

GETTIN' RIGGY WITH IT — MAINE'S HOTTEST TRIO | P. 27

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ISSUE 032

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A MAGAZINE WITH A TASTE

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2024 GIFT GUIDE

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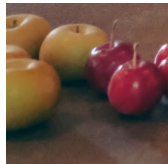
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2024 GIFT GUIDE

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Please don't tell us you're thinking of holiday shopping online? Disaster. Sam Pfeifle has been scouting local options so you don't have to.



TASTE THE SPECTRUM

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Think cider stops at 'apple'? Think again. Becca Abramson learns a bushel about the process and varieties at Apres and Absolem.



CLOVE CONQUERS ALL

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If you're into growing things for personal consumption, garlic is as easy as it gets. Daniel Padell has everything you need to know for four-season enjoyment.



WTF IS A KAVA BAR?

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If you're looking for a light buzz that won't hurt you, kava might be your best bet. Cyndle Plaisted Rials heads over to the brand-new Lava Kava to investigate.



GETTIN' RIGGY WITH IT

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Wondering what all the fuss is about with Rigometrics? Frank Gallagher talks to the band and local luminaries to figure it out.

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YOU'VE GOT A FEW THINGS TO DO



AS WE MOVE INTO OUR SECOND ISSUE OF THE NEW BEER & WEED REGIME, WE'RE STARTING TO GET OUR SEA LEGS A LITTLE BIT. THIS WHOLE TAKING-OVER-A-MAGAZINE AND NEVER-DOING-PRINT-BEFORE THING IS A LITTLE CRAZY, BUT I'D LIKE TO THINK THAT WE'RE TACKLING THIS HEAD ON WITH WHAT WE'RE ABLE TO GIVE. WE'RE WORKING HARD ON

LAUNCHING THE ONLINE VERSION OF THE MAGAZINE SO THAT OUR CONTENT CAN LIVE ON IN THE UNIVERSE AFTER EACH ISSUE IN AT LEAST SOME CAPACITY. SPEAKING OF THE WEBSITE: WE WANT YOUR EVENTS!

We are creating a hub for event listings in Maine that circle around beer, weed, and the beyond, and we'd love to highlight whatever you've got going on, whether it's a celebration of a new can release or a band playing at the brewery, an in-store appearance or a yoga class at the dispensary. Please submit your events via www.beerandweed.com. As we relaunch — we want to do our part in spreading the good word and building community.

As for that community — thank you to everyone who attended our relaunch party back in the beginning of October! Thank you to Maine Women's Connection, Spouse, Oystah Guy, Dave Gutter, John Duncan, Wynk, Hilltop Superette, Eighty Eight Donuts, and many others for your support in helping us have a memorable event at Oxbow's Portland location. What a great time! We are looking forward to doing one or two events a year and want to collaborate with everyone. Please reach out to us via our contact information in the magazine or on our website if you've got a great idea for something fun that you think we can help promote.

Oh, yeah, this is supposed to be an editor's note, not a laundry list of things I want you to do. I'm not too sure

if there are any rules with these notes, so please excuse my ADHD-ridden ramblings as I sit at Bard Coffee here in Portland. I'm currently enjoying the PSL, a drink that I think most agree should be available all year round, after enjoying a pre-roll I picked up at Skunk Circus in Raymond. If you want some high-quality weed from some really knowledgeable people, I highly suggest you make the trip over there.

I think they are onto something with their focus on high-quality weed in a storefront, a niche that needs to be filled here in Maine.



We want to do our part in spreading the good word and building community

This month's issue is an eclectic mix of articles I feel, compared to our last issue, a much better variety. We try to touch on all topics in beer, weed, cider, and music. We're introducing a new feature with this issue, too, that we will have in each issue, which highlights a band or artist from New England and beyond. We hope to expand on what we cover — both in content and in geography — as we grow the magazine with this new team behind it.

We also want to know if there is anything you want us to cover, too. Please reach out! (There I am again, telling you what to do...)

Say Hello! cody@beerandweed.com



WORDS / CODY DELONG
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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&
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Rigometrics EP "Elodie" is out Now!

Rigometrics releases an absolutely rocking four-song EP, "Elodie", to all streaming platforms on November 8th.

The rock & roll trio had the opportunity to work with Maine's best to bring this body of work to life. Matt Perry as their main producer, Dave Gutter as a creative advisor, Jon Wyman as mixing engineer, and Adam Ayan to top it off for mastering.

THIS JUST IN

OMP RECALLS MOLDY WEED

For the second time in 2024, Maine's Office of Cannabis Policy issued a product recall based on failed testing results. This time around, it was Massachusetts-based Nova Farms failing tests for yeast, mold, and microbes with products containing their Frosted Cookies strain. Products were sold with potentially contaminated weed at 14 different stores throughout Maine, from Nova's shop in Greenville to Columbia Recreational Marijuana in Columbia, which is apparently a town in Maine. There are 450 people there, right between Winter Harbor and Machias.

We gotta say, though, that the recall went out first on Oct. 11 and then on Oct. 24 for products sold between Sept. 17 and Oct. 8. Does anyone still have the pre-rolls they bought on Sept. 17 when Oct. 11 rolls around? Oct. 24? We're thinking not. Also, pre-rolls and flower were sold under the brand-name Midz.

THIS BEER IS FOR THE FISHES



What do you do when you used to be a lobsterman and now you own a brewery? Well, if you're Maddie Daughtry (who's also done some political stuff), your Moderation Brewing Company teams up with the Maine Coast Fisherman's Association and releases Hook, Line, and Lager, an easy drinker with 15% of proceeds going toward the MCFA, which works to help out fishermen and revitalize Maine fisheries.

It's a hyper-local concoction, with malts from Blue Ox in Lisbon and nugget hops from the Hopyard in Gorham, and they'll have it not only on tap in Moderation's Brunswick taphouse, but also in cans at a number of seafood spots, like Freeport Oyster Bar and Luke's Lobster in Portland.

As long as they keep the fish out of the beer, we say more power to them.

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NEW BEER FOR SOCCER FANS

You've heard Portland is getting a professional soccer team, right? Indeed, they're calling themselves Hearts of Pine — no, that's really the name — and they'll kick off their first game in the United Soccer League League One (or USL League One, we guess) in March of 2025. They'll play in Fitzpatrick Stadium, which some people are kinda mad about, and their supporters will wear scarves and do lots of chanting, we're fairly certain.

Also, since not much happens in a soccer game, supporters tend to drink lots of beer during matches, so Bissell Brothers has stepped up to give them something to do: The Hearts of Pine Pale Ale, a 5.2%, straightforward brew. And, yes, there are already scarves out there with the Bissell logo on one end and the Hearts of Pine logo on the other.

Fine. Whatever. Come on you Hearts!

MADISON VOTERS APPROVE MEDICAL-ONLY RETAIL

After approving retail sales at the ballot box in June, and instructing the Select Board to figure out an ordinance, Madison voters at a special town meeting in October approved rules that will allow for three medical-cannabis shops within town lines. That can't be within 1,000 feet of dedicated "safe zones," however, like parks.

Oddly, however, there are already five medical-cannabis shops in Madison, including one that's in a safe zone. What gives? Apparently an ordinance passed in June 2018 didn't actually allow for medical shops, meaning all the shops in town were operating illegally. Oops. Luckily, instead of closing them and hassling people, they grandfathered everyone in — if someone should close, their license won't be replaced.

The new rules passed 54-12. Madison requires at least 50 voters for town meetings to be legit.

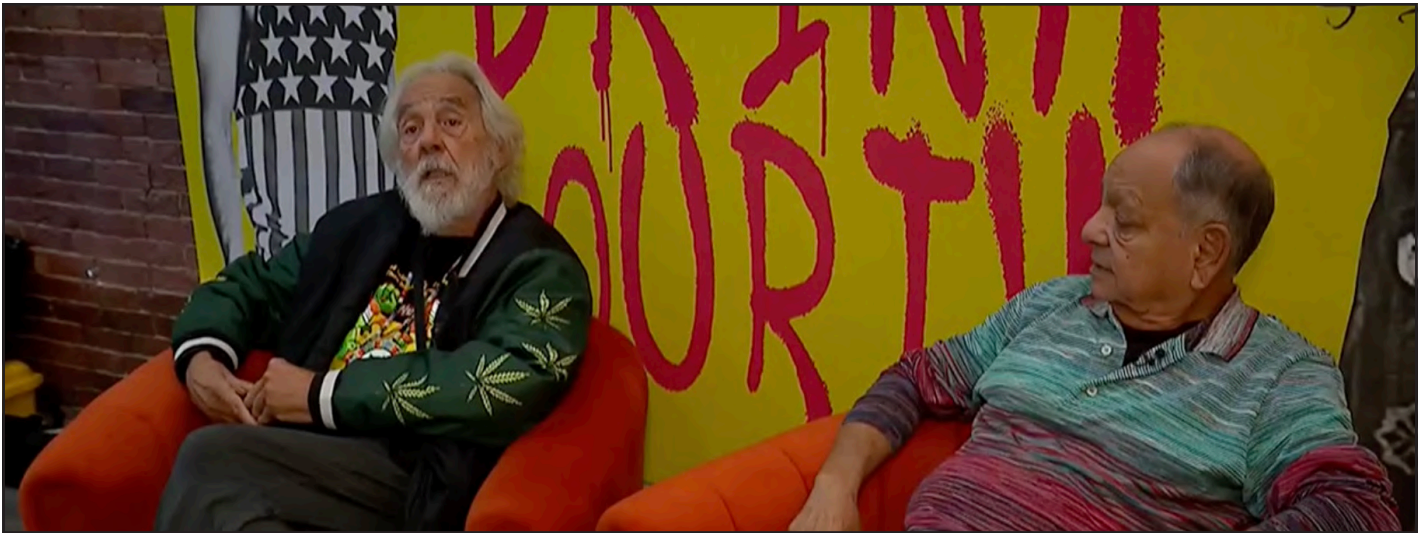


CBD MURDERS MOSQUITOS

While kind bud often leads to feelings of love and care for one's fellow man, we can probably all agree that mosquitos engender a general animosity. So perhaps we can all rejoice in the news that researchers from Ohio State University have found that CBD kills them dead.

That's right: In a study published in *Insects* magazine, researchers show that applying concentrated CBD (they smashed up hemp leaves and soaked them in methanol) to yellow fever mosquito larvae kills them dead within 48 hours.

And we know, ha, ha, can they do black flies next?, but this is a potentially big deal, as mosquitos are the world's deadliest animal — the list of diseases they carry is long — and CBD could be much less harmful than the insecticides currently being used. Researchers will study what CBD does to pollinators and other insects next, to make sure that killing mosquitoes doesn't also wipe out friendly bugs.



CHEECH AND CHONG COME TO MAINE

Maine has already seen celebrity cannabis business owners like Jim Belushi and Big Papi, but perhaps no celebrities are more associated with weed than comedians Cheech Marin and Tommy Chong, who came to Portland in October to celebrate the opening of Cheech & Chong's Dispensoria on Exchange Street, right next to where Starbucks used to be.

The pair gave away custom-designed signed posters, sat on a couch, and generally hung out and chatted with fans who pre-registered for a free event. This is the pair's sixth dispensary in the United States; they have three already in Massachusetts. You can also get their branded cannabis products at East Coast Gold in Bangor.

Of course, they didn't smoke any weed with fans because Maine still won't allow on-site consumption, or consumption in public, so everyone has to hide out and smoke in their homes.

BLUE OX GROWS UP

Not only is Blue Ox malt being used in that fisherman's beer by Moderation, it's being used by lots and lots of breweries. So many, in fact, that Blue Ox Malthouse in Lisbon recently expanded to a full 20,000 square feet, making its facility the largest floor malting operation anywhere in the world, other than Europe. That's big!



According to a press release, Blue Ox will now be able to create malt with a larger diversity of grains, from barley to wheat to rye to triticale to oats, plus smoked and roasted products, for richer and more interesting flavors in your beer. Maine Department of Agriculture Commissioner Amanda Beal called the news, "an opportunity for the growth of our grain sector." Lisbon Council Chair Harry Moore Jr. noted that, "projects like this one, which not only enhance traditional processes with modern equipment but also focus on sustainability and support for local farmers, are key to the development of communities throughout Maine."

We also like the idea of somebody asking, "but isn't Lisbon actually in Europe?"

HOW TO GIFT MAINE BEERS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



AS A BEER COLUMNIST, I MAY BE BIASED, BUT I LOVE GETTING BEER AS A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FROM MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY, ESPECIALLY IF THEY'RE COMING TO VISIT FROM A FAR-FLUNG LOCALE. WELL, WITHIN REASON, I SUPPOSE. I DON'T SEE MANY FOLKS HOPPING ON INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

WITH FOUR PACKS STASHED IN THEIR CHECKED BAGS (BONUS POINTS FOR YOU IF YOU HAVE), BUT IF YOU'RE IN DRIVING DISTANCE, YOU'RE IN BEER-GIFTING DISTANCE, IN MY ESTIMATION.

Especially during the holidays, though, when you're reconnecting with loved ones you may not have seen since the last merry season, beer can be extra meaningful. When someone picks you up a four pack from their favorite local brewery and shares it with you, they're giving you more than just the drink as a gift. They're sharing an experience, a memory, and, if you get the chance to share your gift together, an opportunity to connect.

Gifts beer — like giving gifts in general — is something of an art. I have gifted and received many beers in my day, and have learned a thing or two along the way.

Before you buy, make sure beer is an appropriate gift for the person you're gifting it to. People can have multiple reasons for not wanting to receive beer as a gift. They could be sober-curious, or live with or celebrate Christmas with someone who is struggling with alcohol use. The timing and context of the gift exchange also matters; some folks may have strong feelings about receiving alcohol at family present exchanges, so use your best judgment.

Or, frankly, your giftee just may not like beer. That, I will never understand (the prior reasons are perfectly valid ones, and should be respected), but regardless, there is nothing quite so terrible as giving someone a gift they don't want to receive.

Now, if you know that your giftee loves beer, or is at least beer curious, there are a few things to keep in mind as you do your holiday shopping. Think about what type of beer

they like. If they have a social beer rating profile like BeerAdvocate or Untappd, you're in luck; scroll through and see what types of beers they normally rank highest to determine whether you'll get them a blonde ale, a brown ale, or whatever in between.

If you're going in without the data, think about what you've seen them drink or enjoy, or their taste in general. If they like bitter and spicy food, maybe go for something hoppy. If they like malty, toasty flavors, try an amber. If they can't get enough chocolate, go for a stout.

(A note: If you're gifting a beer to a vegan, make super extra sure that it doesn't contain any lactose or honey. I've had more than one beer gift foiled this way.)

Now, I'm not usually one to judge a book by its cover, but I am also a big fan of gag gifts. If you find a beer with a funny name, perhaps one that references an inside joke, or a label that you just can't resist, that may trump the general considerations of taste and preferences. I personally can't resist a beer named something like Disco Sasquatch (hilarious on its face) or Girl's Cabin (I have a former bachelorette who would laugh out loud at receiving this one), both from Bangor Beer Company.

Make sure you're purchasing fresh beer, too. Some beers age better than others, but check the dates on the packaging regardless. Most beers stay good for two to three years after their canned date if they've been kept in the fridge, but that timeframe tops out at nine months if they haven't been refrigerated.

Don't turn your nose up at a holiday release. Not only will those beers be guaranteed fresh, but they can also have fun and interesting flavors that even beer connoisseurs haven't tried. Does your giftee love Mast Landing's Gunner's Daughter, for example? In past holiday seasons, the brewery has released mint chocolate imperial stouts that make for a fun variation on that candy-inspired dessert beer theme.

Of course, shop local. Not only will this better guarantee the freshness of the product you're gifting, but it will also

FIRST PERSON : SAM SAMPLES

make the gift feel that much more special if it comes from a place that is significant to the both of you, or that the giftee can't easily purchase at their local grocery store. Plus, those extra dollars during the holiday season mean a lot to brewers looking to keep the lights on in their establishments.

When it comes to wrapping, I'm partial to keeping it simple. Stick a color-coordinated bow on the four-pack, and let the packaging act like its own wrapper. You could even consider purchasing a growler of a local beer if you know your giftee is hosting an event where a big jug of beer will come in handy (beer lasts for 24 to 36 hours after opening in a growler). A growler makes a fun keepsake in and of itself.

But what if your friend is even more of a craft beer connoisseur than you? What if you are too intimidated of getting them the wrong thing to get them anything at all?

Enter the Mug Club. If you know what local brewery the craft beer aficionado in your life most likes to frequent, consider purchasing them a subscription to that brewery's mug club, if it has one. Mug clubs usually have some incentive, like a larger pour of beer or even a free beer on the house on your birthday. Sometimes they also come with even quirkier perks; my friends recently gifted a lifetime mug club membership at Two Feet Brewing in Bangor, and that comes with a customized baseball jersey. The cost will vary on mug clubs, but generally range from \$50 to \$150, and can span in time from a year to a lifetime. Make sure you ask about the stipulations of the membership, and pass that information along to the giftee.

My last piece of advice: Why not grab some merch while you're at it? Many craft breweries are merch masters, and aside from making a great gift, having someone wear their wares helps spread the word about their great brews. For me, the quirkier, the better; one of my most prized possessions is a T-shirt from First Mile Brewing in Fort Kent celebrating one of their limited-release summer beers that says, "Pucker Up for a Delicious Motherpucker." 10/10, no notes.

Here's an idea you can have for free: a beer-only Yankee Swap with all your craft beer buds. And you all enjoy the brews together at the end of the gift exchange. Everyone brings a salty snack, maybe some chocolatey desserts for the grand finale of porters and stouts. You're welcome, and happy holidays.



WORDS & IMAGES / SAM SCHIPANI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

LET'S STAY TOGETHER

A QUICK SMOKE BEFORE LEAVING ON TOUR

WORDS & IMAGES / MISS ROLLING STONER

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL TUESDAY MORNING IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA. I'M PREPARING TO GO ON A TOUR ACROSS THE U.S., AND I LEAVE TOMORROW. IF YOU'RE JUST MEETING ME, NICE TO MEET YOU! I'M MISS ROLLING STONER, A WEED JOURNALIST BY DAY, AND A POPSTAR BY NIGHT! LIKE CARRIE BRADSHAW, BUT INSTEAD OF MY SEX LIFE IN NYC, I'M WRITING TO YOU TODAY ABOUT CANNABIS AND MY FLOATING THOUGHTS, LIVE IN LOS ANGELES.

I'm just finishing up a few details on my setlist, outfits, packed bags, etc. Believe me when I tell you, I'm not typically a "wake and bake" kind of gal, but today calls for it. Through the mountains of logistics, and the anticipatory anxiety of what's to come, I need a little something to get me into an inspired, creative state as I sort through the chaos. As a baby stoner, I usually like to take just a few tokes from a good sativa to get me in the mood. Today, I reached for the Miss Grass Bloom + Play pre-roll pack, aka: "Fast Times"!



Miss Grass is one of those incredible brands with outstanding flower for a reasonable price point. Opening a fresh pack is like Christmas day, with an initial scent of juicy fruits, and notes of citrus and floral. I slide the box open,

noting the cute smaller box of matches they include in the first compartment, and slide my nose along the length of one of the .5g pre rolls. Inhaling with a smile, I pop the joint in my mouth and take a drag. Sweet and slightly citrus on the first toke, settling as a light gassy flavor on the exhale. Testing at 29%, this sativa-dominant-hybrid blend packs a punch! The onset of the high is a bit of bubbly lift off, and while it is a heady high, it's mainly a more saturated experience, in my opinion.

What do I mean by this? Well, in my world, saturation is the degree to which we experience our lives. For me, some days are more saturated than others, and cannabis definitely helps me find that color when I'm devoid of it. A nice sativa such as this one washes out the anxiety, and increases the vibrancy of my positive emotions. Reader beware, not all sativas are the same. This Miss Grass sativa blend in particular, is quite the delight.

It's going to be a really interesting month and a half, traveling the United States and singing in front of strangers every night. The familiar faces I am excited to see, and yet I'm terrified to let down. I haven't toured since last year, haven't played a show since this wonderful festival in Vermont back in August. Maybe that's where these jitters I'm trying to shake off are coming from. There's so much that goes into making a good show, and it's all hypotheticals until you can test it out in front of a crowd.

Picture this: I'm slightly stoned off this bodacious, yet light and soaring sativa, and I'm getting into the creative flow for my day (resisting the crash of a wake and bake, which I find to be an unfortunate side effect of the behavior) and I'm trying to figure out which album is going to accompany my high the best. It could go plenty of ways, from '80s synths to '90s slamming guitars to One Direction deep cuts. However, after much contemplation, even including a hot shower, and preparing a breakfast burrito, I've come to a warm, inviting, classic conclusion. Finally, I've settled into the 1972 classic "Let's Stay Together."

Al Green had hits on hits, including this record's title track

FIRST PERSON : MISS ROLLING STONER

and “How Can You Mend a Broken Heart.” This album is a great way to ring in the day, with warm, smoky, flowing instrumentals and melodies. Al’s voice sits in the middle of the sonics, forward yet mid-range. The bright percussion and background vocals sit lightly atop the full shape of the sound. Blasts of perky horns peak through, and smooth guitar plucks throughout pretty much every song. It sets the tone for the day to be yellow and vibrant, yet with that classic tape-recorded depth.

After about an hour or so, I’ve managed to get excited and organized about my day, and my high from my first three tokes has faded. I find myself reaching back out for that Bloom + Play J, needing a bit of a boost to pack up for my final dress rehearsal today. Now, as I’m gathering my costume pieces, packing it all up in one bag, and heading out into the LA city for one more full day before I’m gone for 20, I’m buzzing. I’m going to keep hitting this delightful little J as I dance about my day, because it truly doesn’t take much to get me high. A quick toke before I head into rehearsals with my drummer will help me get jazzed up and ready to party, even through my innate exhaustion. Another quick toke before I drive to hang out with some friends, and another one to eventually head home to finish

packing and have one final night in my room before I’m away for so long will smooth over any anxiety pending.

”

the thought of leaving for tour and the adventure of making music every night for new people is enough to get me high alone

I love my sativa, and I love Miss Grass, but to be honest, the thought of leaving for tour and the adventure of making music every night for new people is enough to get me high alone. Just the thought of screaming crowds, new people, amazing music, and endless hours in the car with my friends makes me smile uncontrollably. It does also spark a slight amount of anxiety in me, when I get too caught up in the logistics of the whole operation. Nothing that can’t be fixed by a quick puff on a bubbly sativa, though.

So, I glide out of the door with butterflies in my tummy at 10 whenever I remember what tomorrow holds.

FIRST PERSON / WORDS & IMAGES / MARIS



Happy Holidaze

*Wishing Joy and Success
to the Women who make
Maine Shine!*

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Maine Women’s Connection supports women in a collaborative community empowering them to connect, learn, and grow together. Save the Date 04/12/2025



IF YOU SPEND ANY TIME ONLINE (AND YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T; IT'S SCARY OUT THERE), YOU WILL QUICKLY DISCOVER THE WORLD IS ENDING. IT'S OVER. EVERYTHING IS AWFUL AND IF YOU CAN'T SEE THAT, WELL, YOU'RE A BIG DUMMY. AT LEAST THAT'S BEEN MY EXPERIENCE.

Luckily, though, I live in Maine. And I go outside regularly and get a chance to see the wonders this great state has to offer us. Plus, I regularly interact with people who smoke weed and drink beer for a living. They don't seem to have it so bad. In fact, this place can regularly seem pretty awesome. Sure, the world is filled with horrors, perpetrated by bad people with entirely too much power and too little empathy, but if we focus our attention locally, on our neighbors and friends and the people who make up our community, it's easy to see we've got it pretty good.

It would be nice, though, if we could keep it that way. Maybe even improve things a little here and there. That's why it's important not just to focus on community with our thoughts and attention, but also to focus on shopping local in gift-giving season, so your dollars stay in the community and maybe even come back around to you down the road.

I don't want to get all preachy on you or anything, but just think about it for a second: When you choose the convenience of something manufactured in Bangladesh and shipped from Sacramento to your door, you're sending your money out of state and into the pockets of bad guys. When you choose to make that extra little trip and pick

something up from the store around the corner, you're putting the money in the pockets of your neighbor, who'll maybe pony up a little later down the road to sponsor your kid's T-ball team or buy the next record your band puts out. Stranger things have happened.

So, this gift guide is full of stuff you can find right here in your communities — and some of them even ship stuff to your door.

For the Budding Farmer

The best thing about the new era of legal cannabis is probably the 10-packs of pre-rolls. That's some Gen-X fever-dream stuff right there. Packs of ... joints! However, the second-best thing has got to be that anyone and everyone is welcome to grow their own. And, sure, you can read the "DIY" column right here in this magazine if you want to learn how, but a nice, comprehensive guide to growing can be a great gift. Danny Danko is the editor of High Times, and he's done a tidy job putting together an entertaining and informative publication (despite the title being profoundly dumb — is it cannabis or "marijuana," Danny?). Plus: easy to wrap.

What: Cannabis: A Beginner's Guide to Growing Marijuana
From: Sherman's Books (we checked; it's on the shelves in nine of their stores)
Where: www.Shermans.com for locations

FEATURE: GIFT GUIDE

For Your Canna-Curious Relative

We've all got them: Cousins or aunts or whomever that grew up straight-edge, but seem kinda cool, and just need that little nudge to dip into the world of cannabis and its many benefits. You know what they all have? Aches and pains. Even the young relatives. There's always something nagging at you. And you know what helps? Wild Folk Farm's High Strength Therapeutic Salve. No, really. With ingredients grown completely organically — from the hemp to the St. John's Wort to the Bladderwack — it's exactly what you need for muscle pain and skin irritations. Plus, there's no actual THC, so you don't have to worry about folks freaking out in a drug panic. Once they're hooked, though...

What: Wild Folk Farm's High Strength Therapeutic Salve
From: Wild Folk Farm, Vassalboro
Where: Available at Lois' Naturals, in Scarborough, and www.wildfolkfarm.com

For the Sandwich Lover



It seems safe to say that people who love beer and weed also love sandwiches. Well, food of any kind, really, but that's beside the point. Sandwiches are great! But no one likes a dry sandwich, right? Condiments are important. Except mayo. Mayo is not important. But mustard is!

Especially mustard like Raye's Mustard, which is made in small batches right in Eastport, Maine. Which flavor do we recommend? Yes, the Lunch Mustard, which is a spicy option that will get your tongue tingling thanks to whole mustard seeds marinated in Maine Beer Company's Lunch IPA (they have a number of other beer-flavored mustards, too). The chili in this one gives it a little extra kick. Try it on a burger and feel it explode in your mouth.

What: Raye's Lunch Mustard
From: Raye's Mustard
Where: Raye's Mustard Mill, in Eastport, ME, or www.RayesMustard.com

For the DIY-or-Die Types

Growing weed? Pretty easy, actually. Brewing beer? Watch out. While growing takes care and attention, things usually turn out alright in the end unless you really bungle things. Brewing requires one level more of sophistication and precision. But it's doable! And very satisfying when you get it right. Luckily, too, there are plenty of smart folks at a place like Maine Brewing Supply to help a person out. Why not start your beloved tinkerer out with their Homebrewing Starter Kit, which has everything someone needs to launch into brewing, from the eight-gallon fermenter to the bottle capper? Just add a recipe kit and you're good to go. Plus,



you'll probably get free beer at some point down the line.

What: Homebrewing Starter Kit
From: Handcraft Supplies
Where: Maine Brewing Supply, 542 Forest Ave., Portland

For the Over-Worked and Over-Stressed

What's better than the gift of true relaxation? In today's mad-dash world, just about everyone is looking for an excuse to get away from it all for a little bit. Enter Southern Maine Massage and Wellness, whose CBD Spa Day is just what the doctor ordered for a working parent or stressed out executive who needs a break and some me-time. Over the course of three hours, you get a 60-minute full-body CBD massage, then a 60-minute CBD facial (hydrating, lifting, AND firming), and then an hour-long "bubbly, fizzy" CBD foot soak and massage. We're getting sleepy just thinking about it. This is a winner, men-folk. Trust us.

What: CBD Spa Day
From: Southern Maine Massage
Where: Offices are located in South Portland and Windham

FEATURE: GIFT GUIDE

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For the Odd Ball in Your Life

Some people are just wired differently. Or maybe they like to demonstrate to others they don't follow the rules. We have just the thing for them: Maine-made "beer glasses" that come with a lid and a straw. Most people, of course, drink beer from things like pint glasses or those snifter-looking glasses (we could look up the name; it's not important), or mugs, or even bottles and cans. But who drinks beer out of a straw? Clearly, the people at Gem Lounge Jewelry, in Raymond, that's who. They've got a set of frosted glasses, infused with Maine-themed designs, everything from Sebago Lake to puffins, which is normal and cool, but then they are capped with bamboo lids that come with a hole and a straw. Okay, okay, you don't have to pour beer in there, and they'd be great for mixed drinks — whatever. They're calling them beer glasses and we're wondering about the straws.

What: Maine Beer Glasses with Lids and Straws
From: Gem Lounge Jewelry
Where: Lots of retail spots, find them at www.gemloungejewelry.com

For the Urban Stylist

Maine really hasn't got much for city style. There's Portland and ... Lewiston? Bangor? You're more likely to see flannel shackets in those spots than a spotless set of Jordans or a well-kept hat with a crisp brim. If you've got someone who's trying to look sharp — you know, knows their barber by name and regularly gets their car detailed — send them over to Fire on Fore, right there in the Old Port, where they've always got a full wardrobe on offer, from lids to shoulder bags to bandanas, and all kinds of other accouterments. Okay, maybe the Old Port isn't exactly 5th Avenue, but there are at least a few people who don't shop exclusively at Wal-Mart and LL Bean in the area. When in doubt, ask for help.

What: Trucker Hat, Bandana, Shoulder Bag
From: Fire on Fore
Where: 367 Fore St., Portland



For Your Cousin Who Goes to Ren Faires

We can sort of take or leave the Ren Faire stuff. If you want to get dressed up in short pants and hose and wear funny hats and watch people joust, good for you. Not really our thing. Blacksmiths, however, are fucking cool. Fire, heating up metal, hitting things with hammers, wearing leather smocks — all way fucking cool. Which is why you should get someone who loves a throwback one of these bottle openers from Tripp's End, down in Saco. We're keen on the one shaped like the state of Maine. It fits in your hand, perfectly. But they're all pretty badass. If they're into funny hats, they're going to be into busting out one of these at the next party.

What: Iron Bottle Opener
From: Tripp's End Blacksmith
Where: www.etsy.com/shop/TrippsEnd

For the College Student in Your Life

Have you met college kids lately? They're kind of boring. They, like, study a lot. And think about their futures and how they can better shape them with appropriate political action and policy creation. BORING. If you know a college kid, buy them a bong. Bongs are fun. They're made of glass and they get you super high and you can wipe them with your shirt and they magically become free of all germs, allowing you to pass them right along to your friend. Just about every weed shop has bongs, really, but if you're looking for something special, or want to have one shipped directly to this kid at college, try out ShopCannaStyle.com. Are they Mainers? No. Do they have an awesome Crystal Ball bong that fills up with smoke like the ghost of your long-lost grandmother? Yes! Do they have one shaped and colored like an anatomically correct heart? Also yes! This kid is going to think you're so cool. Also, buy them some weed.

What: Bongs!
From: Shop Canna Style
Where: www.shopcannastyle.com



WORDS & IMAGES / SAM PFEIFLE



TASTE THE SPECTRUM

DIVERSE TAKES ON CIDER FROM APRES AND ABSOLEM

WORDS / BECCA ABRAMSON | IMAGES / CODY DELONG

IN THE EVER-CHANGING WORLD OF CRAFT BEVERAGES, MAINE'S CIDER SCENE IS A COLORFUL PATCHWORK OF DIVERSE TECHNIQUES AND PHILOSOPHIES. AT ONE END, APRES IN PORTLAND CURATES A LINEUP OF REFRESHING, APPROACHABLE CIDERS THAT CLOCK IN AROUND 6% ABV. IN CONTRAST, ABSOLEM CIDER COMPANY, NESTLED IN A HISTORIC BARN IN WINTHROP, EMBRACES THE WILD COMPLEXITIES OF SPONTANEOUS FERMENTATION, YIELDING FUNKY, HIGH-ABV CIDERS THAT FLIRT WITH THE BOUNDARIES OF WINE. IT'S THIS EXPLORATION OF FLAVORS AND PRODUCTION METHODS THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE INCREDIBLE VARIETY OF NEW ENGLAND APPLES AND THE CREATIVE SPIRIT OF MAINE MAKERS WHO ARE CHANGING THE CIDER GAME.

BALANCING TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Photographer-turned-cidermaker Larry Westler has always been fascinated by the sheer variety of apples available on the East Coast. "When you visit the grocery store, no one is referring to the blueberries or raspberries by name," he says, "but when you're looking at apples, there's Macintosh, Red Delicious, Granny Smith, and a whole range of other types. At the farmers' market or an orchard, there are 20, 30, even 50 varieties — it's completely eye-opening."

Growing up in New York City, Westler did his fair share of apple picking with family near the New Jersey border. Like many college kids, his introduction to hard cider came from packs of Angry Orchard and Woodchuck, before he

discovered a handful of local establishments. "Eve's Ciderly in New York makes phenomenal orchard-based cider with heirloom apples," he says, "and Bellewether Hard Cider and Wine makes a really approachable, clean cider. They both kind of opened my eyes to what cider could be."



Westler, who currently leads cider production and R&D at Apres in Portland's East Bayside, is well aware the business is known for a different type of alcoholic drink: seltzer (see "Don't Hate the Fizz," June, 2022, by Caleb Jagoda). "We've been making cider since the beginning — when the owners founded Apres, they intended for it to be a cidery and seltzer place," he explains. As hard seltzer gained popularity, more resources were dedicated to the

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sparkling beverage. In March, Apres opened a new facility in Westbrook that handles the bulk of seltzer production, leaving the original tanks in East Bayside available for cider.

While many cideries use bulk juice (a mixture of dessert

” We try to keep an inclusive and accessible portfolio of ciders, but we also lean into some of the more complex and unique flavors

apple varieties that orchards often press for cidemakers), Apres places an emphasis on sourcing unique apple varieties from across the state. “A few years ago, we did a deep dive into all the orchards we could find and created a database of what’s available and where,” says Westler. “It’s really important for us to support orchards and farms of all sizes, because no one orchard can provide everything



we need,” he adds. There are a variety of factors Westler considers when selecting specific varieties of apples: “Is it cider-specific? Will it hold up as a single varietal? Is it something people might not have tasted before? We try to keep an inclusive and accessible portfolio of ciders, but we also lean into some of the more complex and unique flavors.”

Once apples are selected and pressed, raw cider is transferred from a juice tote into one of Apres’ stainless steel tanks. Westler usually adds sulfite, and, 24 hours later, pitches the yeast. “I like to work backwards from what I’m trying to make when selecting a yeast,” he says. “Right now we’re making a plum cider that aims to be on the lower end of semi-dry, so we settled on a white wine yeast that’s similar to a Reisling. Ultimately, it depends on the flavor profile and final goal for the product.” After the yeast is added, the cider undergoes primary fermentation for two-to-four weeks before it’s transferred to another tank

or into barrels to mature. “The longer you keep something in the tank, the less cider you can make,” Westler says. “We usually move it into oak barrels to mature, or we finish secondary fermentation in stainless steel barrels that won’t impart any other flavors.”

Most commercially available cider in Maine — including many of the varieties Westler makes at Apres — is produced at 6.9% ABV or below; any higher and the federal government gets involved. “Our philosophy here is to have easy, drinkable, crushable ciders along with a few complex options. We’re not watering anything down, we’re not using concentrate, and we’re not back-sweetening,” Westler says. He’s currently experimenting with a new beverage called cider kin, which involves rehydrating already pressed apples to make a weaker juice with perfumey, subtle flavors that results in a lower-alcohol product (around 2% ABV). “It’s too soon to tell how it’ll turn out,” he adds.

THE FARMHOUSE APPROACH

About an hour north of Apres’ bustling urban seltzer and cider house, you’ll discover Absolem Cider Company, nestled on the western shore of Cobbosseecontee Lake. Housed in a charming 150-year-old barn on a sprawling 60-acre farm, Absolem specializes in cider crafted primarily through spontaneous fermentation. This unique method means no additional yeast is added to the pressed juice; instead, the indigenous cultures present on the apples and equipment naturally ferment the cider, creating a rich and authentic alcoholic beverage.

Kevin Sturtevant, co-founder and director of sales at Absolem, compares picking apples for cider to choosing grapes for wine. “The fruit has an amazing variety from season to season, but there’s also a great continuity in any given variety. Because we’re not always pitching yeast, our ciders don’t pick up those invasive yeast flavors,” so choosing the right variety of fruit is crucial. Apple selection is especially important in Absolem’s single varietal ciders. “People don’t often recognize how distinct, unique, and delicious independent apple varieties can be. For example, we have a new product called Under Veil that’s made entirely with Harrison apples, which is one of our favorite cider apples with a



FEATURE : INVESTIGATIONS

beautiful spikiness and citrusy character. We love to nerd out about this kind of thing,” he laughs.

In addition to cultivated varieties, Absolem incorporates foraged apples, sourced from roadside trees and abandoned orchards. “Wild apple trees offer incredible diversity. When foraging for uncultivated fruit, you’ll encounter unique flavors that cultivated apples, which are bred for sweetness and appeal, simply don’t have. Even crab apples, which people don’t usually eat, can make phenomenal cider,” Sturtevant adds.



Aging is another secret weapon for flavor at Absolem. “We have a garage full of over 60 barrels, from wines to whiskeys and everything in between,” Sturtevant explains. “It’s a really easy, effective way to manipulate the flavor of a product. It takes time to age and develop flavor, and it’s an art to know when to stop.” This process can lead to unexpected discoveries, both fortunate and unfortunate.

“We have a cider we found in the back of the barn after two years that we thought we’d have to pitch, but we tried it and it was amazing,” Sturtevant says. “Aging cider is exciting because it’s proven to be a really stable product, similar to wine.”

In addition to classic hard cider, Absolem produces a variety of co-fermented and blended beverages. “We craft a range of wines that we mix with cider in varying percentages. One of our best-sellers is Roses Red, which combines 20% Pinot Noir with 80% heirloom cider. It’s fruity, has a deep red color, and is incredibly refreshing at 8.4% ABV — just slightly less than wine, yet completely gluten-free.” The cidery also experiments with co-fermenting fruits like cherries, strawberries, and peaches alongside apple juice, resulting in robust ciders inspired by fruited lambics and skin-contact wines. “Because we ferment to fully dry and don’t stop fermentation, whatever the fruit brings in is what’s going to kick off the process. A lot of times we’re blending that with up to 50% or more of wine, so some of our products are 10% or 11% ABV just as a cider-wine hybrid.”

MAINE’S CIDER REVOLUTION

The cider scene in Maine is characterized by a dynamic blend of knowledge and ingenuity among its makers. “Cidermakers in Maine are incredible because they’re all

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Cidermakers in Maine are incredible because they’re all very generous and willing to share, whether it’s sources or knowledge or equipment




PHOTOS

IMAGES / JOHN DUNCAN







CLOVE CONQUERS ALL

FEATURE: INVESTIGATIONS

HOW TO MAKE GARLIC PART OF YOUR PLANS FOR ALL FOUR SEASONS

WORDS & IMAGES / DANIEL PADELL

WINTER IS COMING. YOUR ONCE PROUD GARDEN LIES IN SHAMBLES, A RUIN OF ITS FORMER GLORY THAT EVEN THE CROWS ARE STARTING TO AVOID. HALLOWEEN HAS COME AND GONE, AND THE FROST HAS BEGUN WRITING GLITTERING POETRY ON THE CRISP, FALLEN LEAVES. AS THE GREAT COLD SURROUNDS THE BONES OF YOUR OASIS, IT'S EASY TO TURN AWAY, SHED A SILENT TEAR, AND DREAM OF THE DISTANT SPRINGTIME. MEMENTO MORI, DUST TO DUST. BUT WEEP NOT, WEARY GARDENER, GREATNESS STILL AWAITS. NOW IS THE TIME TO GET YOUR NEXT SUMMER'S CROP IN THE GROUND AND GATHER YOUR RESERVES FOR THE LONG MONTHS AHEAD.

Some of us are winter people, some of us just aren't. There are those who are chilled by the very thought of the gusting wind, the shorter days, the sticks, the ice, and the brooding grey skies. Then there are those who cherish the crackling fires, the hot drinks, the comforters, the hoodies, and the warm, fuzzy socks. Whether you're chasing down that last planting fix of the year, seeking a hearty enhancer for a savory winter meal, trying to shake off those back-to-school sniffles, warding off last month's lingering vampires, or even just shifting into soup mode, your humble, versatile, and pungent friend garlic is here with the answer.

You may be eager to run out and revitalize your beloved little patch of life, but this is still gardening and timing is still important. Much of New England is in USDA planting zone 5, and garlic should ideally go in the ground sometime in mid-to-late October, but can be planted at any point between the Fall Equinox and the big freeze. The aim is to get your cloves comfortably situated before the ground freezes solid, without the chance of a day warm enough to sprout them before springtime.

As always, it all starts with a seed; you're going to need to find some garlic. Don't just run off to the grocery store; try to find a farmstand with bulbs nearby since they'll be

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fresher and more adapted to your local conditions. Separate the cloves from the bulb and discard the stalk and the paper, but leave the individual cloves unpeeled. They'll need their outer casing to survive the long winter freeze. Choose only the largest, most well-formed cloves for planting and set aside any that are damaged during this process to help guarantee the best bulbs in the coming summer.

Break up the soil in a well-drained area, and create long, parallel rows every five or six inches. A depth of two or three inches will be enough to protect your cloves from the harsh conditions. If your soil isn't suited for it, or if you simply don't have the space, they will also do well in a container as long as they still have enough distance between plants. The plants will grow about three feet tall, with leaves that spread into the other rows.

Press individual cloves into the rows spacing them about five inches apart, root-side down, and pointed-side up. When you've planted as many cloves as can comfortably fit, fill the rows in with the surrounding soil and gently pat them flush with the ground. On top of this pile straw or leaf litter about four inches deep, to insulate your new garlic patch from the impending ice and snow. Congratulations, gardener, your garlic is on the road to success, and they'll be maintenance-free until springtime.

FROM SPRING INTO SUMMER

Your garlic will begin poking up through the layers of insulating mulch before most other plants, and before long they'll be fully grown. During the spring each will sprout a scape, the plant's curling, leafless flower, which should be promptly removed and can be used in a number of delicious recipes. Sometime in the early summer, when the lowest two leaves of your plants have withered and browned, it's time to dig them up. If you harvest too early the bulb may not have grown to its full potential, and waiting much longer will increase the likelihood of the bulb splitting from overgrowth.

Using a pitchfork or another prying tool, reach under the garlic bulb's root and gently lift the entire plant up through the surface of the soil, being mindful not to pull the bulb up by the stalk. Resist the urge to peel your unearthed treasure, and instead gently brush away most of the soil clinging to the outside. Lay your garlic, stalks and all, in a single layer on any surface that will promote airflow, like an old window screen or last season's garden fencing. Alternately, as an effective space-saving solution, hang the harvested garlic bulb-side-up in bunches of around 10 plants. Within a couple weeks much of the soil will flake away, and your bulbs will have cured noticeably.

Once the plant's leaves and bulb have become dry to the



touch, it's time to trim away the stalks and roots, then peel away the very outermost layer of paper (taking with it any remaining soil). Take a moment to admire your bounty, and notice how many new friends you're making as word gets out of your fresh garlic haul. Choose the biggest, healthiest looking bulbs as your seed stock for next planting. The rest can be stored in a cool, dry place, and can be enjoyed for up to six months.

POST-HARVEST AND BEYOND

You may be asking, "Well, what about right now? It's practically wintertime and I've got all these extra cloves I didn't plant." You've got a pile of the smaller ones that didn't quite make the cut, or maybe the leftovers from when there just wasn't any room for more plants. They'll need to be used somewhat quickly, as their shelf life once separated is a fraction of a whole bulb's longevity. Garlic recipes can be pretty simple, the kinds of preparations that don't take much space or make much of a mess, and there are hundreds of ways to use your fresh cloves. Pestos, purees, infusions, and seasonal detox are all at your fingertips.

One of the easiest ways to use those leftover cloves is to ferment them in a jar with honey. Fully peel all the remaining paper from your cloves and submerge them in any variety of high-quality honey, and after a few days on the shelf the fermentation process will begin. Be sure to keep the cloves entirely covered by honey, and remember to release the pressurized gasses every few days. The

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infused honey can be used as a sweet and savory dressing for salads, a quick and ready glaze for baked or grilled dishes, or simply as a drizzle for your morning toast. Honey has long been believed to help soothe some of the pesky symptoms associated with wintertime illnesses, and this preparation provides the additional benefit of the garlic's natural immunity-boosting properties.

Another way to utilize those extra cloves could be in an easy-to-make garlic confit. This simple and slow-cooked preparation only requires extra virgin olive oil, any number of garlic cloves, and an oven-safe dish. Fill the dish halfway with fully peeled garlic cloves, add enough extra virgin olive oil to fully cover the garlic, and bake in the oven at 240°F for about two hours. At the hour mark you may consider adding aromatics to adjust the flavor of your infused oil, such as peppercorns, lemon zest, rosemary, thyme, or cannabis. Cannabis will need to be ground and secured in a cheesecloth sachet to properly decarboxylate and contain the plant matter. The intensity of the cannabis effects will vary depending on the quality of cannabis and the amount of oil involved, so sample with caution. Garlic confit will last in the refrigerator for one or two weeks, or several months in the freezer.

Garlic confit can be enjoyed as-is; the cloves can be spread onto toast or crackers, or thrown into salads and used in soups and stews. The garlic's intense flavor becomes very mild during the low-and-slow cooking process, and the infused oil can be used in any recipe that would normally call for extra virgin olive oil. Crush a clove between slices of a baguette, drizzle with infused oil, and gently bake for a no-fuss garlic bread, or puree the garlic confit and mix with mashed potatoes for an unforgettable Thanksgiving spread (depending on the herbs involved, of course).

And who could forget about garlic scapes, the underappreciated but delicately delicious flower, a springtime staple of New England farmstands? Scapes tend to arrive around the same time as fiddleheads, and are generally cooked in the same ways — sauteed with vegetables, roasted in meat dishes, or blended into a crowd-pleasing pesto. If your timing is right and you have cloves

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If using cannabis-enhanced garlic oil, consider only replacing a fraction of the pure extra virgin olive oil with the herbal infusion to avoid an unintendedly intense pesto experience

on hand, try using the garlic-infused oil as the base for your scape pesto. If using cannabis-enhanced garlic oil, consider only replacing a fraction of the pure extra virgin olive oil with the herbal infusion to avoid an unintendedly intense pesto experience. This scape pesto can be made fresh in season, or from scapes that have been frozen for up to six months as a last, late-autumn taste of the sunnier months.

The changing seasons impact us all in different ways, there's no denying it. These early nights and brisk mornings may have spelled doom for your outdoor plans and plantings, or perhaps opened the door for those bluebird days on the ski lifts. But no matter what type of winter person you happen to be — the mourning gardener, the fuzzy sock wearer, the sledder, the hibernator, or the mistletoe hanger — sometimes, in the end, **all you need is clove.**



WORDS & IMAGES / DANIEL PADELL
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



LAVA KAVA PUTS DOWN ROOTS

LOOKING FOR A NEW WAY TO UNWIND AFTER A LONG DAY?
KAVA MIGHT JUST BE YOUR CUP OF TEA

WORDS & IMAGES / CYNDLE PLAISTED RIALS

WHEN MIRIAM ALICEA FIRST CAME TO PORTLAND IN APRIL OF 2022 — BY WAY OF A TRAVEL NURSING ASSIGNMENT — SHE HAD, AS SHE SAYS, A BIT OF A “SPIRITUAL AWAKENING” DURING HER FIRST SPRING IN MAINE. WHILE COMMUTING TO WORK FOR 16 HOUR SHIFTS, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, SHE NOTICED THINGS WERE CHANGING. “I GOT TO SEE EVERYTHING BLOOMING LITTLE BY LITTLE; FLOWERS BLOOM FROM NOTHING, TREES GO FROM BARE TO FULL,” SHE SAYS, THE AWE OF THAT MEMORY STILL PLAIN IN HER VOICE. “IN MY HEAD I WAS LIKE, ‘YUP, THIS IS WHERE I NEED TO BE. I NEED TO LIVE HERE.’”

Those of us who have lived in New England for a while might take this annual vernal process for granted, but it was a novel one for Alicea, who hailed from south Florida where the plant life was rather more static. Portland had lots to offer, but she quickly realized one thing the city was missing.

“I used to just walk downtown by myself, people watch, go into shops ... One thing popped up: There were no kava bars. They’re everywhere in Florida. It’s the most saturated state for kava bars. [In Portland] I got to know the demographic. It’s very hippie, very holistic, very natural. It was just like a lightbulb went off: I need to make sure everybody knows about kava.”

Chances are, unless you run in alternative medicine circles or have a connection to the Pacific Islands, you’ve never heard of kava. Kava, or kava kava (scientific name *Piper methysticum*) is a plant in the pepper family that originates in the South Pacific — the word “kava” means



“bitter” in Tongan (more on that in the sidebar). Natives of Tonga, Fiji, and Vanuatu, among others, have consumed kava (sometimes known by other names depending on the country or island) for centuries as a tea made from the roots of the plant, which are finely ground and added to water. Kava has long been consumed ceremonially across the South Pacific: it could be used to commemorate weddings, births, and funerals; to welcome visitors; or as a means to bring feuding tribes together to try to come to a peace agreement. Today in the islands, kava is consumed as a social drink just as alcohol is in North America.

FEATURE : ORIGIN STORY

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And with that evolution from purely ceremonial to a social drink in its place of origin, kava has caught on in other places too, with people getting hip to the benefits it offers. Thanks to the presence of kavalactones, the active ingredient of the root, kava can act on the central nervous system's GABA receptors to provide a euphoric, sedative, or anesthetic effect. Couple that with the fact that it's plant-derived, an increasingly desirable characteristic in many populations, and kava is quickly becoming a viable alternative to alcohol for lots of folks.



Alicea still remembers her introduction to the beverage. "It was four or five years ago. I was working second shift; I got out at 11. I lived in a small beach town on the east coast — kinda like Maine — where everything closed at 8 p.m. There was that one bar open till 2 a.m. everyone goes to, but I didn't really want to go there. I googled what was around, saw there was a kava bar, and I checked it out." She was thrilled to find a way to unwind at the end of the day that wasn't a glass (or a bottle) of wine. And that was especially important with her work schedule; those long nursing shifts didn't really afford her the time to be downed by a hangover.

Now feels like the perfect time to introduce something like kava to Portland, as growing numbers of consumers are looking for not just a beverage to cap off their night, but also alcohol-free social gatherings. Millennials and Gen Z are drinking less alcohol than previous generations, with Gen Z drinking 20% less alcohol than millennials per capita. Alicea thinks there are a couple reasons for that. "I think it has a lot to do with social media — kids seeing drunk people online, drinking and driving, hit and runs, a lot of people are seeing that and saying, 'I don't wanna drink.'"

But the lack of adult social spaces that aren't traditional bars is a constantly bemoaned issue, and Alicea thought opening Maine's first kava bar was a perfect response to the problem. While she had been a kava consumer in Miami, she didn't know all that much about running a kava business, or the ins and outs of sourcing the drink itself. "I did my research, educated myself a lot more on it, where the best kava came from. I started getting to know the [local] population, started doing some pop-up markets last summer [2023], tested the waters ... by November, I rented a space."

Lava Kava officially opened its doors in May of this year, and the reception has been great, with a wide-ranging clientele finding Alicea's little tropical oasis on the far end of Washington Ave., in Portland.

"People find me by googling 'kava' when they come back from a vacation in the islands, or they're visiting here from Florida or Colorado, where there are lots of kava bars," Alicea says. "A bunch of my customers are reiki and yoga practitioners. They appreciate the naturalness of the drink, the holistic part of it. There are herbalists, to people who go to the gym every day, to people here on blind dates. I had a customer come in once; they just had a massage, and they said, 'My massage therapist told me to come here. They said it would be a great way to close out my massage.' We talked about the different types of kava, which one would be right for the occasion."

That conversation is really central to what Alicea is offering at Lava Kava. Unlike at a traditional bar, where your bartender might guide you in choices based on taste, at Lava Kava, there are three types of kava that will offer a slightly different experience, kind of parallel to the designations of sativa, indica, and hybrid strains of flower in the cannabis world.

The difference comes in the age of the harvested root. Heady kava, which often comes from Vanuatu and is harvested three-ish years into the plant's growth, is mood-elevating. It can enhance mental clarity, and Alicea says it's good for day-time drinking, working, and socializing.

Conversely, there's heavy kava, which she recommends for people looking for full mind and body relaxation; it's especially suited to evening consumption, to combat insomnia and anxiety. Heavy kava isn't ready until the plant has grown for six to eight years. And in between, with roots most often harvested in Fiji around four or five years of growth, is balanced kava, which offers a blend of both ends of the spectrum: You could experience a bit of mood elevation and some body relaxation. So the consumer has a choice to make, and Alicea and her part-time kavatender are there to guide a first time kava-imbibers.

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It's just a pretty, sensory experience —
we use the garnishes and dress it up

"I always ask people that are having kava for the first time, 'What are you trying to achieve?' A lot of people have googled it so they know a little bit about it; some people will say, 'I just wanna relax,' then they start opening up [about what's going on] before they even have their first kava: trouble sleeping, high stress ... we talk it through. Even though it's not a ceremony we have, intention is important."

Not only are there a few choices when it comes to the kind of kava one might try at Lava Kava, there are also a couple different consumption methods. It's traditionally imbibed at room temperature, from a coconut bowl (historically a communal bowl, but you get your own at Lava Kava), and Alicea feels it's important to offer visitors that authentic way of experiencing kava: "I like to respect the culture. That is a huge thing for me — I want people to know what it is, understand where it comes from, even if they just want to enjoy it socially."

But if you're looking to try a familiar drink with a kava twist, Alicea also offers mocktails, like the Kava Colada, Horchata Dream, or Mami's Mojito. "It's just a pretty, sensory experience — we use the garnishes and dress it up," Alicea says, grinning behind the counter. "Pretty drinks at a bar just make it more fun."

The offerings change frequently as she's inspired by her local farmer's market. Her passion for the creation of new kava mocktails using local ingredients shines as she talks about all the drinks she's introduced this summer. "I saw jalapeños, so I tried a spicy drink," she says. "Strawberries have been in season, and I've done strawberry lemonade, a strawberry basil drink, a mango mojito with mint from the farmer's market ... I make my own purées and use fresh ingredients as much as possible."

SO, WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Of course if you're going to write about the first kava bar opening in Maine, you have to try it, right? Despite contributing to this publication since its inception, I'm not all that much of a drinker. My tastes run more toward psychedelics, generally, especially microdosing. As a person with at least three jobs, along with being a mother who sometimes gets an unexpected call to come pick up a kid at school, something that just puts a little extra sparkle into my everyday life and doesn't impair me in the process is what I'm usually seeking. So kava intrigued me not just as a writer, but as a consumer.

Proprietor Miriam Alicea met me at Lava Kava to give me my first taste, offering me both the traditional serving — room temperature in a coconut bowl — with a chunk of pineapple as a chaser and palate cleanser, as is customary. The name is legit, folks — it is definitely bitter. And while leaf tea can have a somewhat earthy taste, this tea is made from roots. Other than dirt itself, how much more earthy can you get? Upon my first sip of the clay-brown liquid, I knew two things: 1. The name doesn't lie. And 2. The effects are real. I immediately felt the tingling, numbing sensation Alicea had described to me: "That numbing in the mouth, tongue, lips — people love the way it feels."

When you drink something and you can feel it, you know it's working; your body and then your mind is in tune with that."



As my tongue and lips tingled, I continued sipping. Now I'm not a lover of bitter flavors. I don't drink coffee of any variety and I can't stand an IPA, which is practically heresy in these parts; give me something sweeter and a little more complex, and I'm a happy woman. So I tried the ever-popular Kava Colada, topped with a chunk of pineapple, toasted coconut, and a cute little bamboo-styled straw. Even mixed with coconut and pineapple, that earthy, bitter kava taste definitely came through. While I can't say I'm now a kava convert, I did feel a little mood elevation (though not quite like a boozy buzz), which some might dismiss as placebo effect. But if you're feeling good, does it really matter if it's all in your mind?

FEATURE : ORIGIN STORY

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So with all these exciting upsides, is there any drawback to switching up your routine from alcohol to kava? There are some that claim kava is still taxing to the liver, and with Alicea's many years of experience in health care, adverse effects are definitely something she cares about. "There aren't a lot of studies and research about it," she explains. "Back in 1999-2000, they did a study with a handful of people who already had liver disease from drinking alcohol. If you drank a bucket of kava it might put pressure on your liver. And I do always warn people that kava could increase the negative effects of alcohol; impairedness will be elevated if you drink both [in the same period]."



Kava is also not recommended for pregnant or breastfeeding women, or anyone with liver disease, and Alicea will only serve it to folks who are 18 and over: "It does alter your state of mind even though it's not psychedelic. Teenagers can be impulsive, or get so relaxed they don't know how to handle that relaxation. There's a responsibility you have as an adult consuming something that changes your mood."

But should people who struggle with addiction worry that they're just switching out one addictive substance for another with kava? "Physically, it has no addictive properties," Alicea says. "But if you're using it to relax you and that's the one thing that relaxes you all the time, you

might want it often. But kava has a reverse tolerance — the more you drink it, the less you need to feel the effects. Your body becomes more sensitive to it. I tell people it's not really a good business model, like, 'You only need one drink now!'" she laughs.

"For me, it's a wholesome drink where I don't have to be picked up off the floor at the end of the night. The fact that I can choose — I think it's a whole journey. A lot of my customers are sober. It's also a good alternative for customers who do drink alcohol, but on a Wednesday night they don't wanna go to the bar and have a hangover for Thursday morning. They just wanna feel good, socialize."

And that's Alicea's ultimate vision for what Lava Kava offers to its customers. She hopes to expand to a second or larger location eventually, and she's added a trivia night to her weekly calendar. It's all about drawing people together to experience a unique, natural drink that has been used to celebrate and create community for hundreds of years. "The whole purpose is to come in, sit down, chat a little bit — even shy people get talkative [when they've had some kava]. When you go to a regular bar, you have a couple of drinks and you're talking to the bartender, who is now your best friend; you're talking to the guy next to you. You can have that same experience with kava because it opens you up in that same way."

LAVA KAVA

550 Washington Ave, Portland, ME
www.lavakavamaine.com



WORDS & IMAGES / **CYNDLE PLAISTED RIALS**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

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very generous and willing to share, whether it's sources or knowledge or equipment. Everyone is so creative and they're all pursuing what they want in different ways," says Westler. This supportive spirit fosters an environment where innovation thrives as cidemakers experiment with various techniques and flavors. "Maine's cider community is young, and it knows it," reflects Sturtevant. "It's kind of like a big workshop where everyone is at their table doing their own thing, occasionally walking around and saying, 'Hey, cool!'"

As interest in cider continues to grow, Westler notes that the beverage has a unique appeal: "Every couple of years, people talk about how cider is going to become the next

big thing. I think people get tired of beer, but cider has this extra mystique because you're working with fruit and it's not as mass-produced." Sturtevant sees plenty of room for the industry to grow. "I think cider lacks a bit of an identity. It can mean a lot of things, in the way beer can mean a traditional lambic, pastry, sour, and everything in between."

Ultimately, he believes that "more cider is good cider." Whether you're sipping a refreshing cider from Apres or a complex blend from Absolem, you're experiencing the rich flavors and creativity that define Maine's cider landscape.



WORDS / **BECCA ABRAMSON**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



WITH NEW MATERIAL AND A TASTE FOR TOURING, MAINE'S PROLIFIC PURVEYORS OF NEO-CLASSIC ROCK MAJESTY, RIGOMETRICS, ARE ON THE VERGE OF SOMETHING BIG. A RIGOMETRICS TUNE LEANS INTO THE GROOVE, BUILDING RIFF BY RIFF TOWARD A SOARING CHORUS THAT SEEMS AT ONCE FAMILIAR, YET SOMEHOW DIFFERENT, AND JUST LIKE THE LYRICS FROM THE BAND'S 2023 TRACK "GONE" KNOWINGLY POINT OUT: "IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE YOU'RE SINGING ALONG."

The band's latest release, "Elodie," a four-song EP that dropped across all the streaming services on Nov. 8, keeps that riff-tastic party going, picking up right where tunes like "Gone" left off.

It's a work that the band is proud of, lead singer and keyboardist Keenan Hendricks said. "The new stuff goes pretty hard," and it digs deeper into that neo-classic rock sound that's made them one of Maine's top-drawing local acts, he told Beer & Weed Magazine during a wide-ranging conversation about the band, the new music, how it all started, and where it's all going.

Hendricks singled out one of the new tracks, "Celebrate

the Darkness," as his personal favorite of the new material. It emerged, he explained, from the frenzy of activity that surrounded the total solar eclipse when it passed over Maine back in April. The idea that thousands of people would come to Maine to experience the absence of the sun was compelling, he said, and it was an image that he couldn't stop thinking about. Sitting down at the keyboard a few weeks after the fact, the tune seemed to almost write itself.

"It's built on this really rhythmic, punchy groove," Hendricks said, "and it's a celebration of the darkness, and the people who came to Maine to be a part of it in that moment."

Recorded at their rehearsal studio in Portland, engineered and produced by Matthew Perry and Grammy-winner Dave Gutter, and mixed by Jonathan Wyman (The Pretty Reckless, Spouse, the Ghost of Paul Revere), the new EP also represents a step forward for a young band that emerged on the scene only a few short years ago.

"We came together during the pandemic," Hendricks said. "The three of us were in college, and we had all this free time. We just started playing, purely just for the fun of it, with zero intention of playing a show, let alone doing what

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we're doing now."

And what they're doing now is something to behold: touring relentlessly, playing show after show, and pumping out new music at a frantic pace.

Of course, the trio — Hendricks, Josef Berger on guitar, and Derek Haney on drums — still play for fun, but their audiences are much, much larger these days, and they've built a following that stretches up and down the eastern seaboard, thanks to all that touring. Hendricks estimated

”

From backyard parties
to hitting the road,
where this goes
we don't know

that by the end of the year, the band will have somewhere in the neighborhood of 120 shows in the books. In fact, they've just wrapped a month-long tour up and down the East Coast, with shows as far south as Georgia, in support of the new music.

The new EP also shares its name with the band's fabled purple tour bus, which carries them from town to town on those tours. Outfitted with bunk beds, a couch, coolers, and all the comforts of home, the bus has been their home away from home when they're on the road.

The new material speaks to that experience. The first single, "All My Friends (Live for the Weekend)," which has been available via streaming since September, is pretty much the story of the band put to music.

"Started a band in the unforeseen, never thought we'd try this rock 'n' roll thing," Hendricks croons over a piano-driven groove that slides firmly into the pocket and stays there for the duration. "From backyard parties to hitting the road, where this goes we don't know."

That take-it-as-it-comes attitude, with all its glorious ups and downs, has become part of their appeal. With Rigometrics, co-producer Gutter said, what you see is exactly what you get.

"I love Rigometrics because they're a real band that plays real instruments, and they live together and tour endlessly," Gutter said. "Whether you like them or not, what they're

doing is pure. They are one of the artists I produce that, when they walk into the studio, have an identity. My goal is to not disrupt what they already have going on."

To help launch the new material, Rigometrics is set to play a pair of shows that have become an annual celebration the band has dubbed "Rigsgiving." And what started as a single show a few years back is now in its third incarnation, and has grown to two: the third annual Rigsgiving gigs are set for Wednesday, Nov. 27, at the SaltWater Event Barn in South Thomaston, and Saturday, Nov. 30, at the Portland House of Music in Portland.

Hendricks, who grew up in Owls Head, called the Rigsgiving shows a homecoming of sorts.

"We've been super busy, touring all over the place," Hendricks said, "and these shows give us a chance to connect with our friends and family again."

In addition to his contributions behind the console, Gutter also played bass on the new tracks, but don't look for him on stage at any of the upcoming shows; Rigometrics is a three-piece and that's the way it's going to stay on stage. Live, Hendricks covers the low end of the sonic spectrum with his keyboards.

Gutter says he's cool with that.

"I love their chemistry together," Gutter said, and that chemistry is a big part of what makes "Elodie" such a solid effort from the young musicians. "They're such a great band. I had a blast playing bass in the studio with them, but they won't let me play live with them because I'm unattractive."

Relative physical attractiveness notwithstanding, Hendricks said, the three-piece thing is just what works for them as musicians.

"We're not opposed to the idea of having a bass player," Hendricks said. "It's just, this is how we started, and it's working for us, and it makes us a little different from all the other bands that are out there."



WORDS / FRANK GALLAGHER



Hot off their national EP release tour, Maine's Rock & Roll Band, Rigometrics, host their annual RIGSGIVING shows. On November 27th in South Thomaston, ME at Saltwater Fields Event Barn and November 30th in Portland, ME at Portland House of Music.

Maine locals OystaGuy and Dave Gutter will be kicking off both nights, setting the vibes right.

These shows are known to be a rock party, selling out the last few prior, get your tickets soon! You can find tickets at Rigometrics.com



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ADVERTISE

POWER RANKINGS THE TOWNS OF YORK COUNTY, MAINE



10. Cornish: This photogenic town deep in the middle of nowhere feels like it could be the setting of the show *Gilmore Girls*. Cornish is so adorable that its Hannaford is still a Stop'n'Shop.

9. York: Despite having a decent beach, Flo's Hotdogs, and the most zoo animals

in York County, York is held back by its flaws. Banning chain restaurants is cool in Ogunquit, but in York it's just inconvenient. You're telling me I gotta drive all the way to the Kittery Dunkin'? York is like Kennebunk's preppier, less-cool cousin.

8. Saco: Despite being home to the legendary Funtown/Splashtown USA and Aquaboggin, Saco feels somewhat outshone by the towns it borders: Its big brother across the river, Biddeford; Maine's best New-Jersey-impersonator, Old Orchard Beach; and the decidedly-more-wealthy Portland suburb, Scarborough. However, the limited, open-late Rapid Ray's menu is a staple for all York County stoners. I, personally, was once in a .jpg image on the Rapid Ray's website laughing hysterically, blazed out of my mind, holding a French fry like a magic wand.

7. Cape Neddick: Are York and Cape Neddick really different towns? Cape Neddick is superior, regardless, despite York having a Hannaford and an "Animal Kingdom." Cape Neddick is a sexy swash of coastline hidden on a windy road between Ogunquit and York. It's like you asked ChatGPT to make the most stereotypically Maine town ever: a scenic lighthouse, many trees, a cliff-side hotel, a jagged shoreline, a lobster pound, and very few people.

6. Kittery: Kittery is like a mullet: costal, hardworking Maine town in the front, capitalist shopping party in the back. It has a Crocs Outlet and a shipyard. It has a Starbucks, a Dunkin', and an Aroma Joe's. Its quaint, adorable downtown has always been a hidden gem. It even has a forest-covered "Welcome Center" on the highway for late-night urination on the way back from a Celtics or Bruins game.

5. Kennebunk: Obviously Kennebunk is the bougiest white-mom town in York County. In the summer months, its clogged stretch of Route 1 is bordered by so many arranged flowers it could pass as a roadside botanical garden. However, Kennebunk gives up most of its nicest sections to the far-more-legendary Kennebunkport and also contains

the barren fields of West Kennebunk. Kennebunk does get bonus points for being home to York County's only Popeye's at its highway rest stop, though.

4. Biddeford: Man, this one hurts. Growing up in York County, Biddeford was ... Shitdeford. It was the trashiest town in York County, where you didn't want to have to go to buy a cheap quarter of weed. However, as much as it pains me to say it, Biddeford has glowed up. This is not so much because of Biddeford's modernized capitalist outpost — "The Shoppes at Biddeford Crossing" — home to Panera Bread, York County's only Target, and an empty unit that annually rises from the dead to become The Spirit of Halloween. Biddeford's higher ranking is mostly due to that revitalized brick mill downtown. It also is home to the prestigious University of New England and the decidedly adorable secret world of Biddeford Pool. Dammit Biddeford.

3. Wells: Yes, the traffic sucks. Yes, the Hannaford is a circus full of aimless French Canadians. Yes, I'm biased because I'm from this town. But — from the Maine Diner to Congdon's Doughnuts, from Drake's Island to Moody Beach — this town is just quintessential, can't-miss, seaside Maine. Unfortunately, the residents of Massachusetts and New York also can't miss this town and own almost every piece of real estate east of the marsh. Despite that, their autumn exodus gives way to a beautiful, empty beach-side burn-cruise route that usually contains a great blue heron and a seal. Wells, Maine forever.

2. Kennebunkport: There's a reason America's wealthy war criminals own sprawling estates in Kennebunkport: its picturesque, gorgeous, livable, stretch of coastal Maine, always ready for its TV or Instagram close-up. If you've ever driven through Dock Square at 11 p.m. on a weeknight when it's snowing on your way home from a girl's house, you know it's beautiful year round.

1. Ogunquit: This iconic, Instagrammable seaside heaven is much more of a year-round destination than it was when I was younger. Even on a January morning, as the icy Atlantic air washes over the huddling seagull gangs in the empty beachside parking lots, there's nowhere more adorable and more iconically Maine than OGT. And I may be a straight white male, but I do think Ogunquit gets extra points for being unashamedly, trail-blazingly gay as hell.



WORDS / SPOSE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

PREPPING YOUR PLOT FOR THE LONG WINTER

WORDS & IMAGES / **DIRT DIVA**

I'M SO GRATEFUL FOR ANOTHER ABUNDANT SEASON OF LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND ME AND HOW GROWING HEALTHY CANNABIS IN OUR BACKYARD IS BEYOND KOOL. THIS GROWING SEASON WAS CLOSE TO PERFECT. THE HEAT AND HUMIDITY SEEMED TO BE THE INITIATOR THAT ENCOURAGED THE HAPPY PLANTS TO EXPAND WITH EVERY BREEZE AND SECOND OF DAYLIGHT; ALL THEY ASKED FOR WAS TO BE WATERED.

Nature provides elements that enhance our efforts to grow astounding clean weed. It's a gift. I appreciate magical seeds and sunshine. It sure does help life sparkle.

Backyard growers finished up the season independently prepared to go vote in the U.S. elections with no end of flower power and the liberties to take a puff with a much needed peaceful exhale. Let's hope our votes bring peace on earth.

Life feels a tad tense in the here and now, so why not take another puff and optimistically put your focus on garden clean up? Composting your backyard garden's debris will take away most of the noise and gently allow you to observe the soil conditions while collecting seeds from forgotten dried flower, herb, and vegetable remnants to contribute to your seed bank for the next growing season. Garden harvest cleanup conditions your soil to be less susceptible to disease and problem insects, which in return encourages a sunny welcome back next Spring.

Yard tarps are super helpful in 101 ways. For one, they move an extra large amount of branches, stalks, leaves, etc., with ease. Hauling the debris away feels productively satisfying. This is the time of year I am happy that I have a garden kneepad to use because the ground has become wet and cold. Having a handy notebook with envelopes and a pen to label and date seeds to compartmentalize them is a good thing, too.

Fall cleanup is an appropriate time to make soil building a priority and gives a grower hands-on examples of what is hidden in the microbes of fertile soil.

Most often we come across grubs that are likely Japanese or May/June beetles that are ready to overwinter. Japanese

beetle larvae are fat and dirty-white, with brown heads and the May/June Beetle are c-shaped white grubs with dark heads.

These beetles feed on decaying vegetation and perennial roots, including the grass roots of your yard. Japanese beetle grubs will live in the sod then surface in the spring and often are the cause of brown or bare spots in your lawn. As an adult beetle they will completely defoliate the plants for pollinators and the ones we like the most. The June/May beetles appear in a three-year cycle and will emerge to feed on the leaves of trees and shrubs.

Using the squish and smooch method is best for the occasional happenstance when you come across them working your soil. However, applying milky disease spores to your lawn and gardens will control/kill an overpopulation of these pests, but only in grub form, not the adult beetle. This combined bacteria creates an insecticide that is harmless to other organisms. You may apply the spores anytime the ground is not frozen. Here in the Northeast, it may be necessary to apply two applications per year until no indication of beetle damage to your lawn, plants, shrubs and trees is obvious.

In our fall clean up process, we can do our best to squish and smooch the beetle grubs, but do we really need to exterminate the species that is doing the damage? I think just curtailing its excess is best, even though the biological assistance of Mother Nature and her buddies may be slow to satisfy us. I'm still going with our best attempt to apply common sense organic practices over rushing out to the nearest garden center to buy an insecticide or pesticide powder or spray that will also kill the good bugs and hurt the eco-community. Conscious evolution matters; patience and faith have a good chance of allowing natural controls to come to our aid.

Basic organic efforts in pest management benefit gardens and enrich the growers' understanding about organisms and insects that are living in our backyard gardens. Encouraging beneficial insects such as ants, aphid midges, assassin bugs, big-eyed bugs, braconid wasps, centipedes, damsel bugs, ground beetles, hover flies, harvester butterflies, ichneumon wasps, lacewings, lady beetles, millipedes, minute pirate bugs, praying mantids, rover beetles, soldier beetles, spined soldier bugs, tachinid flies, tree crickets, tiger beetles, and

others. More than 90% of insects are beneficial pollinators, decomposers and predators.

If you are looking to up your game on identifying the beneficial insects to cohabitate within your living environment I suggest "The Organic Gardener's Handbook of Natural Insect and Disease Control," edited by Barbara W. Ellis and Fern Marshall Bradley. This book has photos and details so you can learn to identify the harmful pests or the imposters from the authentic beneficial insects because nature has a funny way of disguising friends and foes for survival purposes.

Building bird houses and placing them around your gardens is a good idea. Don't worry: You're not spoiling their efforts to find their own source of food. It's always nice to attract insect-eating feathered friends during the growing season and inviting winter songbirds into our cold season living environment. They're pretty, too.

The more organic matter you add to your soil — such as mowed up fallen leaves, aged animal manure, and an organic compost — the more you enrich the soil and increase its ability to hold moisture. When a grower adds a fine humus of clean compost onto the backyard garden, the amended soil is ideally constructing soil rich for earthworms and next year's outrageous cannabis. Earthworms and field worms are highly beneficial.

Unfortunately, I hate to have to mention that there are some nasty earthworm impostors invading our environment right now in the Northeast, known as "Asian jumping worms"! Oh, for fuq's sake — really? Yup, this is a possible buzzkill that has to be dealt with. The first indication that you have them is that they act like crazy squiggling worms creeping around the soil surface and with that, you will notice a crazy amount of worm castings resembling coffee grinds and cocoon eggs that are terribly hard to see ... eww!

I'm really freaked out to think about squish stomping on possible creepy worms, especially when I'm high, so goddess knows this is a big-time buzzkill. I don't want to play this game anymore, hahaha. What's with this zeitgeist already?

These crazy worms dramatically change the soil chemistry, destroy soil organisms, and will harm your outrageous weed plants' roots. They will quickly eat the leaf litter before it has a chance to make organic matter for your gardens and for our forests. These Asian jumping worms are asexual and will reproduce at an alarming rate.

They are often coming from garden nurseries that don't use 130-160-degree-heat-treated bulk mulch or compost and/or imported them from someplace else. Beware of the source! Remember that composted soil that has been prepared with



the highest standards to prevent these creepy worms from happening is the best stuff for your grow besides preparing your own compost.

Stay aware and keep to your organic goals/instincts when buying plants and compost. Be hands on and eyes wide open.

High heat temperatures is the only known cure to truly abolish them. Abrasive materials such as biochar and diatomaceous earth have shown to kill some of the adult

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jumping worms, but the hard-to-spot cocoon eggs in the very topmost soil levels of the garden will overwinter.

Commercial garden stores will recommend and use toxic products like Sevin. There is no guarantee that this poisonous chemical will remedy the crazy worm and its cocoon eggs, and then dang, there goes all the efforts toward a healthy and sustainable neighborhood ecosystem!



Solarization will destroy them. In late spring or early summer (they are late risers, even though they are not deep burrowers) cover moistened soil with a sheet of transparent polyethylene for two or three weeks or until the temperature exceeds 104F for at least three days. That should kill the worms and cocoon eggs and most importantly won't leave toxic waste in your family's backyard soil.

Having experience planting gardens closer to Father's Day than Mother's Day leaves no worries about giving our outrageous weed plants enough time to grow. They will have plenty of time, and that way you can keep the tarp on longer if it hasn't reached close to 104 degrees for three days yet. It's a collaboration of nature and good intentions. Keep the faith and save your money because chemical monopolies do not have our best interests at heart.

Safety matters, so be certain when buying any potted plant with an unusual amount of worm castings to take warning. Follow your instincts and look below the surface when purchasing compost or plants and use solarization if you suspect they may be in your garden. Pursue the challenge because in the end it matters.

Yeah, independence vs. ideology is a challenge ... if I was unfortunate to have acquired these crazy worms or even suspect it, I would begin a mission and lay transparent polyethylene sheets and bury the edges on the gardens this Fall as you are preparing the gardens for life in the cold. Pray for a very warm early Spring so it doesn't disrupt the planting season. Any leaf litter/mulch needs to be blown off the transparent tarps to allow the heat of the sun to do its thing as soon as the snow melt is gone.

Unfortunately, the deep-dwelling beloved earthworm surfaces

earlier than the late-May/early-June creepy crazy Asian jumping worms do, so when we pull those transparent tarps off suspected gardens in hopes of saving the good earthworm, well, that's asking for a miracle.

HARVEST AND SEEDS

On a much better note, I am still in the process of harvesting my 2024 cannabis plants, since I grew male and female plants to produce seed. The female photoperiod plants took all of October to mature and so, as I write this, I'm yet to have cured and stored all of the flower. My goal was to collect a bank of outrageous organic weed seed and if I don't get to a quality curing and storing of the flower, I will jar and possibly freeze the banged up flower and trim to pull out when I'm free to make some oil and tincture treats over the winter. Goddess knows we are grateful to have a bountiful harvest year after year, so thankfully lack of smoke isn't a problem.

Christmas gift giving to my stoner friends and family is going to be super easy for me this season: A glass or pottery vial full of outrageous organic weed seeds will jingle all the way.

My mission for this past growing season was to begin a substantial stash of seeds. I purchased a few packets of regular and feminized seeds from Seed & Soil in Monroe; they sell their own brand and also Humboldt Seed Company's seed.

I sowed three regular seeds in pots inside where they received an abundance of March's eager sunshine. They popped into the happiest little sprouts in no time and continued their growth there until late April, when I put them in the ground. Yeah, I was being a bit reckless planting them outdoors so early, but they were so strong and healthy that I figured if a frost was probable I would cover them. There were two females and one male. I didn't regulate them, I just let them do their thing. I spaced them quite far apart and the female plant flowers were chock full of gorgeous seeds by September and matured into October.

Since it's been years upon years since I have had buds with seed, I don't think I ever grew anything but feminized photoperiod plants, previously. So, busting up the flowers, some dried and some fresh, to collect the seeds was incredibly aromatic but also a sticky mess that I'm not eager to reproduce. Remembering how album covers were the easiest way to separate flower from seed, I randomly pulled out *Who's Next* and got it done. Well mostly!

Wishing Joy to all and peace on earth this holiday season and through the New Year.



WORDS / KATHRYN SHAY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

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