

# Spice: Substance is Illegal in Texas

From Page 1

Skunk, Moon Rocks, and others—and labeled “not for human consumption”—these products contain dried, shredded plant material and chemical additives that are responsible for their psychoactive (mind-altering) effects.

For several years, Spice mixtures have been easy to purchase in head shops and gas stations and via the Internet. Because the chemicals used in Spice have a high potential for abuse and no medical benefit, the Drug Enforcement Administration

(DEA) has designated the five active chemicals most frequently found in Spice as Schedule I controlled substances, making it illegal to sell, buy, or possess them.

Manufacturers of Spice products attempt to evade these legal restrictions by substituting different chemicals in their mixtures, while the DEA continues to monitor the situation and evaluate the need for updating the list of banned cannabinoids.

Spice products are popular among young people; of the il-

licit drugs most used by high-school seniors, they are second only to marijuana. Easy access and the misconception that Spice products are “natural” and therefore harmless have likely contributed to their popularity. Another selling point is that the chemicals used in Spice are not easily detected in standard drug tests.

The State of Texas, in 2011, passed a bill banning K2 or Spice and made the possession of K2 a misdemeanor. However, manufacturers and sellers would be charged

with a felony.

The 2011 bill added synthetic marijuana products to the Penalty Group 2 class of drugs under the Texas Controlled Substance Act, along with “bath salts.”

The bill created six subclasses of synthetic cannabinoids that street chemists have been using to create a series of very harmful legal drugs illegal, as well as a new penalty group to regulate the substances.

“It’s a dangerous drug, more dangerous than marijuana itself, because of the concentrated, synthetic chemical compounds,” said Kraft. “And, with the increased amount of usage seen in our area as of late, we are going to go after (Spice) to the fullest extent of the law.”

Earlier this fall, law enforcement officials in neighboring Hobbs, N.M. conducted a major Spice bust from head/smoke shops in their community, where an estimated \$88,000 worth of the illegal product was seized.

“These stores were using loopholes to deal these drugs to our youth and citizens and are reaping huge profits from it,” said Chris McCall, Interim Chief of Police for

the HPD in a press release received by the *Sentinel* shortly following the bust.

“The dangers that are posed to our community from these synthetic drugs are too great. These products are sold in retail shops commonly known as smoke shops. The name of the business establishment alone would indicate there is no intent for these products to be sold as incense.”

**How Is Spice Abused?**

According to the NIDA, some Spice products are sold as “incense,” but they more closely resemble potpourri. Like marijuana, Spice is abused mainly by smoking. Sometimes Spice is mixed with marijuana or is prepared as an herbal infusion for drinking.

**How Does Spice Affect the Brain?**

In a NIDA study, Spice users report experiences similar to those produced by marijuana—elevated mood, relaxation, and altered perception—and in some cases the effects are even stronger than those of marijuana. Some users report psychotic effects like extreme anxiety, paranoia, and hallucinations.

So far, there have been no scientific studies of Spice’s effects on the human brain, but we do know that the cannabinoid compounds found in Spice products act on the same cell receptors as THC, the primary psychoactive component of marijuana. Some of the compounds found in Spice, however, bind more strongly to those receptors, which could lead to a much more powerful and unpredictable effect.

Because the chemical composition of many products sold as Spice is unknown, it is likely that some varieties also contain substances that could cause dramatically different effects than the user might expect.

**What Are the Other Health Effects of Spice?**

Spice abusers who have been taken to Poison Control Centers report symptoms that include rapid heart rate, vomiting, agitation, confusion, and hallucinations. Spice can also raise blood pressure and cause reduced blood supply to the heart (myocardial ischemia), and in a few cases it has been associated with heart attacks. Regular users may experience withdrawal and addiction symptoms.

## Drought: From Page 1

ous week. The amount of land in extreme or exceptional drought—the two worst classifications—increased from 18.3 percent to 19.04 percent.

The Drought Monitor’s map tells the story, with dark red blotches covering the center of the nation and portions of Texas and the Southeast as an indication of where conditions are the most intense. Those areas are surrounded by others in lesser stages of drought, with only the Northwest, Florida and a narrow band from New England south to Mississippi escaping.

A federal meteorologist cautioned that Wednesday’s numbers shouldn’t be alarming, saying that while drought usually subsides heading into winter, the Drought Monitor report merely reflects a week without rain in a large chunk of the country.

“The places that are getting precipitation, like the Pacific Northwest, are not in drought, while areas that need the rainfall to end

the drought aren’t getting it,” added Richard Heim, a meteorologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Climatic Data Center. “I would expect the drought area to expand again” by next week since little rain is forecast in the Midwest in coming days.

He said there was no clear, scientific explanation for why the drought was lingering or estimate for how long it would last.

“What’s driving the weather? It’s kind of a car with no one at the steering wheel,” Heim said. “None of the atmospheric indicators are really strong. A lot of them are tickling around the edges and fighting about who wants to be king of the hill, but none of them are dominant.”

The biggest area of exceptional drought, the most severe of the five categories listed by the Drought Monitor, centers over the Great Plains. Virtually all of Nebraska is in a deep drought, with more than three-fourths in the worst stage. But

Nebraska, along with the Dakotas to the north, could still see things get worse “in the near future,” the USDA’s Eric Luebbehusen wrote in Wednesday’s update.

The drought also has been intensifying in Kansas, the top U.S. producer of winter wheat. It also is entirely covered by drought, and the area in the worst stage rose nearly 4 percentage points to 34.5 percent as of Tuesday. Much of that increase was in southern Kansas, where rainfall has been 25 percent of normal over the past half year.

After a summer in which farmers watched helpless as their corn dried up in the heat and their soybeans became stunted, many are now worrying about their winter wheat.

It has come up at a rate on par with non-drought years, but the quality of the crop doesn’t look good, according to the USDA. Nearly one-quarter of the winter wheat that germinated in poor or very poor condition, an increase of 2 percentage points from the previous week and 9 percentage points worse than the same time in 2011. Forty-two percent of the plantings are described as in fair shape, the same as last week.

Farmers who might normally irrigate in such circumstances worry about low water levels in the rivers and reservoirs they use, and many are hoping for snow to ease the situation. But it would take a lot. About 20 inches of snow equals just an inch of actual water, and many areas have rain deficits of a foot or more.

## News Briefs

### 4-H Christmas Parade Set for Dec. 13th

Float entries are currently being sought for the 22nd Annual Lighted Christmas Parade, sponsored by the Gaines County 4H Club.

The parade will be held on the evening of Dec. 13, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

This year’s theme, according to event organizers, is entitled “A Rock ‘n Roll Christmas.”

Cash awards and prizes will be determined on the number of float entries and the deadline to register an entry is Tuesday, Dec. 11.

Float entries may be made by contacting the Gaines County AgriLife Extension Office at (432) 758-4006, extension 140.

A copy of rules can also be provided by the Extension Office.

As in year’s past, Santa Claus is anticipated to be the Grand Marshal of this year’s parade, and is expected to meet with children on the western

grounds of the Gaines County Courthouse shortly following the parade.

### Museum to Hold Open House

Friends of the Gaines County Museum announces sponsorship of the Fifth Annual December “Open House,” which will pay tribute to art students in the Seminole Elementary School.

Ms. Lee Nell Mayes’ 5th grade art students will be displayed throughout the museum, and the public is invited to the yearly event, scheduled to be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 11.

Attendance is free of charge, and refreshments will be served.

The annual event is a “come and go” function giving the visitor time to view the children’s art work.

Visitors will also have an opportunity to see new exhibits and historical items relating to the five cultures that help define our unique history.

For more information call the Gaines County Museum at (432) 758 4016 or send your inquiry to: seminolemuseum@co.gaines.tx.us.

## Obituary

### Peter Peters

Funeral services for Peter Peters, age 46 of Seminole were held Friday, November 23, 2012 at 2 p.m. at Community Church with Pastor Rick Klassen officiating. Burial will follow in Gaines County Cemetery. All services were under the direction of Boyer Funeral Home.

Mr. Peters passed away Monday, November 19, 2012 at Covenant Medical Center in Lubbock following a sudden illness. He was born April 4, 1966 in Mexico to Anna (Reimer) and Diedrich Peters. He married Helena Peters August 7, 1988 in Seminole. Mr. Peters has lived in Seminole since 1986. He worked in construction and was a member of the Old Colony Mennonite Church.

Peter enjoyed wildlife, fishing and hunting, and was a very hardworking man. He is preceded in death by one son, Johnny Peters in 1995; and two brothers.

Peter is survived by his wife, Helena Peters of Seminole; two sons, Benjamin Peters and Abraham Peters of Seminole; two daughters, Margy Peters and Mary Bergen and husband Willy of Seminole; two brothers, Isaac Peters and wife Annie and Isidro Peters of Seminole; two sisters, Kathy Reimer and husband Jake of Seminole and Annie Wiebe and husband Peter of Seminole and parents, Diedrich and Anna Peters of Seminole.



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