

Growing marijuana is a serious crime in North Carolina

Written by Australian Business

September 20, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- Growing marijuana is a serious crime in North Carolina

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Over the last several years, societal attitudes surrounding marijuana use have changed significantly. Whereas marijuana use was once seen as something that was only acceptable in edgier social groups, it is now much more mainstream.

Unfortunately, this increased acceptance has given some marijuana users a false sense of security. It is important to remember that marijuana is still illegal under both federal and state law, and that getting caught can have serious legal consequences. This is especially true when it comes to growing marijuana, even if the grow operation was relatively small and there was no evidence of large-scale drug distribution.

An example of the serious consequences of marijuana cultivation can be found in a recent case involving a North Carolina mother and son who were arrested in August 2013 after law enforcement received a tip that marijuana was being sold out of their home. Upon executing a search warrant, police discovered three marijuana plants being grown in the family's backyard. The plants had an estimated street value of \$3,200.

After the seizure, both individuals were charged with a number of serious offenses including felony possession of marijuana, manufacturing marijuana and maintaining a dwelling for controlled substance. Both have been detained pending a late September court date.

North Carolina marijuana penalties

Many people decide to grow their own marijuana because it seems safer and more convenient than trying to find someone to buy it from. From a legal standpoint, though, growing marijuana is a much riskier endeavor.

Under North Carolina law, the possession of anything less than 1.5 ounces of marijuana is a

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misdemeanor that is punishable, at most, by 120 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine. By contrast, the cultivation of anything less than 10 pounds of marijuana is a felony that can bring up to 24 months of incarceration. Growing anything more than 10 pounds carries a mandatory minimum sentence of at least two years in prison.

If the charges are brought under federal law, the penalties can be even more severe. Growing fewer than 50 plants is a federal felony punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Anything between 50 and 99 plants carries the possibility of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$1,000,000.

Of course, selling any excess marijuana will only result in additional trouble.

Because of these serious penalties, anyone who has been accused of growing marijuana would be wise to enlist the help of an experienced North Carolina criminal defense lawyer. The lawyer will be able to evaluate all of the facts and evidence in the case to help fight for the best possible outcome.