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by Joe Walsh (19 Sept, 2006)

Growing in the bush requires a lot of planning, and here's howto harvest properly

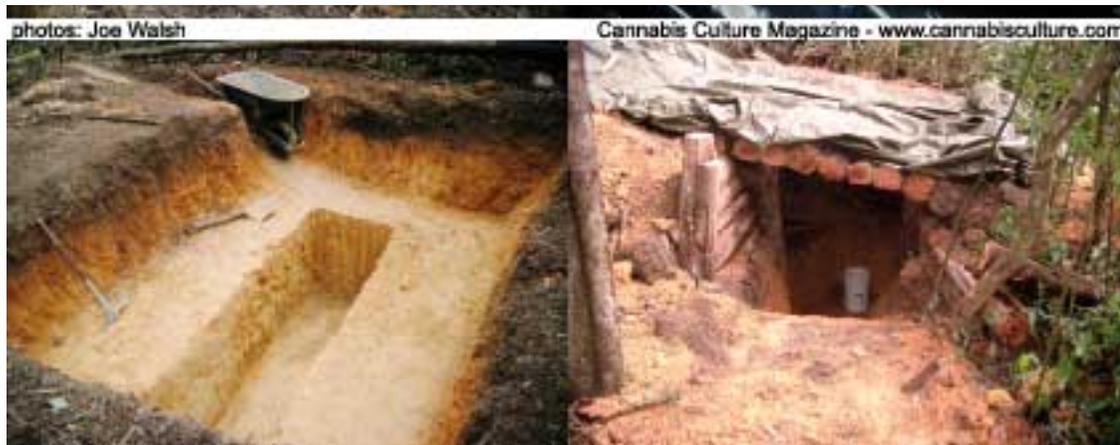


By Joe Walsh



photos: Joe Walsh





When you are growing guerilla jungle style you must be set up to process everything in the forest, only taking out finished product or dried bud ready for manicuring. Harvesting should be straightforward, yet I have seen so many people do it the wrong way, making life harder later on. As one plant can have up to ten larger-sized branches on it, the more the plant is disturbed

during harvest, the more damage you do. The very best way is to cut the plants as low to the ground as possible. Many people cut the branches off individually but all that does is increase the amount of work you have to do later. By cutting off the main stems and laying the entire plants on top of each other, you reduce the disruption of the resin heads. Remember, every time you touch your plants, you are losing and damaging the most valuable part: the trichomes!

What I didn't do the first season was build myself a drying shed. As I recounted, that lack of planning was disastrous. When you have a drying shed on-site, you take the heaps of harvested pot inside the shed and hang the plants up by strings or rope. If the plant is big, cut off the top half of it and hang the two parts of the plant separately. You will find the larger branches provide adequate strength to support the weight of the plant. As the drying process almost instantly reduces weight, the plants will break either straight away or not at all.



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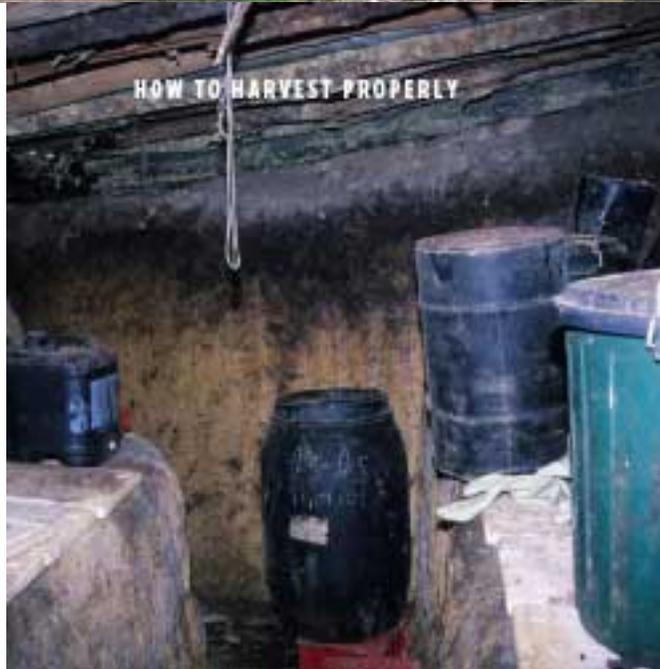


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I made my first drying shed with a timber frame and covered the walls and roof in heavy-duty black builders plastic. In the event of heavy rain the plants were protected, and during the day the sides could be lifted to let the cool breeze reach the plants, drying them as it went. With this method, I could get 50 pounds (22 kg) of dry weight in 14 days. I had to be careful not to pull the plants down too soon—act too early and mold can still break out in your buds. Ideally, the pot should be left in total darkness for the whole time of curing, and as cool as possible as heat destroys the THC.

The following season I developed a method that for my purposes was perfect. It required money but by that stage I had it. I excavated the earth

creating an underground shed to house a small generator that provided me with ample electricity for my growing compound's communications and lighting (as described and pictured in CC #60). I had to shovel big holes and it was



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backbreaking work, but being underground muffled the sound of the generator. It's the only way to have a generator operate outdoors—it's got to be quiet and stealth. Sound travels in the forest.



photos: Joe Walsh

I had also brought in a large generator to make the drying shed more efficient. I ran standard 6-inch diameter clothing dryer ducting from the generator shed into the drying shed, with another length of ducting carrying the cool moist air from the drying shed back to the generator so it could pump a constant stream of warm dry air to the harvested plants. The generator had electric lines going to a heap of power outlets that connected industrial fans, inline fans, de-humidifiers and three fluorescent lights controlled by a switch.



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With this set-up, hot dry air would be sucked into the drying shed, circulated by the big industrial fans. The de-humidifiers would remove moisture from the shed and then the cool air was sucked back into the generator shed, to repeat the process. With the generator going 24 hours a day—only stopping the machine to clear vapor locks from the fuel lines, and to change oil every 12 hours—I could dry 50 pounds in three days, single-handedly drying the entire crop (about 300



pounds dry, which started at around 3,000 pounds of wet bud) without any help at all. When it was time to carry out the finished product, I put

the buds into chaff bags, tied the tops, and then wrapped them in industrial cling wrap. They could be stored like this for weeks or months. I found that leaving them in the bags for a few weeks tended to make the quality a little better.



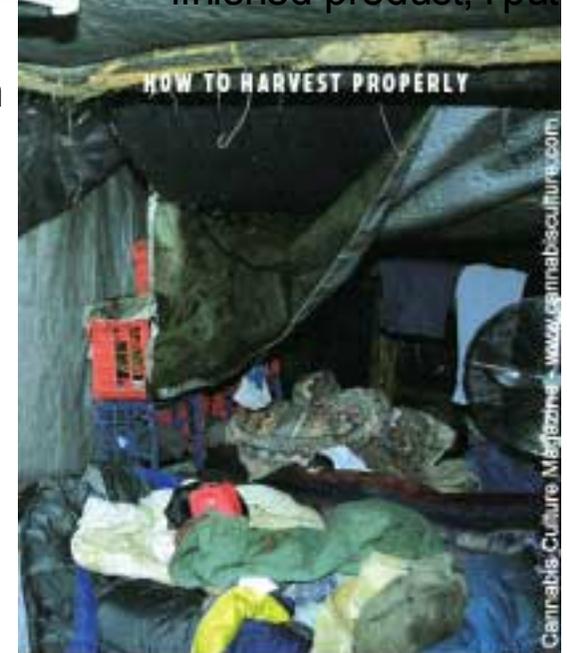
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What I would do with my next crop is process the shake—as I had had over 2,000 pounds of it—with the 20-gallon Bubblebag® ice-cold extraction system. I have seen this at work on-site



photos: Joe Walsh





in the Canadian outback, and although the plant material was fresh (it's better to be dry for the Bubblebags®), it is still a very efficient and very flexible method for fresh-cut trim. Pot damaged by mold is redeemed in some small way when put in the ice-cold extraction bags, because mold is rendered harmless and is separated from the trichomes through this method. I used to be very partial to making extracted THC oil using solvents, but the ice cold water extraction method is so convenient, fast, safe and clean as to be unbeatable, and the product is very quickly turned over as the demand for bubble-hash is great, and supplies are always scarce.



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I learned from my first season growing in the bush that there are huge losses involved in poor planning. I was able to stay anonymous, and successful, within the bush for the second season even though it often rained heavily in the final weeks. Learn from my



experiences and next season you can do as I did, scaling harvesting requirements to your ability, and curing your cannabis to a perfect smoke.



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