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by Dana Larsen (18 Aug, 2000)

Our readers report back on the Australian Bastard Cannabis.



ABC is a strange looking plant [Frank]

[All photos by [Frank](#) and [Ras_Z](#)]

Last year while in Australia I was introduced to a strange strain of pot which we dubbed Australian Bastard Cannabis (ABC) (see CC#19, [Growing Down Under](#)). This unique variety does not exhibit many of cannabis' typical traits, so much so that even an experienced grower might not notice if he passed by this strain in the wild.

The ABC leaf structure is quite different than regular cannabis. There are no fan leaves, all leaves are quite small with an irregular distribution of stamens. The plant grows more like a shrub, without the typical candelabra shape of most cannabis.

Mr Ayers, who introduced me to the ABC, told me that it was a



very hardy strain, resisting frosts which had killed Flo and Skunk plants, even withstanding direct snowfall.

Unfortunately, the ABC does not provide a potent smoke, and although hash screened from the buds does give a decent buzz, it is higher in less pleasant cannabinoids than THC, like CBD and CBN.

I brought back a goodly supply of ABC seeds from my last trip, as well as ABC x Flo. We gave them away to subscribers and others, to encourage breeding and development of this strange strain. Ideally, a new strain could be developed which combined the camouflage look of the ABC with the potency of Flo.



Immature ABC bud close-up [Frank]



The strange leaf pattern of ABC [Frank]

Since then I have received a great deal of feedback from growers who have worked with these seeds. A few readers have posted excellent photos of their young ABC plants on our website, which we've reproduced here for your enlightenment.

Early on we received a letter from an Aussie named Ketra Hybud, who said he had seen the strange strain before. "In the Eastern fall country of Northern NSW it is known as Mutant," explains Hybud. "Stories and rumours have it as a colchicine polyploid experiment gone wrong. Another bloke told me it was from a pot branch grafted onto a hop bush and seeded naturally. Who knows?"

Well, it's not possible for it to be a pot/hop graft, for although those two plants can be grafted together, that doesn't alter the genetic



structure and wouldn't produce mutant seeds. But colchicine does produce strange polyploid mutagenic effects, and so could possibly explain the plant's odd leaf structure and characteristics.

Ketra went onto to say "Goddamn it is a hardy strain! I have seen headed plants with sleet snow on them and they didn't flinch! No death or ice burn. But when you cross a Mutant with a normal plant 99% of the time you will lose the unique leaf pattern."



Does this look like pot to you? [Frank]

Of the many ABC x Flo crosses which we distributed, I know of only one which retained the ABC look. While in Nimbin, I met a breeder who had been experimenting with the ABC x Flo seeds. She had grown out a selection of the crosses, and had found that all of them had turned out looking like Flo, except one. I encouraged her to use this plant to do further breeding with, and to determine if it smoked better than the straight ABC.



This breeder also told me that she found the other ABC x Flo plants, which had the Flo appearance and potency, nevertheless seemed hardier than the straight Flo, indicating that some of the ABC toughness had been passed on to the cross.

Another fellow emailed me to suggest that the ABC may be a "land race" strain, which he dubbed Cannabis Australis. He discussed the possibility of it being an inbred stabilized polyploid strain, quoting Canadian cannabis researcher Ernest Small, who wrote in 1975 that "...if a polyploid race became widely established geographically, there might be a basis for giving it taxonomic recognition."

He also speculated about the legal ramifications of this "new plant" possibly not being covered under current anti-pot laws. Unfortunately, courtroom strategies involving differences between Sativa and Indica strains have always proven fruitless.

Since almost all of the ABC x Flo crosses have looked like Flo, I'd expect that crossing the ABC x Flo with ABC would be the place to start in looking for plants which combined the ABC leaf structure with the Flo pot quality. Crossing the ABC x Flo among themselves could also be productive, as it is in the second generation (the f2) that recessive traits like the odd leaf structure will often reappear.



ABC at 60 days, profile [Ras_Z]



ABC at 60 days [Ras_Z]

Please keep us informed about your experiments, and send your ABC pictures if you have any. Happy breeding! 🍀

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