

Hemp-derived CBD, whether in the form of flower, a tincture or cream, oil, edible or non-combustible, has risen in popularity at near breakneck speed. So quickly, in fact, that if you are unfamiliar with its history, you may think CBD is relatively new. The history of CBD use may surprise you.

As it happens, hemp, or as it's known by its Latin name, *Cannabis Sativa L.*, has been around for many thousands of years. The only thing that's changed between then and now is the technology that's used to extract the cannabidiol, or CBD.

Ancient China's Wealth of Knowledge

As is also the case with bamboo, hemp is one of nature's most adaptable and resourceful plants. [Emerest Abel](#), PhD (a professor emeritus of Wayne State University) noted in his research that China's dynasties began using hemp for a variety of needs starting in 10,000 B.C., among them: to make paper, create rope, to bury people in, for clothing and to make the strings used in bows and arrows.

While researching for his book [Marihuana, the First Twelve Thousand Years](#), Dr. Abel discovered that the first verified use of hemp for medicinal reasons happened as far back as 2700 B.C. What Dr. Abel learned is that Emperor Sheng Yung, considered to be the father of Chinese medicine, used hemp for a variety of purposes

Without access to present-day technologies to create the over-the-counter painkillers we reach for today, like acetaminophen and ibuprofen, as well as antibiotics, people turned to nature. Back then, hemp was used to treat a number of ailments such as general pain, gout, beriberi (a condition caused by vitamin B-1 deficiency), menstrual pain, constipation, [rheumatism](#) and malaria.

Chinese physician Hua Tuo (also spelled T'o) developed a combination comprising hemp and various herbs to create a rudimentary anesthetic as recently as 2017 A.D. Dr. Tuo used this anesthetic to perform multiple surgeries including [laparotomies and removal of diseased tissue](#). There is also evidence that Dr. Tuo used hemp to perform a splenectomy.

The Progression of Hemp and Cannabis Use in Different Regions of the World

Chinese civilizations may have been the first to begin using hemp for health and practical purposes, but evidence shows that the practice of using hemp eventually spread to other parts of the world. In 1300 B.C., traders along the [spice and silk routes](#) sold hemp to aid with a number of ailments including malaria, dysentery, fever and asthma.

Archeologists discovered that [Pharaoh Ramesses II](#) was mummified using hemp, but the practice of using hemp in Ancient Egypt began long before the pharaoh was interred. Ancient Egyptians were known to use cannabis and hemp to treat depression, cataracts, glaucoma, hemorrhoids, pain and inflammation, and even cancer. Indeed, [between the 11th and 15th centuries](#), hemp was

commonly used to reduce epileptic seizures. Credited with this discovery are Arabic scholars al-Mayusi and al-Badri.

Napoleon Bonaparte discovered the pain-relieving benefits of the plant on a rather ill-intentioned expedition to Egypt during the 1790s. [Napoleon](#) brought this “new wonder drug” back to France, where it would later be discovered to offer relief from coughs and jaundice.

19th Century Discoveries and the First Medical Trials

While [hemp and cannabis come from the same plant](#), there are two major differences in the end products, one being that hemp contains less than .03% of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is responsible for the psychotropic effect it causes (this is the high that is commonly associated with cannabis). The other difference is the result of that first. In spite of these differences, the very presence of THC in cannabis has caused the plant, and any extracts that come from it, to be restricted and even criminalized (depending on the state or country). On the other hand, hemp, with its absence of THC, means that CBD is an [estimated \\$9.3 billion industry](#).

Physician, researcher, pharmacologist and pathologist, Dr. William O’Shaughnessy (1808-1889) of Limerick, Ireland, was a pivotal figure in cannabis research during the mid-1800s. Just three years after graduating from medical school at the age of 21, Dr. O’Shaughnessy left the forensic toxicology lab he founded to become an [assistant surgeon for East India Company](#).

Dr. O’Shaughnessy was moved to conduct his own research on the benefits of the plant, following a thorough examination of the history and medicinal benefits conducted by Ayurvedic and Persian physicians from both India and the Middle East. After testing on rodents, dogs and cats to determine the plant’s safety, Dr. O’Shaughnessy added humans to his clinical trials.

Some very important discoveries were made during Dr. O’Shaughnessy’s trials:

- The frequency and severity of epileptic seizures were reduced.
- Rheumatism sufferers experienced a dramatic decrease of their debilitating pain and inflammation.
- Patients affected by rabies saw a reduction in their hydrophobia (an extreme fear of water, which is a common symptom of rabies). (Louis Pasteur’s vaccine for rabies wouldn’t be developed for another 45 years.)
- Cholera patients gained relief from diarrhea (a symptom of cholera), which allowed the body to rehydrate and heal.

Adding to these integral findings, many of which have only been recently re-[discovered by researchers](#), Dr. O’Shaughnessy is widely accredited with determining the difference between [male and female cannabis and hemp plants](#).

The Downfall of Hemp Cultivation Across the U.S.

From the 1600s to around 1890, hemp production in the U.S. was heavily used for the purpose of making textiles. By 1618, every farm was required by the Virginia Assembly to grow hemp simply to meet the growing demand. And by the 19th century, many medicinal products sold in pharmacies across the U.S. contained hemp.

At the start of the Mexican Revolution (1910 – 1924), there was a massive influx of Mexican refugees into the U.S. During this time, attitudes began changing regarding the plant. What was once seen as a practical and medicinal plant was quickly being regarded as dangerous and unwanted.

By 1936, the same year that saw the release of the movie [“Reefer Madness.”](#) Americans had already begun looking upon the once revered plant with much skepticism. The propaganda surrounding “evil weed” from Mexico made it far too easy for the Marijuana Tax Act to be passed by Congress in 1937. This act placed a \$2 tax on every ounce of cannabis or hemp sold, essentially barring its growth or use. In terms of today’s prices, that would be \$36.71. If a user could pay as little as \$50 for an ounce of hemp flower (depending on the strain), having to pay an additional \$36 would be utterly outrageous.

To make matters worse, in 1937 the company DuPont was awarded the patent for nylon, basically closing the door on the hemp industry overnight. In order to create nylon, [petroleum](#) and high amounts of heat are used to bind plastic and [polymers](#).

President Richard Nixon officially declared the War on Drugs in 1971 by adding the cannabis plant to the [schedule 1 list of dangerous drugs](#). This decision put cannabis and hemp, as there was no distinction made between the two, in the same league as actual dangerous drugs such as heroin.

The History of CBD Includes Modern Day Discoveries of the Past

Israeli researcher Raphael Mechoulam made some integral discoveries about the medicinal benefits of the still-illegal hemp plant. The CBD cannabinoid was found to be safe and effective in [the reduction of seizures associated with epilepsy](#). Twenty-eight years after this discovery, the first cannabis-based, small biologic drug, Epidiolex, was approved by the FDA to treat Lennox-Gastaut syndrome and Dravet syndrome, which are both known to cause frequent seizures.

Researchers discovered [CB1 and CB2 cannabinoid receptors](#). The most common cannabinoid receptors in the nervous system are CB1s, which are required for healthy brain function. They do this by assisting to regulate mood and anxiety. Meanwhile, CB2 receptors control the body’s immune response to viruses and bacteria. As well, they help to reduce inflammation.

The National Health Institute (NIH) has committed millions of dollars toward cannabis and CBD funding, verifying [CBD’s effectiveness as a treatment for multiple afflictions](#). And in 2013, CNN’s medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta gave a surprising but needed endorsement for cannabis and CBD. Dr. Gupta reiterated his stance on cannabis and CBD near the end of the first

quarter in 2014, maintaining that both [THC and CBD](#) were safe and effective at providing myriad medicinal benefits.

In 2014, [NIH concluded that](#), “at this time, there does seem to be a growing body of basic pharmacologic data suggesting there may be a role for CBD, especially in the treatment of refractory epilepsy.”

Around the same time, CBD oil producers began popping up all around the country, recording \$548 million in sales. When the Farm Bill was expanded in 2018 to include nationwide hemp cultivation, as well as CBD oil and other extracts, sales in the CBD industry had [swelled to \\$7.1 billion](#). [A Gallop poll](#) conducted in 2019 revealed that consumers have been using it for many of the same reasons that people have throughout history.

Why Zen Garden Organics Complements Your Active Lifestyle

If the rising popularity of CBD products has piqued your interest, the size of the industry may have you feeling confused as to which companies are deserving of your business. One thing that is clear is that not all of them are reputable. Many of these companies source their hemp from producers that use [pesticides and herbicides](#) (such as Roundup) during the growing process, and many still are grown using chemical fertilizers.

Additionally, synthetic CBD like K2 and Spice have been found to be circulating. These synthetic forms of CBD have been linked with serious health risks, including death. There is only one concrete way to make sure the CBD products you're buying are pure. When looking at the company you're interested in, check to see whether they use [third-party testing](#) to validate their products. If they don't, it means they won't disclose what's in their product, and you should definitely look elsewhere.

All of the hemp-derived CBD products sold by Zen Garden Organics are made using the safest method of CBD oil extraction. Only the best [ingredients are used to](#) complement the health and wellness benefits of our CBD oil. Why trust your body to anything less?