

What are the evolutionary origins of modern-day marijuana?

The cultivation of marijuana has much longer roots than we previously understood, [according to \[a new\] study](#) — including evidence that our cultivation of pot may have led to the extinction of pure, wild, ancient strains of [cannabis](#).

Cannabis “is one of the first cultivated crop species,” Luca Fumagalli, a co-author on the study from the University of Lausanne’s Laboratory for Conservation Biology, tells *Inverse*.

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From their DNA analysis, the researchers build phylogenetic trees that show the relationships between and evolution of four genetically distinct groups of cannabis.

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The origin of cultivated or domesticated cannabis can be traced to East Asia, including parts of modern-day China. The finding challenges previous research stating that cultivated cannabis originated in Central Asia.

The split between ancient basal cannabis and modern cultivated cannabis occurred roughly 12,000 years ago.

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This study takes a remarkable first step in tracing the evolutionary origins of modern cannabis, especially at a time when many lawmakers are reconsidering whether or not to legalize the drug.

The evolutionary findings challenge the traditional legal divide between hemp and pot, suggesting it might be more arbitrary than scientific in reason.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.**](#)