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Health & Fitness

The Pot Book: A Complete Guide to Cannabis
Julie Holland, editor
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Since the Drug Enforcement Administration was founded in 1973, millions of Americans have been arrested for marijuana offenses, contributing to the country's bulging prisons. And, while the costs of the government's war on marijuana run into the billions, federal surveys indicate that young Americans find it easier to buy marijuana than alcohol or prescription drugs, which are legally regulated and controlled.

With controversy heating up, and propositions to legalize marijuana appearing all over the nation, a book which educates, dispels myths, and elucidates the issues associated with this plant could not be more timely.

The Pot Book provides the reader with a panoramic view of the multiple uses of marijuana, *cannabis sativa*. Organized in five sections, the book offers important facts and expert opinions regarding marijuana's physiological, neurochemical, and psychological effects; its potential for medicinal uses; and its role in creativity, business, and spirituality. The politics of marijuana law, the relationship of pot and parenting, the co-evolution of humanity and cannabis, and other social dynamics are also covered.

Neither a political, enforcement, nor marketing pitch, this lengthy and thorough volume brings together the collective wisdom of professionals in several fields. Editor Julie Holland is a psychiatrist specializing in pharmacology, an assistant professor at the NYU School of Medicine, and editor of a book on another street drug: Ecstasy: *The Complete Guide*. She lectures widely on topics related to drugs. Contributors to *The Pot Book* include Andrew Weil, Michael Pollan, physicians, psychiatrists, attorneys, researchers, activists, comedians, a dealer, and a farmer who grows for the US government.

The result provides a broad range of knowledge in the subject, and an open forum for genuine discussion on the best course toward the use of cannabis. It also makes a convincing argument for the need to increase objective research, while recognizing the potential for abuse.

Finally, it attempts to identify the political, operational, and organizational changes essential to support these ideas, and proposes solutions to help implement the medical use of cannabis.

Throughout the book, research-based material is enhanced by interviews and stories, and the contributors' accounts of their personal experiences add a flavor of authenticity.

The Pot Book will appeal to a wide audience, and serves as a thorough reference for educators, clinicians, and families, as well as a training consultation manual. This volume makes an excellent transducer to help transform the failing war on marijuana into something more positive and enriching.

Richard Skaff