

# The Hype About Hemp

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June 1 2022 8:27 AM



First, there was flax. Then chia. Now the latest food craze is hemp. It is a nutritional powerhouse and you can find it on your local supermarket shelves in the form of seeds, milk, and powder. Hemp contains all of the essential fatty and amino acids required by the human body. The seeds are an excellent source of protein, minerals, and dietary fiber.

Hemp is actually a variety of the cannabis plant and is grown commercially for its many uses including use as food, paper, textiles, rope, fuel, building materials, and even a fuel alternative. It's probably one of the most useful plants on earth.

Hemp cultivation dates back more than 10,000 years and hemp has been utilized for hundreds of products from food to fuel to fiber. The 2018 farm bill reclassified industrial hemp as a commodity crop, which made it legal. This opened up a world of possibilities. Hemp has the power to transform the environment and strengthen local economies while having a positive impact on the environment for the future of our children. Hemp is environmentally regenerative, restoring air, water, and soil.

## **What's the Hype About Hemp?**

Hemp grows almost anywhere in the world and can produce over 25,000 products. That would take more space than we have available to list, but let me tell you just a few of the great things about hemp.

Farmers who practice sustainable farming techniques know the importance of rotating crops by season. This keeps the soil nutrient-rich and increases the overall yield. Hemp is an ideal plant for crop rotation.

It enriches the soil while also removing toxins, and can reverse the effects of soil compaction and erosion. Growing hemp helps keep the soil healthy for years to come.

Hemp reduces carbon in the air by pulling CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere through phytoremediation, capturing up to 20 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per acre, and releasing oxygen back into the air. This reverses the effects of global warming! Hemp also produces more biomass than any other plant that can be grown in the U.S., which can be converted to fuel in the form of clean-burning alcohol, or no-sulfur man-made coal. Hemp has more potential as a clean and renewable energy source than any crop on Earth! It is estimated that if hemp was widely grown in the U.S. for fuel and/or energy, it could supply 100-percent of all U.S. energy needs.

Humans buy about one MILLION plastic bottles per minute! Even more crazy is that plastic water bottles can take up to 1,000 years to decompose. Sadly, only two percent of plastic bottles are recycled within the U.S.

The basic building blocks of plastics are cellulose derived from highly toxic petroleum. Hemp, on the other hand, happens to be the greatest cellulose producer on earth. The most amazing news is that hemp also happens to be biodegradable.

Biodiesel is produced by pressing hemp seeds to extract their oils and fats. After the extraction, the product is then put through more steps to make it into a usable hemp biofuel for vehicles. If processed correctly, biodiesel can be put into any diesel-powered automobile. It can be stored and transported like diesel, so there isn't a need to create a new system for transportation.

Hemp conserves water and is superior to cotton. It takes around 1,800 gallons of water to grow enough cotton to produce just one pair of blue jeans. In fact, cotton is one of the most water-dependent crops around and is quickly depleting our limited freshwater sources. Meanwhile, hemp requires minimal irrigation in comparison. A study comparing cotton vs hemp production found that it only takes 634–898 gallons of water to produce 2.2 pounds of hemp.

On an annual basis, one acre of hemp will produce as much fiber as two to three acres of cotton. Hemp fiber is stronger and softer than cotton, lasts twice as long as cotton, and will not mildew. Cotton grows only in moderate climates and requires more water than hemp, but hemp is frost tolerant, requires only moderate amounts of water, and grows in all 50 states.

Cotton requires large quantities of pesticides and herbicides—50-percent of the world's pesticides and herbicides are used in the production of cotton. Hemp requires no pesticides, no herbicides, and only moderate amounts of fertilizer. The majority of synthetic fibers we use today are manufactured from polymer-based petrochemical materials (AKA highly toxic materials). Producing these synthetic materials requires an energy-intensive process, burning large amounts of gas, coal, or crude oil. This type of manufacturing process releases toxic emissions into the air and into the fibers we wear every day. Nature has provided the solution to many of the planet's problems with hemp!

The use of the hemp plant can extend into every aspect of our lives—including our homes. Fiberboards made from a hemp-based composite are stronger and lighter than those made from wood. Not to mention the combination of hemp and lime (hempcrete) results in a soundproofing system and insulation superior to that of concrete. Hemp homes also provide a healthier living environment. Unlike fiberglass or drywall, hempcrete is nontoxic and mold resistant. Hemp homes are also shown to have incredible durability. One hemp home in Japan is estimated to be over 300 years old.

## **Hemp-based CBD Products**

Hemp-based CBD products provide a multitude of health and wellness benefits, many of which are changing the lives of the people that use them.

I haven't heard any negative comments about the wonderful properties of hemp mentioned thus far, but there is still some controversy surrounding CBD and hemp products. Why is that? Basically, hemp and marijuana come from the same species of plants. But they are NOT the same plant.

CBD, an abbreviation for cannabidiol, is a cannabis derivative – one of over 100 cannabinoids found in the hemp plant.

It simply comes from a cannabis plant. CBD is a non-psychoactive cousin of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol – the chemical responsible for most of marijuana’s psychological effects) which means CBD cannot, and will not, get you high. As long as your CBD is hemp-based, or comes from the hemp plant, it will not contain an amount of THC over 0.3%. Federal regulations on CBD currently require all CBD products to come from hemp in order to remain federally legal.

The human body contains a specialized system called the endocannabinoid system (ECS), which is involved in regulating a variety of functions, including sleep, appetite, pain, and immune system response. Studies have shown that CBD may help reduce chronic pain associated with aging, repetitive motion, or exertion by supporting a healthy inflammatory response within the body. The body produces endocannabinoids, which are neurotransmitters that bind to cannabinoid

receptors in the nervous system. CBD works with the body to use more of its own cannabinoids to help the body help itself. This is why studies have shown CBD to be potentially beneficial for such a wide variety of ailments with therapeutic and regenerative properties, benefitting the overall health of those who use it on a regular basis.

According to Harvard Health Blog, CBD is “commonly used to address anxiety, and for patients who suffer through the misery of insomnia...which may help with both falling asleep and staying asleep.” It also is an effective treatment for chronic pain, since the “CBD inhibits inflammatory and neuropathic pain, two of the most difficult types of chronic pain to treat.”

## **Riemann Hemp and Honey**

Ellen and Danny Riemann are Illinois natives, who live in Raymond, IL. Danny is retired from farming and Ellen retired in 2014 from a business she co-founded in 1985, Designer Landscapes, which is still in operation and going strong. It’s obvious they both know a little bit about growing plants. Originally they began beekeeping in their retirement, giving back to the pollinators that had given so much to them during their careers. They currently have 35 hives in six different locations and harvest honey from them all. They began producing CBD products when a friend began growing industrial hemp and mentioned it to them. After some research, they decided to give it a try also. Now, they also used beeswax in some of their CBD products. Riemann Hemp and Honey is about 30 miles south of Springfield.

CBD products are a bit pricey. One of the reasons is the labor it takes to process the plant to produce the products. Plants can be started from seed, but the Riemanns prefer to use clones. A hemp clone is a clipping of a hemp plant. Clippings are taken from

mature plants and they will copy the genetics of the original plant. Clones are also several steps closer to maturity than starting with a seed, to streamline the process and prevent problems with early growth. Another reason the Riemanns prefer to use clones is to make sure they only get female plants.

“We tried growing from seed one year and although they were guaranteed to all be female seeds, we ended up with some male plants, which we destroyed,” Danny explained. “What happens when you have both male and female plants is that the boy and girl plants will ‘mate’, which produces higher levels of THC in the plants.”

According to the Riemanns, their crops are tested by the government and if they contain over 0.3% THC, the crop is destroyed.

“We can’t risk that. It would be devastating to have our plants test above government regulations and the entire crop is destroyed.”

Starting such a business from scratch has had many trials and errors. For instance, early in the startup, the Riemanns had 4,500 plants. And although they do have a machine – a ‘bucking’ machine, that ‘bucks’ the buds off the stems – most of the growing, maintenance, and harvesting is done by hand. That includes watering, removing from the ground, and hanging to dry.

“That was just too overwhelming,” Ellen said. “Now we try to work with about 400 plants at a time.”

Studies continue to show CBD has a plethora of beneficial properties, with the most popular of these being: anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidative, pain relief, anti-seizure, and anxiety and depression relief properties. In medical field studies, CBD has proved its worth in a growing amount of trials. And it has certainly proved its worth in my life for the anti-inflammatory and pain relief benefits!

CBD products have also been shown to alleviate: headaches, nausea, muscle pain, back pain, hot flashes, depression, insomnia, cramps, digestive issues, acne, psoriasis, and many other conditions. If you don’t like taking over-the-counter medicines, or prescribed medicines like me, CBD products are an all-natural choice with no known detrimental side effects!

Last year, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Epidiolex, the first-ever cannabis-derived medicine for the treatment of seizures associated with two rare forms of epilepsy.

Many of the CBD products are made on-site at the Riemann's property but some of the product is sent to a company that can process them more quickly and efficiently, with commercial packaging and regulations labels. Products made at the Riemanns include pain creams, tinctures, body butter, and dog biscuits. Yes, CBD has health benefits for animals, as well as humans. Other products include oils, lotions, lip balm, capsules, body butter, gummies, salves, and roll-ons. On the honey side, you can find raw honey, creamed honey, and natural products made from beeswax: soap, lotion bars, sugar scrubs, lip balm, and more.

I have talked to numerous people that shout the praises of CBD products. Most talk about miraculous pain relief but others have said it helps them sleep. I personally have recent experience with CBD products, including those from Riemann, that I would like to share with you.

If you read our monthly Follow My Fitness column or follow The Buzz on social media, you are probably aware of the issues I have been having with my leg. Without going into great detail, the pain was not only excruciating, but debilitating... driving, even walking, was difficult due to the level of pain, and sometimes impossible. I don't like taking medicine, even just acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Doctors prescribed two different opiate (narcotic) analgesics – so you can imagine how opposed I was to that – but I had to do something! Those drugs are supposed to work by changing the way the brain and nervous system respond to pain, but they had absolutely zero effect. Along with the pain, I was beginning to become angry and depressed. I could barely walk from one end of the house to another, let alone do things I enjoyed like working in the garden or walking the dogs.

Tony saw my suffering and decided to go to a local dispensary to buy some pain cream that was highly recommended. With just a single application my pain level was the lowest it had been for months, and with multiple applications throughout the day, I literally had no pain. I was elated, as you can imagine! But there was one problem – the cost. The size of the container the cream was in was about that of lip balm and it was \$50. It would only last a few days. I couldn't afford that on a long-term basis. Then, on a trip to The Briar Rose in Litchfield, owner Danell Fogle and I were talking shop, dogs, and personal issues, as we always do, and Danell mentioned the products by Riemann, adding her own personal testimony. I grabbed some Full Spectrum Icy Relief Stick and was thrilled that for about the same price as the product at the dispensary, I was getting at least four times as much! If only it worked as well...

And it did! It worked – maybe better – making me a true believer.

Riemann's Hemp and Honey offers many CBD products including tinctures/oils, lotions, lip balm, capsules, body butter, gummies, pain cream salves, roll-ons – dog biscuits. Yes, CBD has health benefits for animals, as well as humans. Many of the CBD products are made on-site at the Riemann's property but some of the product is sent to a company that can process them more quickly and efficiently, with commercial packaging and regulations labels.

On the honey side, you can find raw honey, creamed honey, and natural products made from beeswax: soap, lotion bars, sugar scrubs, lip balm, and more.

CBD products, for both humans and animals, can be purchased all over Illinois. Consumers can buy CBD oil and hemp-derived CBD products from a variety of retail stores, gas stations, and kiosks. You may want to be careful where you purchase your CBD products though. In the summer of 2020, the FDA conducted a study on CBD products from different brands. They reported that roughly 25% of CBD products are either fake, under-dosed, or mislabeled. CBD is fairly expensive. If what you buy is super cheap, it's probably fake.

Save the hassle and buy CBD products locally from producers such as Riemann Hemp and Honey. Products offered by Riemann are available to purchase at The Briar Rose in Litchfield, Southern Roots Salon in Raymond, and Elkhart Station (north of Springfield – a business that sells only Illinois-produced products), as well as from the Riemann's facility next to their home. They also attend various markets throughout the year, including the Small Town Dreamers Market in Farmersville. The next Small Town Dreamers Market is scheduled for September 10.

“You can order from our website too,” Ellen said, “But if you are local, don't spend extra for shipping. If you can't come to us, we can probably work out a delivery option.”

Riemann Hemp and Honey is located at 23151 East 5th Road in Raymond, IL. If you are coming to visit, you probably want to call first to make sure they will be open /available. Call [217-254-4061](tel:217-254-4061) or [217-415-4739](tel:217-415-4739). For more information email [riemannhemphoney@yahoo.com](mailto:riemannhemphoney@yahoo.com), visit [riemannhemphoney.com](http://riemannhemphoney.com), or find them on [Facebook](#).