Monoculture farming for food crops affect all growers, since air has no borders!

The rise in pest plagues, certain diseases like oidium, botrytis, fusarium and powdery moulds are indirectly related to the rise in the practises of monoculture agriculture (single species agriculture).
Modern day greenhouse techniques for growing tomatoes and cucumbers have developed due to an all year round demand from the consumer, us! In turn certain preventative insecticides are used to control the actions of pests and fungal attacks, but these attacks carry on just move to other plants less well defended from them. This year an outbreak of macro-mites in Spain caused many indoor and outdoor Cannabis grower’s immense suffering from the cloning stage onwards and new diseases and pest plagues sit dormant waiting to attack when climatic conditions are in their favour. The enticement of greater yields, pest resistant crops and increased quantities of active ingredients, amongst other positive promises, with time, emerge as negative developments with devastating consequences. That is one folly of Man and there are examples everywhere to be seen. So how does the average Cannabis grower help combat large company’s claims and survive in this day and age?
The simple solution is to try your best to replicate Nature’s solution and that is to grow diverse and complimentary plants together rather than apart. So if you are an indica grower mainly and suffer each year from powdery mould around August/September, then plant several different (preferably local) strains or herbs like basil, thyme, mint, or garlic in a scattering around the indica clones. Consider adding a few sativa strains or different hybrids, not necessarily for the production of flowers or even to finish, but to act as decoys for pests in your garden. Read up and research Permaculture techniques and practises, it will aid you in all to do with your gardening. (This is a practise adopted in the 1970s by two Australians to aid self subsistence farming and mimic the local ecology of one’s flora and fauna.)

Monocultures used in agriculture are usually single strains that have been bred to be high yield and resistant to certain common diseases. As all plants in a monoculture are almost entirely genetically identical, if a disease strikes to which they have no resist-
ance, it can destroy entire populations of crops, whereas in a polyculture, some portion of the crop will usually survive due to natural variation giving some of them resistance. There is increasing support for moving away from monocultures towards a mixture of varieties as a way to limit the impacts of disease to these sorts of crops, and some studies have shown planting a mixture of crop strains in the same field to be effective at combating disease.

The environmental movement seeks to change popular culture by redefining the "perfect lawn" to be something other than a turf monoculture, and seeks agricultural policy that provides greater encouragement for more diverse cropping systems. Local food systems may also encourage growing multiple species and a wide variety of crops at the same time and same place. Heirloom gardening has come about largely as a reaction against monocultures in agriculture.

The promise of larger than normal yields, inevitably mean compromises of other traits such as flavour, aromas, effects and resin production. It is time to not only think of economics in a long term set up for your garden but to take into consideration more unique and special traits certain plants offer in lure of huge yields. This will increase cultivation of biodiversity within a plant strain and help evolving hybrids to adapt and flourish. Increasing grower numbers and biodiversity of Cannabis increases the chances of discovering new plants beneficial to medicine, food and industry.

Man began to grow local seed of plants species native to his area as well as travellers introduced unknown strains and that gave rise to a lot of unique pockets of agriculture. For example, this is why the merlot grape was favoured in certain regions and the tempranillo grape was favoured in other areas. Specialisation began and cloning of selected plants increased to guarantee a consistency in a final product as well as reliability from the plant. The similarities for Cannabis growers in certain countries begin to follow suit since larger operations are beginning to gain permissions due to medical reasons. But what comes with these so-called advances in developments is not always predictable and in many cases lead to devastation, soil leeching and over dependency on toxins and insecticides. Clones favoured and adapted to one area do not always perform as well in other areas close-by due to small ecological differences that cannot be measured. Therefore, it does not mean we all have to only grow what is popular because it is easy? Easy for some is difficult for others with the same setup and methods of cultivation, so be aware of this when using clones from another area or climate. The trial and error approach to sort out problems related to the environment can be costly and time consuming, and inevitably can lead some growers to give up hope and stop!

Cannabis growing is a skill that now has become a legitimate vocation depending upon the country you live in and the reasons or permissions that entitle you to grow certain numbers of plants. With experience of certain plant strains individual growers have lead the way and created trends or popularity of certain named hybrids. Stories grow along with the reputations of particular plants and tend to over grow the plants potential at times creating inflated legends. The new growers easily believe these urban legends and cause demands for these hybrids, and the cycle continues.

Selective breeding has lead our plants to the modern day ways of agriculture, flower production and food development. Humans have made mistakes. As a consequence of economic selection we have lost a lot of more specialised rare breeds of plants we had great diversity on before. Like the potatoes or apple! Cannabis has survived well due to its sub-cultural diversity and cottage farmer approach (unique pocket breeds being developed by hobby farmers worldwide). Due to an increase in legitimate Cannabis harvests for various reasons world wide, clone production has increased to make a consistent product once it is discovered, but it can cause a lack of diversity amongst growers. Monoculture is a choice not a necessity! So choose for genetic diversity first, and then the traits that fit best to your choice of medicine and we will avoid running down a path that has only a one-way direction!

We need every grower to be responsible for his and her world. Through honest education and making people aware we will do our best to help work with Mother Nature rather than add to the man made problems already seriously affecting us in the world. The plant kingdom has been evolving long before man came along, and it was doing fine. Let’s not be the species responsible for harming genetic diversity on earth more than we already have!