

HEMP INDUSTRY



Jerry Whiting

WHEN COLOR MATTERS

BEFORE YOU TURN THE PAGE, please note that this month's column applies to Cannabis as well as hemp. I want to take a broader approach than industrial hemp, which is legally limited to 0.3% THC.

Most consumers focus on two things in what they buy: THC and/or CBD. Those are the numbers shoppers focus on and in many cases determine what they buy. I glance at those same numbers myself. Project CBD calls them “the power couple” and rightly so.

Both interact with our endocannabinoid system (ECS), the network of CB1 and CB2 receptors. But there's more to Cannabis than just these two chemicals.

Terpenes are compounds the Cannabis plant creates like many other plants. Terpenes are the volatile, aromatic compounds that give hemp or pot its smell and taste. What's the first thing you do when you encounter new Cannabis or hemp? Smell it! Much of

what you're experiencing is due to the terpenes, and as the old saying goes: Your nose knows. In other words, if it smells good to you, there's a strong likelihood you'll enjoy the effects. Sometimes what smells good to you is good medicine, too.

In fact, the effect of specific terpenes is where Cannabis, herbology and aromatherapy overlap. Lavender has a calming, stress-reducing effect whether you smell it, bathe in it or find it in hemp or Cannabis.

IMHO, terpenes are almost as important – and together with THC and CBD – are responsible for The Entourage Effect: the synergistic effect of the chemical cocktail our favorite plant is famous for.

Read Dr. Ethan Russo's seminal paper if you haven't already.

With over 100 cannabinoids, almost 200

I'M TALKING ABOUT PLANTS THAT ARE NATURALLY PURPLE, WITH OR WITHOUT COLD WEATHER.

terpenes and things like flavonoids in what you smoke, eat or apply on your skin, the specific ratio of each and every one of them creates a unique experience. Unique to you at this very moment – shop accordingly.

Many hemp and Cannabis products are made using highly selective extracts like distillate and isolate. Focusing on THC or CBD alone doesn't evoke an entourage effect. It does however put high CBD or THC levels on the packaging. But without terpenes, flavinoids, anthocyanins and the other compounds, it creates a less well-rounded effect. Look for whole plant or full spectrum products with a deliberately wide profile of cannabinoids, terpenes and other compounds.

Some Cannabis and hemp cultivars have a genetic predisposition towards coloration, especially purple, or to a lesser extent pink and red. I'm talking about plants that are naturally purple, with or without cold weather.

A growing number of growers, processors and consumers alike seek out purple plant material and with good reason: These plants have elevated levels of anthocyanin, so they too need to be considered a facet of The Entourage Effect. They too interact with our endocannabinoid system.

Anecdotally, medical and recreational users alike report beneficial results consuming anthocyanin-rich Cannabis. Without formal research comparing two examples of the same cultivar – one

with anthocyanins and the other without – we're left to collate users' feedback and extrapolate the effects of anthocyanins in other contexts.

As a hemp processor and consumer, over the years I too believe there's magic in the purple.

My personal opinion is that purple plants have an adaptogen effect. If so, the presence of anthocyanins needs to be explored further.

Real research – with chemical profiles and human journaling and everything in between. I for one can't wait for the conclusions of said research.

Until then, I'm growing and processing all the purple I can get my hands on. #grin