

EIDINGER WITH ONE OF HIS HOME-GROWN PLANTS, A PREDOMINANTLY AUTO-FLOWERING HYBRID, ABOUT THREE MONTHS OLD.



ADAM EIDINGER

ACTIVISM IN THE CAPITAL

In 2014, Initiative 71 legalized possession of Cannabis in small amounts and allowed home cultivation for up to three plants in the District of Columbia. It allowed sharing, but not sales. Adam Eiding, one of the activists who raised money, spent his own money, helped write and get 71 on the ballot, calls the initiative “Legalization 1.0,” or legalization without commercialization. The next step, Legalization 2.0, will allow sales, and, he hopes, a thriving home-cultivation movement as well as decarceration for what he calls “marijuana prisoners.” He’s the social action director for Dr. Bronner’s Magic Soaps, where he started in 2001 as a public affairs manager, and he co-founded DCMJ, a Cannabis rights nonprofit. He’s a publicist for the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS), and is working on a Cannabis decriminalization initiative for 2020. Lately he’s flexed his political muscle by working on the \$15/hour minimum wage movement in the District, and he’s putting his weight behind campaigns to oust two policymakers who are thorns in the Cannabis-movement side: Jack Evans, councilmember for Ward 2 in the District, and US Representative Andy Harris, from Maryland’s Eastern Shore. (Rep. Harris was re-elected in 2018, but Eiding is undeterred; “Harris is a six-year project,” he says.) He’s working on about a dozen projects at once, all of which excite him.

WHAT’S YOUR NEWEST PROJECT?

I’m developing a new marijuana product with David Bronner [CEO of Dr. Bronner’s Magic Soaps], who I’ve worked with for many years. It’s called Brother David’s. It’s Emerald Triangle, California, sun-grown, outdoor-grown Cannabis. And 100 percent of the profits will go to charity, kind of like Newman’s Own. We’re looking at it as a national brand. We’re going to talk about it everywhere, even though it can only be sold in California. It’s an ethical brand that’s so broad it has labor standards. We’re launching on 4/22, on Earth Day, and it’s Sun + Earth certified. We’re motivated by, first of all, saving the planet.

WHAT’S SO EXCITING ABOUT SUN + EARTH CERTIFICATION?

Currently, we have a couple different certifications [for Cannabis] that use organic standards, for example, Clean Green Certified is very widely seen. But that doesn’t certify whether it was grown in the sun. The consumer is not being exposed to harmful pesticides, and the plant was grown in organic nutrients [which is great]—but it could have been grown [in warehouses] under nuclear power, coal power. And I’ve seen many greenhouses where the plants are not in the ground, they’re actually sitting on top of plastic inside of a pot. So you have to bring all the inputs from somewhere else, which is not sustainable. So there’s nothing regenerative about it. Sun + Earth Certification is the only certification that looks at the holistic situation, not just if you are growing organically. Anyone can do that. But do you actually have contracts with your farm workers? We want to see them. A lot of these farms do what’s called polyface farming. We’re trying to produce Cannabis that Michael Pollan can be proud of.

WHAT DON’T YOU LIKE ABOUT THE CURRENT MODEL OF GROWING?

What’s being done in conventional agriculture is literally putting dioxins on the plant that will be smoked, and then you get carcinogenic smoke from your plant ... and so we’re taking this non-carcinogenic plant and then it’s becoming carcinogenic. On the nutrients side of things, you



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can have organic hydroponics, they’re pretty cool, very efficient with water. Really, if you’re on Mars, I think it’s great stuff. But the Emerald Triangle [California]? I mean, it’s beautiful. It’s a paradise to grow Cannabis in. And the Pacific Northwest has some of the ideal best climate for growing rich, complex, flavored Cannabis. And with the temperature fluctuations, you get amazing colors. Growing anything in a sterile environment [such as a warehouse] really kind of freaks me out, because they have to sterilize an indoor cultivation facility. They use bleach to sterilize the place.

WHY IS HOMEGROWN CULTIVATION IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Growing at home is pure empowerment and should provide lawful supplemental income. There’s a shortage of Cannabis in DC until we get interstate commerce. DC will not be able to grow enough Cannabis to meet the demand. And so what we’re proposing is a simple registration for home cultivators, essentially saying, look, you got to get the DC Council to let the home growers sell their Cannabis, there should be a way to have a farmers market for home growers in DC, we should merge it with the existing farmers markets.

DO YOU THINK MARYLAND WILL LEGALIZE RECREATIONAL CANNABIS?

Maryland is stuck. They should have never passed that [medical] legislation. Now there are huge lobbies to not have legal adult sales unless it’s medical dispensaries.

WHAT’S YOUR LONG-TERM VISION FOR CANNABIS?

If you were to legalize it, you’d be able to buy it in any store. You know, John Mackey [co-founder and CEO of Whole Foods] wants Cannabis in Whole Foods. And you know what? I do, too. And I think Brother David’s, or Humboldt’s Finest, which is a great brand ... I think these brands should be available everywhere in America. And if you grow Cannabis in Kentucky, you should be able to say, This is Kentucky-grown Cannabis. And if you grow in California, you should be able to sell it everywhere.