

The History of Pollinator

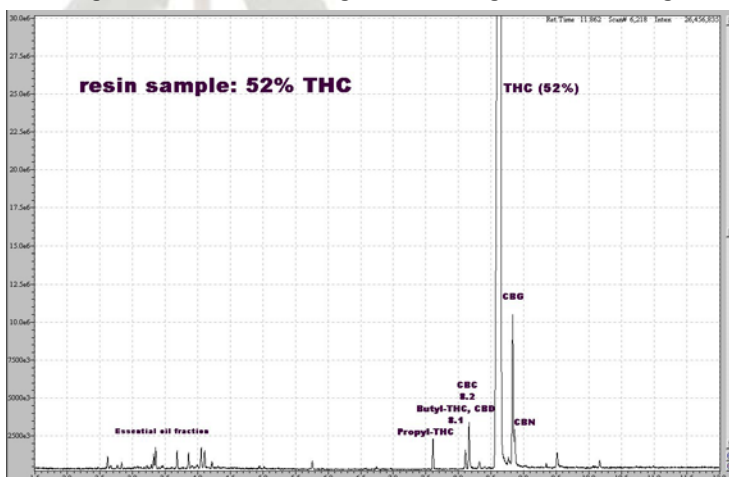
By Robbie Terris

Cannabis use in Holland has been accepted as a recreational substance for several decades although it is only recently that cannabis is being increasingly used in a medical context by many Dutch citizens. Cannabis is a most versatile and powerful drug in relation to the treatment of many conditions ranging from Multiple Sclerosis and Arthritis to HIV and Cancer to name but a few. At first Dutch medicinal use of cannabis was a personal affair with patients producing their own supply or buying small amounts from Coffeeshops. The Dutch cannabis industry began as a few individuals who had previously travelled the world and returned to Europe with some knowledge about Cannabis, as well as some strains from regions with long traditions of cannabis use, such as India. One such individual is Mila Jansen, Mila had lived in Amsterdam in the 1960's, experiencing the Hippie Culture and Hashish (The collected resin glands from the cannabis plant, which is then smoked). Mila then travelled the "the Hippie trail" via Afghanistan to Kathmandu.

In Mazar -I- Sharrif, Afghanistan, she saw at first hand the fields of cannabis growing all around. Later the plants would be cut, dried and then sieved through a fine silk screen. This process of sieving would be done on a cold winters night for two reasons. Firstly the cold air would be low in humidity, which is favourable as water can lead to the onset of mould. Secondly, lower temperatures harden the resin glands making them easier to remove from the plant. Later in the Himalayan valley of Kulu Mila observed Hindu Sadhus hand rubbing resin glands from living Cannabis plants. Plants that grew wild in secluded valleys and had survived the winter were considered to be the best, although in appearance they looked small and dishevelled in comparison to the tall plants which grow around the villages. Both methods of resin collection have been well practiced for hundreds of years in different climates. In dry climates where plants can be dried after the harvest sieving is the method used whereas in climates with heavy rainfall plants cannot be dried so the resin glands are collected straight from the plant.

In the late 1980's Mila returned to live in Amsterdam where she worked with a small group of Cannabis growers. Here she saw at close hand how cannabis growers were only harvesting the large buds and discarding large quantities of resin glands which coat the small leaves and small buds. These resin glands contain the active chemicals which gives cannabis its potency, THC , CBN and CBD. Mila and her friends were seeking a way to collect the resin glands from the discarded plant material. They would store all the dried leaf material until the coldest nights in winter, the extreme cold being ideal for extracting the resin glands, making them easier to work with. The leaf material would then be gently tossed over a silk screen to knock off the resin glands where they would be collected on a smooth surface beneath. This process, taken from the method as done in Afghanistan for thousands of years, was time consuming and laborious.

The Pollinator® machine was first invented by Mila in 1993 as a personal solution for hand turning leaf material to separate the resin from the plant material. The first model



was used by Mila in the indoor Cannabis garden she worked in. This was a very private production at the time but it was soon known that a new type of extremely high quality hashish was being made in Holland – “Nederhash”. In 1995 the first Pollinator® for public sale was made and unveiled by Robert Clarke at C.I.A., during the annual High Times Cannabis Cup, where it was marvelled at by many connoisseurs of hashish.

The Pollinator® machine contains a removable drum which can be opened for leaf material to be inserted inside. The drum is then closed and placed back inside the Pollinator® where it is turned by an electric motor. The resin glands on the leaf material fall through the precise fine screen around the drum onto the bottom of the Pollinator® container where it can be collected later. The quality of the Hashish is dependant on the length of time the drum is allowed to turn. A turning of three to five minutes produces top quality hashish (containing only resin glands and not any plant material, dirt or other impurities); longer turning results in a lower quality as the plant material is broken down and falls through the screen, again mixing with the plant material. The five minute turning of the Pollinator® produced hashish that traditionally would have taken hours of labour intensive work. This meant that Dutch growers of cannabis were easily able to make a small amount of excellent hashish from material that previously was seen as waste.

Not surprisingly at later annual High Times Cannabis Cups, Hashish, made with Mila's Pollinators® was entered by several Coffeeshops and were judged to be the best in the world when smoked alongside the best Afghan, Indian and Moroccan entries. Not a bad achievement for a lady who just wanted to be able to make a good free smoke for herself from material that was seen as waste... “In early spring 1993, the idea of the Pollinator was born. We used to make hash (I'm a hash smoker, rather than a marijuana smoker) sitting in cold rooms over a screen – gently tumbling waist leaf material in the air. A very slow and tedious method of collecting resin glands, producing only a few grams of pure product. One day I stood in front of the clothes dryer and realised – these cloths were tumbling the same way I tumbled my small manicuring leaves. I couldn't wait - within 12 hours we'd pulled an old clothes dryer apart and refashioned the drum to our liking and there it was – the first electric machine to produce hash*. Our department of research and design has now got three standard models which are good for 150, 500 and 3 kg at a time. We also have small handheld models and one huge machine The Dave, where you shovel your waste material in at one end. You can adjust the legs so you can determine how long the leaf tumbles, and thereby determine your quality. Anywhere between 3-5 minutes up to 20 minutes”

The Pollinator® machine was the first ever machine to be designed for the production of hashish. The hashish industry had gone unchanged for thousands of years due to the fact that silk screens used for sieving had not been improved. From selling the first Pollinators from her home Mila soon opened a shop where she had more time and space to work on the development of methods to improve the making of pure hashish. It was in this shop where Mila made her second breakthrough – the creation of the “Ice-O-Lator” method of making hashish.

Mila, a tailor and designer in the 1960's noticed that new fabrics and qualities of screens were being developed which would allow sieves to be made which were more precise than the silk screens being used for thousands of years. These precise screen fabrics allowed Mila to collect only the mature resin glands which are at their peak chemically and therefore in their activity. 'In 1997 we were practicing at home with jugs of water – but nothing came out of it really. The big water revelation didn't come till the Extractor came into our lives. Designed in the USA, manufactured in Yugoslavia they broke down a lot. Each one we sold broke down within 8 months. They were very heavy and expensive. For 9 months I stared at this machine and thought. And thought. All over the world people could by buckets stirring machines. And so, in the summer of 98 I sowed up my first Ice-O-Lator bags”.

This method of extracting the resin glands from the leaf material involved the use of water and ice. Leaf material is placed in cold water (4°C-38F) where it is agitated causing the resin glands to be knocked from the plant material. Gravity then plays its part as the oil filled resin glands sink and the plant material is left floating on the surface. With the aid of two precise

screens (one for the leaf material and the other for the resin) the desirable mature glands and the leaf material can be kept separately. This has proved to be the most efficient method of separation when taking into consideration factors such as time, purity and quantity. In the Coffee shops of Amsterdam Hashish made by this process is the most expensive and highly sought after type of hash as its potency and purity have become legendry. All over the world Ice-O-Lator bags have been sold which allow users to separate and collect their own resin glands.

The Dutch Government awarded a research subsidy to the Pollinator® Company in 2001. This research subsidy was for the sole purpose of investigating resin separation methods for use in Medical Marijuana. As a medical property, Cannabis has been found to aid a wide-ranging number of symptoms and demand for it in a medical context is growing. This subsidy has enabled Mila to expand her small research area and conduct tests on a daily basis. Some such tests include sonic separation and various wet and dry methods of sieving. Variety of Cannabis strains and growing methods are also factors to take into consideration. Cannabis strains vary, and yields and potency of the resin glands can be greatly different. Indoor Cannabis garden (using high powered light) will produce glands of a slightly larger size to those grown outdoor. All these factors must be taken into consideration when assessing quality of hashish. Microscopes, laboratory tests, and several other methods of examination should always be taken into when assessing the true condition of hashish.

Hashish as a substance is considerably easier to accurately distribute than marijuana. Storage, longevity, and consistency are all extremely important factors for those who would have to administer it in precise quantities. Marijuana has little consistency of active ingredients. As it is just cropped buds of the cannabis plant there is varying amount of stalks, leaves and other plant material that have no beneficial chemical properties. Moreover as the resin glands coat the buds, heavy handling or pruning can knock off the active resin glands, diminishing potency – hashish is pressed and therefore small and easy to store while also being simpler to divide into measurable doses. As many patients using “medical marijuana” would be taking long-term treatments where slight increases or decreases in dosage would be important, this would be considerably more practical.

Vaporisation is fast becoming one of the preferred methods ways of taking in cannabinoids as it only creates vapour and not harmful carcinogenic smoke. For sufferers of MS, arthritis or others, who desire a fast acting medicine at critical times to stop pain or enable muscle control, vaporisation has had a very beneficial impact. The vaporisation of very pure hash, which can be made with either the Pollinator® or Ice-O-Lator® method, has proven to be the healthiest way to intake cannabinoids. The lack of any impurities allows patient bodies to quickly breakdown only the active chemicals. Greater purity allows users to take less, while even consistency allows exact dosages. For many patients suffering from MS, Arthritis and suchlike an immediate medication is required when patients are ill, therefore instantaneous methods of intake like vaporisation are essential to their well-being.

At The Pollinator Company in Late 2001 there has been much activity. After Hashish made by our methods took first, second and third place in the Hashish category of the Annual High Times Cannabis Cup, there has been a steady stream of customers to the shop, all interested in how they can easily make their own Hashish. We are moving to larger premises in mid February and are busy preparing for the move. This will allow Mila to expand the Research and Development area and hold small seminars and classes.

With a small and dedicated staff behind her, Mila Jansen is looking forward to another year in the Dutch Cannabis Industry.

By Robbie Terris
with quotes by Mila Jansen