

Siberian Experiment to Grow Drug-Free Hemp Fails

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Wild hemp growing in a similar climate in Inner Mongolia. **Gregory Jordan**

An experiment to grow narcotic-free hemp in Siberia ended in failure when plants with a high concentration of psychotropic substance THC grew from seeds supposed to produce non-psychoactive cannabis.

Authorities in the Siberian region of Buryatia launched the experiment this summer in a bid to eradicate wild cannabis, growing in abundance in the area, the Baikal Daily reported Tuesday.

A local farmer bought some 300 kilograms of drug-free cannabis seeds and planted them over three hectares.

"We planted seeds of various types, with and without fertilizers," said Nimazhap Badmayev, a scientist involved in the project.

But it turned out that the supposedly non-psychoactive plants contained 0.7 percent THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the principal psychoactive substance in cannabis.

"It is seven times above the maximum concentration level," Badmayev said.

According to the scientist, the region's arid climate is the main reason behind the failed experiment.

"Our climate is extremely continental, with low precipitation. So the plant adapts itself to our dry climate by increasing the concentration of THC," he said. "No matter how much of this nice foreign hemp you plant, our local [cannabis] will force it out."

THC levels in domestic cannabis species can reach up to 1.45 percent.

The debacle did not prevent the republic's agriculture ministry from announcing another tender, worth 350,000 rubles (\$10,800), for planting various types of drug-free hemp in a local field.

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