

# Poisonous weeds seen as drugs

Although not considered illegal, jimson plants are used as hallucinogens by some.

BY LINDSEY BAKER

"Smoking weed" may soon refer not only to marijuana use if a Nebraska trend continues.

The last two years have seen a rise in the use of jimson weed for its hallucinogenic properties.

The poisonous weed, native to Nebraska, grows annually in cultivated areas, said University of Nebraska-Lincoln Agronomy Professor Alex Martin.

He said the seeds germinate in late May, and the plant develops large, trumpet-like flowers and seed pods, or "fruit" that house the kidney-shaped seeds used for hallucinogenic purposes.

The weed isn't classified as a noxious weed or one that is highly invasive to Nebraska fields.

The weed - and consumption of it - is not illegal.

Both UNL police and Lincoln Police have not had any recent reports of jimson weed abuse, though 14 jimson weed poisonings have been reported to the Nebraska Poison Control Center in the last two years.

Madison County resident Amanda Ann McFarlin, 18, died last November after taking 25 jimson weed seeds and using methamphetamines.

Some UNL students aren't familiar with the drug.

"I've never heard of it," sophomore undeclared major Adam Potratz said. "If someone died from it, obviously there needs to



Jimson weed, shown here, grows in Nebraska.

Courtesy Photo

be more education."

Junior secondary education and language arts major Rachel Beck said the weed sounded familiar to her, but she had never heard of anyone using it for recreational drug purposes.

Students said prevention of jimson weed abuse might be difficult without laws prohibiting use.

"I think if it was legal, kids would probably do it," junior exercise science major Travis Siffing said.

Poison Control Center

spokeswoman Marcia Rasmussen said jimson weed can be smoked or brewed as a tea. Potentially serious side effects can occur five to 10 minutes after consumption.

Those effects could last up to 48 hours, she said.

In small doses, jimson weed produces dry mouth, thirst and sweating, Rasmussen said. In higher doses, blurred vision, light sensitivity, heart palpitations, increases in breathing and heart rates and cardiac irregularities

can occur.

In extreme cases, effects include urinary retention, constipation, an increase in body temperature, confusion, agitation, hyperactivity, visual hallucinations, seizures and, in rare cases, coma or death.

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture says four grams of jimson seeds is a fatal dose for children. Leaf ingestion can also lead to death.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

# Student government supports new license

ASUN from page 1

Riley Peterson, first vice president, said Nebraska licenses, which are laminated pieces of paper, are well-known as being easy to replicate.

"Nebraska's license is like the easiest to forge," he said. "I've heard stories that on the East Coast, there's a lot more Nebraska students than there really are."

On the other hand, ASUN voted to lobby against LB582, which was introduced to the Legislature by Sen. Gene Tyson of Norfolk.

Student government is against the bill because it allows for presumption of consumption. In other words, minors could be charged with MIP simply by looking or acting as if they're drunk at the discretion of police.

The bill also allows undercover minors to go into a party to provide probable cause for police to enter the party, Echternacht said.

"It's stepping on the rights of minors, which make up a significant number of students on campus," he said.

In other news:

ASUN approved a bill to endorse a single class ring for graduating seniors. With this endorsement, the Nebraska Alumni Association will move forward on selecting a design and a company of the ring.

Urrvano Gamez, special topics committee chairman, said that he favors a single-style class ring because it would serve as an identifying mark that a student went to UNL.

"I think it's a good idea not only because it builds tradition -

it's nice to be able to spot somebody when you're old and have a connection with them," he said.

Student government also decided to enact ASUN Polling Day on Tuesday.

The survey will poll students about controversial issues, including whether they think student government should lobby on behalf of the student body for or against certain legislative matters.

The polling day was proposed by Arts and Sciences Sen. Nathan Fuerst, who is also running for ASUN president under the Score! Party ticket.

The survey is more succinct, Fuerst said, than ASUN Awareness Day, which was held in November. During that day, students were asked simply if they knew of services that ASUN provides.

"We're not holding anything back this time. We're going straight for the jugular," he said.

ASUN senators will survey students in the Nebraska Union and in and around the Nebraska East Union from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Four new senators were appointed to represent their respective colleges - Timothy Dorn, agricultural sciences and natural resources; Dan Mauler, arts and sciences; Michelle Schrage, business and Cristina Camacho, journalism.

ASUN senators also extended a reminder to graduating students: Seniors who want to graduate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln need to bring \$25 for a graduation application to the Canfield Administration building by Friday.

## Journal Star writer cited for indecent exposure

Lincoln police cited Journal Star sports writer Steven M. Sipple, 34, for indecent exposure early Tuesday morning when a dancer at Mataya's Babydolls, 5600 Cornhusker Highway, removed a towel from Sipple's lap and discovered he was exposing himself.

The exposure was witnessed by the dancer and a security guard.

## Teenagers escape train, car collision

Lancaster County sheriff's deputies reported a car and train collision Tuesday night at 162nd Street and Highway 6 near Waverly.

The three Lincoln teenagers involved got out of their car before the train hit and were unharmed by the collision.

The teens, ages 16, 17 and 18, were in the area to read a plaque commemorating the death of another teenager when a train struck his car several years ago.

The icy conditions caused the car to slide off the road and

## Law & Order

high-center on the tracks.

The driver of the vehicle, 16-year-old Amy Brock of Lincoln, saw the train coming, and she and her two passengers jumped out of the car before it was struck by the train.

Brock was taken to the hospital for shock and released.

Compiled by Charlie Kauffman

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 Tuesday, Feb. 13, 8 p.m. CT (7 MT); Monday, Feb. 19, 1:30 p.m. CT (12:30 MT)

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