



Hemp: *cannabis sativa* - A tall, thin plant similar to flax, harvested for its fibers and seeds. To anyone who grew up in the sixties, it means only one thing: pot.

Today, consumers are finding hemp to be one of the world's most versatile plants, providing food, clothing and construction materials all over the world. As early as 8000 BC, ancients in China and the Middle East used hemp fiber for ropes and fishnets, the oil for their skin, and the seeds for food. The original Declaration of Independence was written on hemp paper (who knew!). Today, hemp is replacing wood, cotton and petroleum-based materials, including plastic, in virtually every product.

Good for the Earth

Hemp naturally maintains a healthy environment for the surrounding streams, air, flora and fauna. Unlike oil, it is an environmentally friendly, sustainable, ecological renewable resource. It burns clean and sulfur-free, while oil's sulfur content causes acid rain. As fuel it can produce 10 times more methanol than corn, the second best living fuel source.

Hemp enriches and prevents erosion, crowding out surrounding weeds. It requires no fertilizers or pesticides, as it is naturally mildew resistant, thus leaving the soil replenished for the next planting. Compare that to cotton, which uses about 40% of all agricultural pesticides. One acre of hemp can produce as much usable fiber as four acres of trees and two acres of cotton. Hemp also needs less water, and grows to maturity in 70-100 days, compared to trees, which take 50 to 500 years! Paper made from hemp is longer lasting than wood-pulp, and acid/chlorine free.

Good for Your Health

A delicious, nutritional powerhouse, leading researchers consider hemp oil, seeds and flour to be one of the most nutritious super foods on the planet. It is higher in protein than meat, fish or eggs, is packed with vitamin E and essential fats (EFAs), and contains all 20 known amino acids, including the nine essential amino acids our bodies cannot produce. Hemp has three times the vitamin E and twice the iron and magnesium as flax.

What makes hemp so special is that it contains an ideal three-to-one ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fats. In addition, unlike any other food oil, hemp also contains valuable super omega-3 fats (SDA), and super omega-6 (GLA), which help our bodies metabolize fats. Dozens of studies show the benefits of omega fats in individuals with attention deficit, bipolar and pervasive developmental disorders, because they are critical for healthy neurological and immune function. (For more on EFAs, see *New Developments* Vol. III: No.3, 6)

Here are some ideas for adding hemp products to your family menus:

- Add a tablespoon of hempseed oil to breakfast shakes
- Throw ½ cup of hemp nuts into your favorite granola or muffin recipe
- Blend hempseed into guacamole, hummus or lentil pate
- Sprinkle hempseeds on salad, vegetables or rice as a condiment
- Make salad dressing with hempseed oil
- Make hempnut burgers with black beans and rice
- Use hempseeds for a pie crust

For more ideas and recipes go to www.manitobaharvest.com.

Good for Textiles and Fashion

Natural organic hemp fiber can be woven into strong, warm and long wearing textiles that breathe are biodegradable, block out harmful UV and UVB rays, and are naturally resistant to bacteria and mold. Compared to cotton, fabrics made from hemp are stronger, more absorbent, insulating and durable, and they don't stretch out of shape.

Jeans, t-shirts, sweats, pajamas, nightgowns, bathrobes, skirts, underwear, even wedding gowns, can be made of hemp. For babies and children, try organic hemp bedding, hats, diapers, socks and onesies. For your bed and bath, you won't believe the softness and durability of hemp sheets, towels, bath mats and shower curtains. For all these products, go to www.rawganique.com.

Good for Skin and Hair

Hemp is a natural for personal care products. Take a bath or shower and wash your hair with organic hemp soaps and shampoos, without worrying about phthalates. (See *New Developments* 11:1, 6) Hemp oil has a refreshing, nutty aroma, and is legendary as a skin and scalp care product that has been treasured for centuries for its soothing, moisturizing, cleansing and antiseptic qualities.

Good for Building

Hemp homes could be the future. "Green" builders all over the world are turning lightweight, insulating and soundproofing hemp fiber products, such as 2x4s and composite fiber board, which are both lighter and stronger than comparable wood products.

Since 1997, the Lakota Sioux in South Dakota have passed multiple pro-hemp resolutions and declarations. They have plans to replace two dozen homes recently destroyed by tornados with hemp-based buildings.

Isochanvre® is a new building material made by crystallizing the sap of unstable raw hemp. The French company that invented it has built over 250 hemp homes with it. When combined with lime it creates a thermal and acoustical barrier which is stronger and seven times lighter than concrete!

In Australia, builders are constructing luxury hemp mud brick and timber homes. A Canadian company has developed an "Enviro shake" shingle, which looks like a handsplit cedar shake, and is made from hemp and 100% recycled materials with a 35 year warranty!

While hemp homes have far less impact on the environment, by using less energy to build, creating less waste and taking less fuel to heat, they cost about 10 percent more to build than brick and block houses. Costs are expected to go down, though, as production becomes more efficient. Stay tuned. For more on this subject, go to www.eartheasy.com/article_hemp_homes.htm.

Turn to Hemp

The time for hemp is now! Its fibers' uses are endless; rope, building materials, textiles, clothing, tarpaulins, curtains, upholstery, shoes, towels, particle board and paper. The seeds provide healthy foods, edible oils, paint, soaps, cosmetics, creams, and a host of other products. Go to www.globalhempstore.com, www.ecomall.com/biz/hemp.htm and www.hemptraders.com for other information and resources.

Wow! If there is anything bad to say about hemp, we can't find it!