

Interview with Jorge Cervantes
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Revista Cáñamo: -- You were in Spain recently. What impression did you get of the growing efforts in progress here? What about the buds you tasted?

Jorge: First and foremost, I love Spain. This is a magical place for me, I have always loved Spain. I feel at home here. The growing efforts here really shocked me as they did many people around the world. When I lived here more than 20 years ago, Franco, the last fascist in Europe, was still alive. He did not like cannabis! We could find hash, usually Moroccan, but I didn't know anyone that was growing marijuana.

When I met the staff from Canamo and other Spanish magazines at the Canna Business show in Germany last September, I couldn't believe the stories I read in the magazine. I immediately made plans to go to Spain after the show. I had to meet the Spanish growers and see their gardens. I arrived in Barcelona in mid September, just in time to see many gardens in full florescence. I'll never forget the first garden I saw. It was in a sunny back yard. I had not seen that many sativa plants growing for years. You see, I prefer the soaring high from the cannabis sativa rather than the heavier stone of the cannabis indica varieties. Sativa varieties are difficult to find in North America, Europe and Australia where they grow predominately indica varieties or indica/sativa crosses. Sativas are not heavy producers, take longer to mature and are not popular with indoor growers.

That's all different here in Spain! Sativa varieties grow incredibly well in Spain. Growers I spoke to said that their seeds originated in Mexico, Columbia, Cuba, Thailand, Hawaii and Holland. I get really high on Spanish weed. I love the minty taste. It reminds me of the times I spent toked out on sativas in Mexico and South America. I really like the soaring high from the sativas. When I smoke many indica/sativa crosses, I feel like sitting down and doing nothing. I get an energetic high from smoking the Spanish sativas. My only regret about the Spanish bud is that it's only available in Spain.

Revista Cáñamo: -- Indoor cultivation is growing in popularity. What should the person who wants to start indoors take into account before even starting?

Jorge: First and foremost, I would ask myself one simple question: Is it easier to grow indoors or outdoors?

Don't get me wrong, growing indoors is perfect for many people. However, in Spain, it would not be my first choice. Spain is full of sun and growing is tolerated. That's pretty appealing. Growing outdoors is always easier than growing indoors. When you grow

indoors, you have to control every factor that contributes to growth, air circulation and ventilation, heat, humidity, water, nutrients, light, insects, disease, and snoopy neighbors. Controlling all of these factors can be expensive and very time consuming. True you can harvest a crop every 6 to 8 weeks, but it is still easier to grow outdoors. Oh yes, if the police come and raid your indoor marijuana garden, they normally take all of your expensive equipment along with your crop.

The next thing to do is read about growing indoors and outdoors. Talk to as many different indoor and outdoor growers as you can find. The more successful they are, the better. Ask them how much work it is to grow and how successful they are. Growing a garden indoors can become very complex. When mistakes are made, plants grow slow or die. Remember, indoors, you must become Mother Nature.

Revista Cáñamo: -- Seed companies offer indica-based and sativa-based varieties. Which are most interesting to an indoor cultivator?

Jorge: That depends upon the desires and tastes of the indoor grower. I remember one grower that lived in an apartment. He grew a beautiful 6-foot-tall Thai plant in a large ornamental container. He would trim off leaves and small buds during the entire 3-month flowering cycle. He wanted the plant as an ornamental conversation piece.

Money is the motive of many marijuana grower's. For these commercial growers, I recommend indica/sativa crosses where the indica characteristics of heavy, dense buds, short, squat, bushy growth, high THC content, and 6 – 8-week flowering period. Plants with these characteristics are the most productive for commercial growers.

If money is not your motive, there are many varieties to select from. Check out Dutch seed catalogs, there are several in Spanish, but most of them are in English, Dutch or German. As I said before, I love the sativa high, so sativas are more interesting to me. I remember the first time I smoked my all time favorite, the famous Thai sativa 'Haze'. It was grown indoors the original Seed Bank in Holland, which was bought out by Sensi Seed. The soaring high was exceptional. The only problem was, it took two or three times longer to mature than an indica variety.

Breeders have crossed sativa varieties with indicas to overcome limitations of both varieties. To make the 'Haze' flower sooner, breeders crossed it with 'Northern Lights'. The resulting hybrid has characteristics of both plants. Years of selective breeding yields a cross that finishes flowering in 8 to 10 weeks. Indica/sativa crosses yield such varieties as 'Northern Lights x Haze', 'Big Bud', 'Skunk #1' and many more.

Revista Cáñamo: -- Bottom line, what are the indispensable items that must be purchased to habilitate a successful grow room, as opposed to those which can be built, recycled or otherwise obtained free of cost?

Jorge: First and foremost, you need information. Not hear-say information or bits and pieces from a menagerie of magazine articles, but a complete set of tried-and-true instructions. Of course, I recommend *Indoor Marijuana Horticulture!* There are also other books out there that offer similar information, I just can't think of any names now!

Next you need a light, just like you need sunlight. Just any light will not do. You can use either metal halide or high-pressure sodium lamps. The most common lamps to use are the 400-, 430- or 1000-watt HP sodium lamps or the 400- or 1000-watt super metal halide lamps. Then you must have a good reflective hood for the lamp. European growers are fond of Phillips or PL agricultural lighting fixtures. Both brands provide a good value.

You must completely control the climate. In warm climates, this can be a challenge. Spain presents special challenges with the warm climate, especially in the south. This means that you must have a thermostat/humidistat attached to a vent fan to evacuate the hot/moist air out of the grow room. Next you must have fast-draining, fertile potting soil or a good hydroponic system. Hydroponic systems are a subject that would take more time than we have in this interview to explain.

Seeds are very important too. Without the proper seeds, you are wasting your time. Make sure to get seeds from a reputable supplier before investing money to set up an indoor grow room. Ask the seed company representative for advice on seed selection.

Revista Cádiz: -- The use of growing lamps can lead to a noticeable increase in electric bills and draw unwanted attention. How can this be offset or reduced? Is a good grow room easily detectable?

Jorge: You can have the best of both worlds when you combine both indoor and outdoor growing techniques especially when you grow clones. For example, when you find a desirable female plant, you can take clones of this female. Once the clones are rooted, you can transplant them outdoors. These clones are from a female plant and guaranteed to be female. This is one simple benefit.

Normally, if you plant 100 seeds, 50 of them will be female and 50 will be male. You can use lights and clones to tell the males from the females early in life. Another scenario is take two clones of each of the plants you are growing. Make sure to label each clone and corresponding parent. These clones are rooted under 12 hours of fluorescent light. Marijuana will flower when you give it 12 hours of light and 12 hours of darkness. Within two weeks the little clones will show their sex, male or female. Once the males show their sex, they are weeded out. This technique is especially productive when your growing space is limited.

Another scenario is to start female cuttings on December first indoors. They will root in about two weeks and can be grown indoors under 18 hours of High Intensity Discharge (HID) light to promote vegetative growth. Grow them in pots indoors under light until

mid February, when they are set outdoors in a very sunny location. The short February days will initiate flowering within two or three weeks. Flowering is completed and plants are ready to harvest during the first or second week of April. I love this technique for growing an early spring crop. Believe me you will be very popular among your friends.

Revista Cádiz: -- You have recently finished a new manual, which may appear soon in Spanish translation. Has a lot changed since you wrote *Indoor Marijuana Horticulture*?

Jorge: Plants evolved over the millennia. They still grow the same today as they did 100 years ago. I think that many people forget this simple truth. I see many people that have little growing experience trying to change the way plants grow. They must master the basics first. The basic needs of plants have not changed for hundreds of thousands of years. Now there are many more products on the market and this industry is much bigger than it was 15 years ago when *Indoor Marijuana Horticulture* was published. I read many garden magazines every month to keep informed about the changes. There are many new HID lamps available now that were not invented 5 or 10 years ago. One new lamp, the 600-watt HP sodium, is my personal favorite because it is the most efficient on the market. HID lamps are rated on their lumen-per-watt conversion ratio. Until the invention of the 600-watt HPS, the highest lumen-per-watt conversion was 140. This means for every watt of electricity consumed, 140 lumens of light are produced. The 600-watt HPS produces 150 lumens-per-watt, or about 7 percent more lumens per watt of electricity. That's big news.

There are the new reflective hoods that reflect more light than old hoods. This is more of an issue in North America than in Europe because European reflectors have been more efficient for many years.

I could ramble on and on about the changes in the industry. It could take hours. To me, the major changes are in lighting and hydroponic technology becoming more widespread and affordable. I do want to caution people to be wary of products that sound too good to be true.

Revista Cádiz: -- **How would you describe the general state of the cannabis culture in your new homeland, Canada?**

Jorge: I recently moved to Vancouver, BC, which is *the* place in North America for marijuana. I know I'll get flack for this answer, what the hell! I think the best marijuana is grown in BC. The reason is simple. Growing is tolerated in BC; there are lots of knowledgeable growers that are able to help each other out. There are several seed companies, including Marc Emery Direct Seed sales. Marc is the owner Hemp BC, The Little Grow Shop and publisher of Cannabis Canada Magazine. He has been selling quality seeds for more than two years. Before Marc began challenging the law, you could not buy marijuana books in Canada, in fact marijuana book publishers were jailed just 20 years ago in Canada!

I am looking forward to major changes in the laws here in Canada within the next 5 years. They are more realistic here than they are in the United States. Our neighbor to the south blames all societies troubles on marijuana and other illegal drugs. In Canada, they tend to look at marijuana for what it is, a substance that gets you high and makes you fall asleep if you consume too much. Canadians understand there are many social issues and actual crimes that are much more important than the prohibition of cannabis.

Revista C a amo: -- Is there any nugget of wisdom that your years of experience has afforded you about marihuana & the art of its cultivation? Are you optimistic about the future of cannabis in general?

Of course, “Contra la prohibicion, me planto!”