

Changing the federal legal status of marijuana could boost research, ease confusion

June 22 2016

Marijuana has never been highly regarded by the federal government, which considers it a dangerous and addictive drug. But many states have legalized marijuana for medical purposes and four states allow its recreational use. Now, activists are calling for the drug to be reclassified to make it easier to study its health benefits and untangle regulations, according to the cover story of *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society.

Britt E. Erickson, a senior editor at C&EN, explains that a patchwork of varying pesticide regulations has caused confusion for legal [marijuana](#) growers. Marijuana, also known as cannabis, is currently listed as a federal Schedule I drug, the most dangerous kind. Because of this, the Environmental Protection Agency can neither assess the health hazards of pesticides on the crops nor approve their application. This makes it illegal for growers to use pesticides on marijuana. But some environmental [activists](#) think they have a solution. They argue that reclassifying cannabis as a less dangerous substance would pave the way for testing pesticides on legal crops and thus lower the public safety risk.

Strict federal restrictions on marijuana also affect researchers in other ways. If the Drug Enforcement Agency were to downgrade marijuana, scientists would have easier access to the plant to study its medical and therapeutic effects. Some say this would eliminate a huge barrier that researchers have previously had to work against. Additionally, the Food

and Drug Administration would be able to regulate facilities that produce edible cannabis products.

More information: Is it time to relax marijuana's legal status?
[cen.acs.org/articles/94/i25/Pr ... arijuanas-legal.html](https://cen.acs.org/articles/94/i25/Pr...arijuanas-legal.html)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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