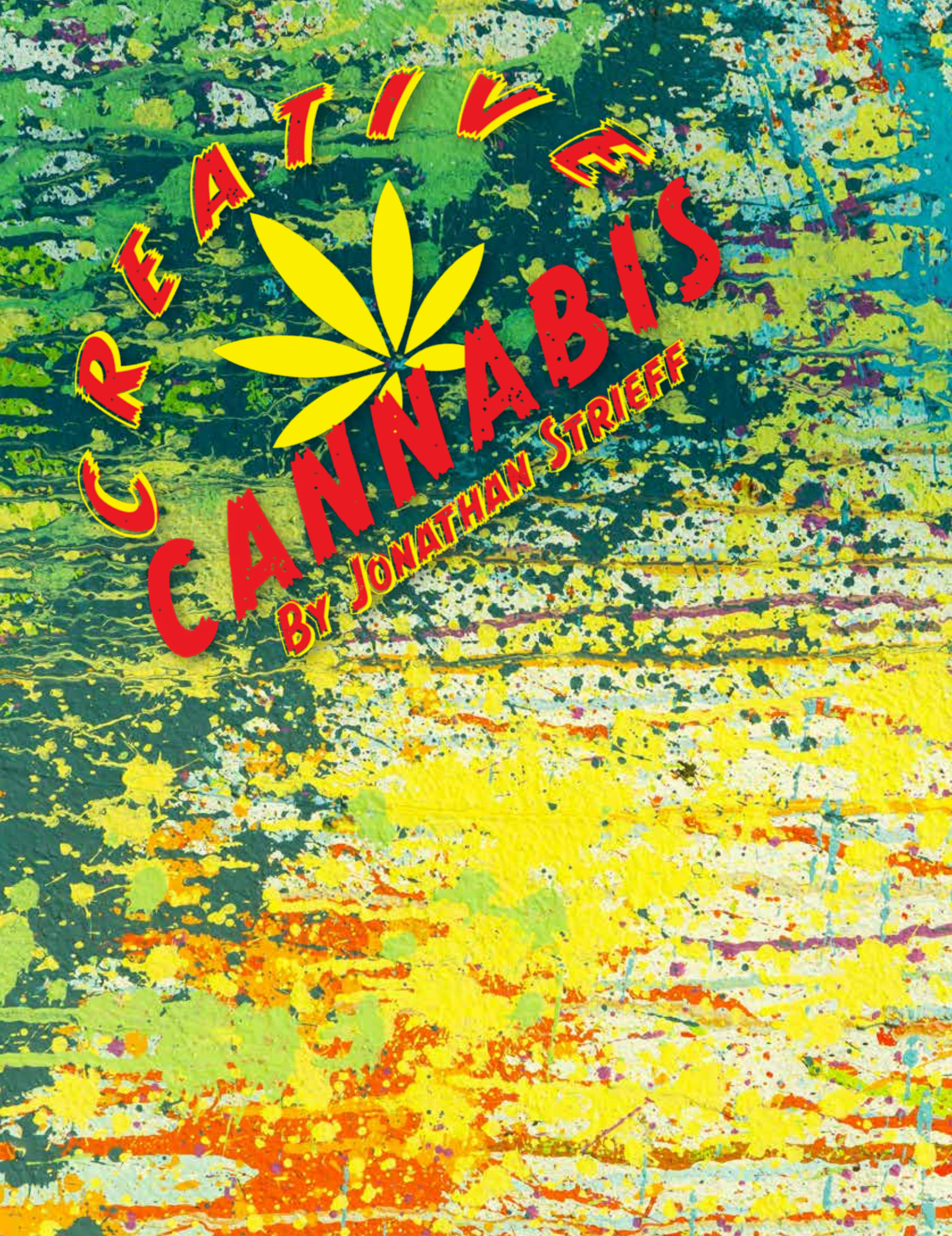
brave and love the silence of snow or love four-season recreation, the likes of skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobile, skating and ice fishing. Come back in mud season if you want to see what Maine actually looks like without the tourist gloss. We are here all year, and we are some of the best people that you will ever meet. Every spring I watch the season open and the visitors arrive, and every spring I feel that complicated, tender thing that comes from sharing something you love with people who are discovering it for the first time. There is nothing quite like seeing someone fall for Maine. It happens fast, it happens hard, and it tends to last a lifetime. The cannabis piece of that experience is something I genuinely believe is adding a new dimension to what Maine tourism can be, not replacing anything, not cheapening anything, but adding depth and presence and a certain quality of attention that makes everything else better. The best part for me is that there is room for everyone. The coast hits differently

when you are fully in it with your toes in the sand. The trail feels different when your nervous system isn't running its usual anxious background noise. The farmers market, the greenhouse, the diner on the main street of a small river town, all of it rewards every human being that stops to appreciate it.

That is my perspective as an herbalist. Plants are for healing and for opening pathways and converting. They always have been. Cannabis is a plant, and it is doing what plants do, meeting people where they are, offering something the body recognizes, healing, enhancing, and making the beautiful more available and the difficult more manageable. Come on a visit. And if you live in Maine, maybe this year's vacation is exploring different parts of it that you have yet to see. Our "tourist season" is opening. The loons are back on the lake, and the peepers are out loudly this year, which means everything is happening right on schedule.







CREATIVITY
CANNABIS
BY JONATHAN STRIEFF

Hempcrete

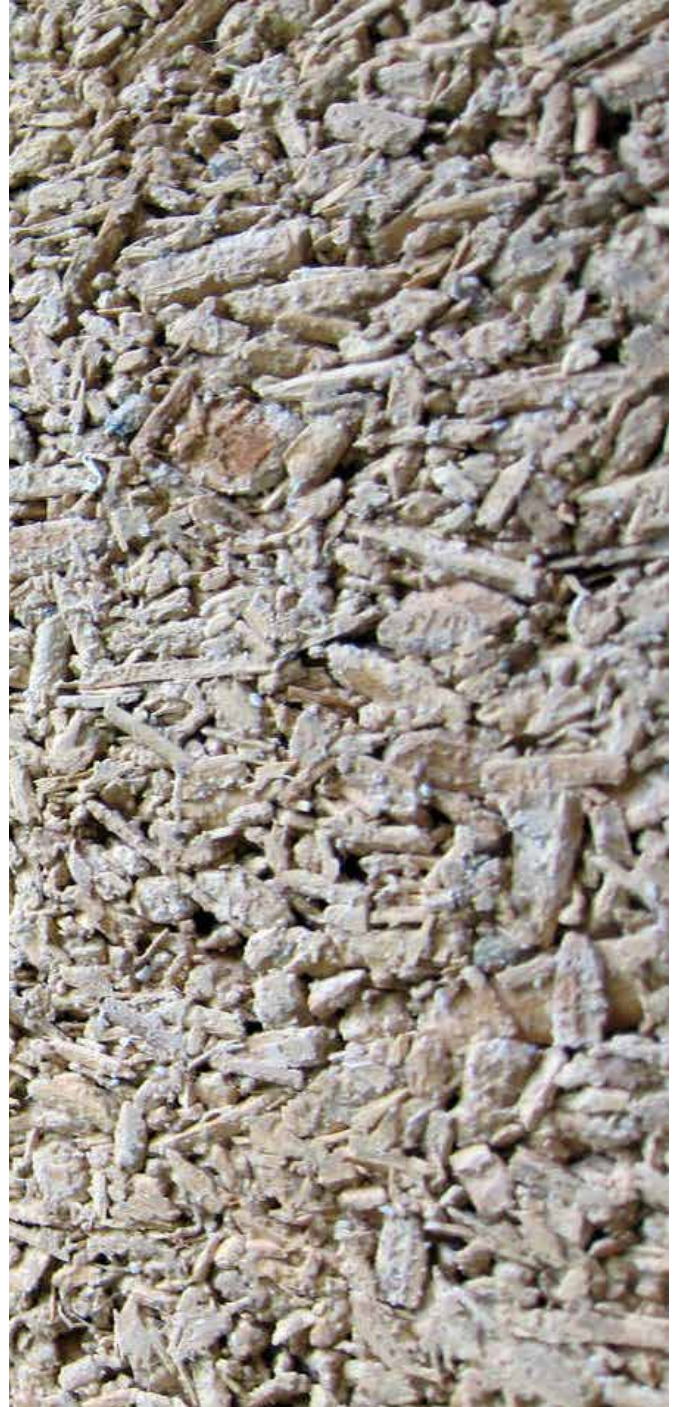
By Jonathan Strieff

What teenage stoner, adrift in the throws of a particularly potent high, hasn't stumbled into the fantasy of living in a house made out of weed? The particulars of the dream will inevitably vary from pothead to pothead. Some might imagine a structure of branches and flowers thatched together by an industrious but chill fourth little pig. Others will picture an ornate gingerbread (ganja-bread?) house, decorated with manicured herb and glass paraphernalia, designed to lure in a groovy version of Hansel and Gretel. Still others may come up with a single, glistening, two story tall bud with doors and windows, reminiscent of Spongebob Squarepants pineapple under the sea.

While the idea of building a home out of cannabis sounds like a literal pipe dream, engineers and designers in the alternative building community have made brought this fantasy into reality. While the promises of "hempcrete" sound far more mundane than a house you can pack into your bong, they offer radical and important new considerations to building science and the future of the construction industry.

Hempcrete or hemplime mixes the tough, fibrous material from cannabis plants with lime and sand to produce lightweight, highly insulated blocks to be used as non-weight bearing infill walls. Other renewable biocomposite materials, like flax and wood pulp historical had wide applications in building materials due to their widespread availability but generally fell out of favor as cheaper mass produced building materials were introduced. In recent years, the massive environmental cost of manufacturing concrete and cement have inspired many to revisit and improve upon traditional building techniques, and the benefits of utilizing hemp in this process became readily apparent.

Hempcrete construction starts long before any 2x4s start getting nailed together. Seeds, soil, and sunshine are the starting ingredients. While cement manufacturing depends on belching enormous amounts of carbon emissions into the environment, the lush fields of industrial hemp grown for hempcrete actually act as a carbon sink, drawing carbon down out of the atmosphere and storing it in the fibers of the plants. If left to decompose, the carbon is rereleased back into the environment, but trapped within the





matrix lime and sand, hempcrete is considered a “carbon-negative” building material.

At harvest time, the hemp plants shredded into a confetti of long fibrous strands, called shives, before being mixed with water and a lime-based binding agent and formed into blocks to cure. The finished blocks are palletized and shipped out to their final destination. Because hempcrete is so lightweight, the reduced transport cost alone provides yet another environmental benefit.

The resulting product possess roughly 3-5 times the effective R-value of conventional concrete blocks, nearly comparable to fiberglass batts. Hempcrete is vapor-permeable, allowing it to absorb and release relative humidity to naturally manage indoor air quality. It is fire, mold, and insect and rodent pest resistant. It's versatility and ease of use make it attractive to new and experienced builders alike, but by far its appealing attribute is its eco-friendliness.

Which isn't to say that hempcrete is without limitations. The most obvious would be the lack of structural integrity. Even referring to hempcrete as a “building” material seems slightly disingenuous as it's primary function seems to be as insulation. Some examples have shown hempcrete applied successfully to restore and refurbish existing masonry buildings, but any new construction requires the

hemp blocks be framed in with traditional stick built walls. Another draw back comes from the long drying and curing time involved in manufacturing. Even overlooking the three months needed to bring the hemp crop to maturity, the typical curing time for the bricks can take between four and eight weeks, significantly longer than concrete. As a new (or newly embraced) material, the availability of hempcrete and contractors with specialized experience with it can be relatively limited. During the prohibition years in the U.S., trying to build with hemp could result in serving jail time. All in all, the long manufacturing process, limited availability, and specialized labor results in hempcrete construction costing 8-12% more than traditional building materials.

Today, hempcrete is a speciality, niche product for the most environmentally conscious home builders who are not afraid of cost overruns. But as green building techniques evolve and mature, and hidden environmental costs of the old ways of doing things continue to come to light, hempcrete offers some truly remarkable benefits to the next generation of architectural design. Consider the fact that concrete production accounts for approximately 8% of global CO₂ emissions and 9% of industrial water usage. If the industry were someday taxed to account for the magnitude of this environmental footprint, the extra expense embodied in hempcrete might not seem so steep.





Reclassification of Marijuana: A Long-Awaited Breakthrough for Medical Research, Patient Safety, and Responsible Use in Maine

By Eric I. Mitchell



Eric I. Mitchell, MD MA FACPE
AAPL is president and medical director of Hemp Commodity Industries, LLC.

the Controlled Substances Act. This isn't full legalization, and recreational use remains a state matter, but it marks the official end of the prohibition era for medical cannabis and the dawn of a regulated, evidence-based future.

As Maine's medical writer for Cannabis Connections, I've fought alongside patients, nurses, and advocates for this exact shift. For decades, Schedule I status treated cannabis as having "no accepted medical use" and a "high potential for abuse"—right alongside heroin and LSD. That classification starved research, left patients guessing, and forced clinicians to rely on anecdotal evidence or limited FDA-approved synthetics. Now, with the expedited rescheduling process set to begin in late June 2026, we stand on the threshold of rigorous, real-world studies that could transform how we treat chronic pain, nausea, muscle spasms, and more—while honestly confronting the risks.

Understanding the Schedules: From Prohibition to Regulation

The Controlled Substances Act of 1970 created five schedules based on medical value, abuse potential, safety, and dependence risk. Schedule I drugs have no accepted medical use and high abuse potential. Schedule III drugs, like ketamine, certain testosterone products, and low-dose codeine combinations,

After years of advocacy—petitions, letters to lawmakers, conversations with patients and providers, and watching friends and family struggle with limited options while federal barriers blocked real science—I finally feel a deep sense of vindication. On April 23, 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice moved to reclassify state-licensed medical marijuana products from Schedule I to Schedule III under

have moderate-to-low dependence risk and recognized medical benefits. Reclassifying state-certified medical marijuana to Schedule III acknowledges what patients in Maine and 37 other states have known for years: cannabis has therapeutic value. It doesn't change patient access—your certifications and recommendations remain valid. But it does open the floodgates for science. Researchers registered with the DEA can now source actual cannabis flower, vapes, tinctures, edibles, and other products directly from state-licensed producers instead of the outdated, low-potency, single-strain material previously supplied through federal channels.

This is huge. Previously, studies were crippled by poor product quality and variety. Now, gold-standard randomized controlled trials (RCTs) become feasible—trials that can finally measure how cannabis performs in real patients with complex conditions. The Pros: Unlocking Research and Therapeutic Potential

The biggest win is research. For too long, we've operated on patchwork evidence while patients' self-experiment. Reclassification lets scientists study the exact products Mainers buy at dispensaries: full-spectrum extracts, high-CBD strains, balanced THC/CBD ratios, and innovative delivery methods.

Strong evidence already supports cannabis for:

- Chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting (where synthetic THC like dronabinol has helped for years).
- Multiple sclerosis-related muscle spasticity and stiffness.
- Certain epilepsy syndromes (Epidiolex, a purified CBD, is already FDA-approved).
- Neuropathic and chronic pain, offering an opioid-sparing alternative for many.

Emerging data also points to benefits for PTSD symptoms, appetite stimulation in HIV/AIDS or cancer, and inflammatory conditions. In Maine, where medical cannabis serves over 110,000 registered patients, this could mean better dosing guidelines, strain recommendations, and personalized



protocols. Imagine clinical trials run right here in Portland or Bangor, partnering with local universities and dispensaries to study how Maine-grown cultivars perform for our aging population or veterans dealing with service-related pain.

Economically and socially, this shift reduces stigma. It treats medical cannabis like the medicine it is—regulated, tested (ideally), and prescribed under professional guidance. For long-time advocates like me, it validates the stories we’ve heard: patients ditching opioids, sleeping better, moving with less pain. Regulation also paves the way for pharmaceutical development—new formulations, standardized dosing, and eventually insurance coverage.

The Cons: Acknowledging Risks and the Need for Caution

Balance demands that we discuss the risks openly. Rescheduling does not mean cannabis is harmless or safe for everyone. A growing body of research highlights potential harms, especially in vulnerable groups.

Pregnant individuals face risks of fetal brain development from THC exposure. Adolescents and young adults risk impacts on cognitive development, increased psychosis likelihood (particularly those with genetic predisposition or family history of schizophrenia), and higher rates of cannabis use disorder (CUD). People with preexisting mental health conditions, cardiac issues, or certain medications must proceed with extreme caution due to possible drug interactions and elevated heart rate or blood pressure. Even in medical users, side effects can include dizziness, dry mouth, anxiety at high doses, and dependence in roughly 30% of regular users. Maine’s own data underscores another gap: while recreational cannabis undergoes mandatory testing for molds, fungi, heavy metals, pesticides, and potency, medical cannabis does not. As noted by experts, this means Schedule III medical products in our state could carry higher contamination risks than recreational ones. That’s unacceptable for patients relying on it as medicine. Rescheduling could send mixed signals to the public. Some may interpret “lower abuse potential” as “perfectly safe for all.” It’s not. We need clear public education: start low, go



slow, consult healthcare providers (especially nurses trained in cannabis care), and avoid driving or operating machinery while impaired.

Maine-Specific Implications and the Road Ahead

Here in Maine, this federal change shines a spotlight on our own regulatory gaps. Our medical program was pioneering, but it lags in safety standards compared to recreational markets. Contaminant testing isn't mandatory for medical products, creating a two-tiered system that shortchanges patients who need the cleanest, most consistent medicine. Advocates have pushed bills like LD 1847 for better tracking and testing—now is the time to strengthen those protections, so Schedule III status truly means safer, more reliable access.

For the general public, this means more informed choices. Whether you're a patient, caregiver, or simply curious, the coming wave of research will give us data-driven answers instead of hype or fearmongering.

Moving Forward with Optimism and Responsibility

As someone who has fought for this reclassification for over a decade—through hearings, patient testimonials, and tireless education—I see this as a pivotal moment. It doesn't solve every problem overnight, but it removes the single biggest barrier to solid science. We can now build robust evidence based on both benefits and risks. My call to Maine readers: Stay engaged. Support standardized safety testing for medical cannabis. Encourage your providers to get cannabis education. Demand high-quality research that includes diverse populations and real-world Maine products. And above all, use responsibly—under medical guidance, with clear labeling, and with respect to the plant's power.

The prohibition era is ending. The regulation and research era is beginning. For patients who have waited too long, for families seeking better options, and for a state like Maine that has led to compassionate access, this is progress worth celebrating—and protecting.







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Trump Administration Reclassifies Medical Cannabis as Schedule III in Major Federal Shift

By AJ Harrington

The federal government's stance on medical cannabis took a historic turn in April, when the Trump administration approved a long-awaited order to move marijuana to Schedule III. The decision, signed in late April and announced publicly on April 23, marks the most significant change to federal cannabis policy in more than five decades and signals a new era for medical research and patient access.

A Long-Standing Barrier Finally Moves

The Justice Department's order ends cannabis's placement in Schedule I, a category reserved for substances with no accepted medical use. Cannabis has been listed there since 1970, a designation that has limited scientific study and complicated access for patients who rely on it for chronic pain, epilepsy, cancer-related symptoms and other conditions.

According to the Washington Post, federal officials said the reclassification is intended to "boost medical research" and align cannabis with other Schedule III substances that have recognized medical uses and lower abuse potential. The shift reflects a growing acknowledgment within the federal government that the existing framework has not kept pace with scientific evidence or public opinion.

The change applies only to medical cannabis. It does not legalize adult-use products, alter federal criminal penalties for recreational possession or resolve the banking and tax challenges that state-licensed businesses continue to face. But for the medical market, the implications are substantial.

Researchers will no longer need to navigate the restrictive Schedule I approval process, which has slowed or blocked studies for decades. Universities and medical centers may be more willing to pursue cannabis research, and pharmaceutical companies could explore new formulations or delivery systems. Physicians may also gain clearer guidance on dosing, safety and interactions with other medications.

Federal Pressure and Public Momentum

The administration's decision followed months of internal review and increasing pressure from patients, researchers and state officials who have urged the federal government to modernize its approach.

Public support for medical cannabis remains strong, and more than three dozen states now operate regulated medical programs.

President Donald Trump had recently expressed frustration with the pace of federal drug policy changes, telling reporters he wanted agencies to move more quickly on issues that have broad public backing. His comments suggested the White House was prepared to take a more assertive role in shaping the next phase of cannabis policy.

Under Schedule III, cannabis is grouped with substances that have accepted medical uses and lower abuse potential than drugs in Schedules I and II. The shift does not eliminate federal oversight. Products will still be regulated under the Controlled Substances Act, and federal agencies will need to update guidance, enforcement protocols and research procedures.

Industry leaders and patient advocates welcomed the announcement but noted its limits. Because the order applies only to medical cannabis, adult-use operators will continue to face federal tax burdens under Section 280E, along with banking challenges and restrictions on interstate commerce. Those issues will remain unresolved unless Congress acts.

A Step Forward, With More Work Ahead

Even with its limitations, the reclassification marks a turning point for medical cannabis patients. Advocates have long argued that Schedule I status contradicted both scientific evidence and the experiences of millions of patients who use cannabis under state law. The new classification acknowledges that cannabis has therapeutic value and should be studied and regulated accordingly.

State medical programs are expected to continue operating as usual while federal agencies update their rules. The Justice Department has not released a detailed implementation timeline, and it may take months for the full impact of the change to be felt.

For researchers, the shift opens doors that have been closed for decades. For patients, it offers the possibility of more consistent guidance and better-studied products. And for policymakers, it represents a significant recalibration of federal drug policy at a moment when the national conversation around cannabis continues to evolve.

Bipartisan Bill Would Let States Sidestep Hemp THC Ban

By AJ Harrington

A trio of U.S. senators has filed bipartisan legislation that would allow states to avoid the federal government's impending ban on hemp THC products, Marijuana Moment reported on Friday. The measure, the Hemp Safety Enforcement Act, was introduced in the Senate on Thursday by Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, Minnesota Democrat Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Sen. Joni Ernst, a Republican from Iowa. Under the bill (S.4315), states and Indian tribes would be able to regulate hemp-derived products with THC that are produced and sold within their borders. Jurisdictions that decide to adopt regulations would avoid a federal ban on products with more than 0.4 milligrams of THC or other intoxicating cannabinoids per container. The prohibition threatens the viability of the nation's hemp industry, which was legalized by the 2018 Farm Bill.

Under that legislation, cannabis plants and products with no more than 0.3% delta-9 THC (the compound most responsible for the classic marijuana "high") were legalized nationwide. But Congress approved a new definition of hemp with legislation to reopen the federal government late last year, setting up the new ban set to take effect in November.

Hemp Ban Threatens Businesses And Jobs

The new prohibition will "wipe out the multi-billion-dollar industry, while depriving individuals of products they depend upon to improve sleep, relieve anxiety, and alleviate pain," Paul wrote on the social media platform X. "My bill would protect thousands of jobs, family farms, and safe access for veterans and seniors."

"About half the states, including Kentucky, have already established their own regulatory rules for hemp: age limits, serving size caps, and testing requirements," he said. "These state laws let farmers thrive while keeping products out of kids' hands."

Under the bipartisan legislation, "a State or Indian tribe desiring to have primary regulatory authority over the production of hemp and hemp-derived cannabinoid products in the State or territory of the Indian tribe may submit" to the U.S. secretary of agriculture, "through the State department of

agriculture (in consultation with the Governor and chief law enforcement officer of the State) or the Tribal government, as applicable, a notice that the State or Indian tribe elects not to be subject to" the upcoming federal prohibition.

Governments that decide to opt out of the federal ban must also adopt a legal minimum age for the purchase of intoxicating hemp-derived products, although the legislation does not specify the minimum age. The bill also allows interstate commerce between states and tribal governments that choose to regulate intoxicating hemp products.

Hemp Industry Lauds New Bill

Jonathan Miller, general counsel of the U.S. Hemp Roundtable, told Marijuana Moment that the group is "deeply grateful" to the bill's sponsors "for their steadfast continued leadership on behalf of the hemp industry."

He added that Ernst joining "the pro-hemp team" is a "major development."

"Sen. Ernst is deeply respected for her agricultural experience," Miller said. "Her participation is an important statement that U.S. farmers are deeply at risk if the impending ban goes into effect."

Chris Boucher, CEO and co-founder of California-based hemp leaf and microgreen food ingredient company, is encouraged by the legislation, saying it "could be a big win for the hemp industry."

"It could help revive hemp agriculture (family farms, veteran and minority farmers) across many states which is key to the success of the entire industry. With out farmers growing hemp phyto-cannabinoids or even dual crops, it would be devastating with the new ban on hemp THC at 0.4 milligrams per container."

The Hemp Safety and Enforcement Act has been referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry for consideration.





Trump Presses Lawmakers for Changes to Pending Hemp THC Restrictions

By AJ Harrington

President Donald Trump is urging Congress to revisit a pending overhaul of federal hemp rules, warning that the current language could unintentionally block access to full-spectrum CBD products relied on by consumers nationwide. While the administration supports tighter oversight of intoxicating hemp-derived cannabinoids, Trump says lawmakers should refine the policy before it takes effect to avoid sweeping restrictions that go beyond the intended targets.

How a Budget Rider Redefined Hemp at the Federal Level

The policy debate stems from language included in a November 2025 appropriations bill that redefines hemp under federal law. The 2018 Farm Bill legalized hemp containing no more than 0.3 percent delta-9 THC on a dry weight basis, but the new provision shifts the focus to total THC in finished products. Industry participants say that, while technical on its face, the change has sweeping implications.

Because many full-spectrum CBD products contain trace amounts of THC that can accumulate beyond the new threshold, the revised standard could render them illegal. At the same time, lawmakers have pointed to the rapid rise of intoxicating hemp-derived cannabinoids such as delta-8 THC, which have proliferated in a regulatory gray area, as justification for stricter rules.

Why Full-Spectrum CBD Is at Risk Under the New Standard

The shift to a total THC limit in finished goods would capture a wide range of products that have been legally sold since 2018. Full-spectrum CBD formulations often contain naturally occurring cannabinoids in small amounts, including THC, that contribute to what many consumers describe as an entourage effect. Under the new definition, even trace levels could push products over the allowable limit once processed, packaged, and tested.

Industry groups warn that the change could eliminate popular CBD products from the market while doing little to address the separate issue of intoxicating hemp compounds that have emerged in recent years.

Trump Pushes for a Narrower, More Targeted Approach

Trump acknowledged both sides of the issue in his comments,

highlighting consumer demand for CBD while backing efforts to rein in higher-risk products.

“I am calling on Congress to update the Law to ensure that Americans can continue to access the full-spectrum CBD products they have come to rely on, and that help them, while preserving Congress’s intent to restrict the sale of products that pose Health risks,” Trump said.

“We must get this done RIGHT and FAST, especially for those who saw that CBD helps them,” he said. “Plus, I am told it will also help our GREAT FARMERS, who we love, and will always be there for.”

The president also referenced earlier executive action to expand research into hemp-derived cannabinoids and to promote access for certain patient populations.

“In December, I signed a very important Executive Order calling for Research and Innovation for Hemp-derived CBD,” Trump said. “Our wonderful Dr. Mehmet Oz moved fast to follow the directive in the Executive Order, and launched a model for some Seniors earlier this month. But more must be done!”

“Please get it done, and SOON,” he added. “Thank you for your attention to this matter!”

Industry Braces for Market Disruption and Regulatory Uncertainty

The stakes are high for a hemp industry that has already faced years of regulatory uncertainty and price compression. Farmers, processors, and retailers have increasingly relied on value-added cannabinoid products to sustain margins, particularly as demand for raw hemp biomass has fluctuated.

Advocates warn that an abrupt shift in federal policy could disrupt supply chains and eliminate products that many consumers view as beneficial, even as regulators continue to grapple with questions about safety, labeling, and oversight. Public health concerns have drawn bipartisan attention in Washington, particularly around products that can produce intoxicating effects but are often sold outside of state-licensed cannabis systems.

Pre-Rolls Overtake Flower As Top Cannabis Product In 2025

By AJ Harrington

Pre-rolled marijuana joints, or pre-rolls, moved into the top spot among cannabis products last year, surpassing flower for the first time. The shift is detailed in a new Custom Cones USA report that examines 2025 retail data and operator surveys to track how consumer preferences are changing as the market matures.

The State of the Pre-Roll Market 2026 report, using data from market analyst Headset, shows a category that has grown from a convenience item into one of the strongest performers in the industry. Pre-rolls generated and estimated \$3.6 billion in revenue last year and sold more than 383 million units. Unit sales grew by 18.6% year-over-year, far ahead of the broader cannabis market, which only expanded by 1.5%.

Harrison Bard, CEO of Custom Cones USA, says the milestone reflects a long-term shift in how consumers use cannabis.

“What it is signaling is the total adoption of pre-rolls as a category and the shift from a more medical type of industry to a fully recreational industry,” Bard says in an online interview. “The quality of pre-rolls has been consistently increasing while the cost has gone down, and consumers want convenience and ease. They want something quick and ready to go.”

Pre-Roll Growth Driven By Convenience And Lower Prices

The report points to several factors behind the rise of pre-rolls. Raw material prices have fallen as cultivation becomes more efficient, and automation has reshaped production. Many operators now produce tens of thousands of pre-rolls per day with only one or two employees, an increase in efficiency that has pushed prices down. In mature markets such as Colorado and Michigan, one-gram pre-rolls often sell for \$2 to \$4. Newer markets still tend to fall below \$10 for a single joint.

The accessible price points have made pre-rolls a convenient and low-risk way for consumers to try new strains, brands or infusions. Infused products continue to drive revenue growth, generating \$1.68 billion in 2025 and now accounting for 47% of all pre-roll sales. Multi-pack formats are also dominating pre-roll sales, representing 48.5% of all SKUs, although the individual one-gram pre-roll remains the top product configuration with \$1.4 billion in sales.

Two Models Prevail In A Competitive Pre-Roll Market

The report also illustrates a clear divide in how brands are winning market share. California-based Jeeter leads the category in revenue with more than \$253 million in pre-roll sales.

The company’s strategy centers on premium infused products, flavor-forward profiles and curated multi-pack formats, with an average price point of about \$23 per unit.

Michigan-based Dragonfly Cannabis, on the other hand, leads the nation in pre-roll unit sales. The company moved 22.6 million pre-rolls last year at an average price of only \$1.34. Its model focuses on accessibility and scale, supported by low prices and high repeat purchase rates.

Emerging Opportunities In Blunts, Premium Tips And Freshness

The report also identifies several areas of opportunity. Blunts (pre-rolls with alternative wraps) represent one of the most underreported product types, with data placing the segment at about \$16.3 million. Product-level analysis, however, shows closer to \$148 million in revenue and more than 8.5 million units sold. The gap is caused by how infused blunts are categorized in retail data systems.

Premium filter tips made from glass, wood or ceramic remain a small but promising segment of the pre-roll market. So far, they only account for only 0.3%, although consumer interest seems to be growing.

Bard believes the next major wave of competition will center on freshness and flavor rather than potency. “Right now, it is all about potency, but the real heady people are all about terps,” he says, referring to aromatic compounds in cannabis called terpenes. “Freshness and flavor are where brands will differentiate. A reputable brand will not want their pre-roll sold if it is older than a month. One day you are going to see a Best By date on a pre-roll just like food or drink.”

The Custom Cones USA report projects continued growth for the pre-roll market. The company expects pre-roll revenue to reach between \$3.8 billion and \$4 billion in 2026, with long-term growth pushing the category past \$5.2 billion by 2030.





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