



# ROOM TO BREATHE

High Country Genetics' decision to use Smart Pots' aeration-promoting container product has allowed the California company to grow bigger cannabis plants with healthy root systems.

In 2007, Dustin Fraser was filling out paperwork at the California Department of Agriculture to acquire a producer's certificate for his small farm, and he found an ad for Oklahoma City-based Smart Pots' commercial tree bag. Smart Pots had been promoting the product since 1980, but the wording of the ad struck him, as it de-

scribed an innovative approach to growing healthy plants.

Fraser, who lives in Mendocino County in northern California, went on to form High Country Genetics, and the Smart Pots have been an important part of his cultivation plans ever since he stumbled on that ad.

Smart Pots had been promoting a bag that reduced heat

ABOUT

## HIGH COUNTRY GENETICS

**Year Founded:** 2015

**Location:** Mendocino County, Calif.

**Cultivation Space:** 10,000 sq. ft. of mixed light greenhouse and outdoor cultivation;

12,000 sq. ft. of nursery space

**No. of Employees:** 4

**Products/Services Offered:** Seeds, cuttings, flower, concentrates

buildup and aerated the root zone, allowing plants to develop large, healthy root masses.

"I thought that was a pretty nice concept," Fraser said. "I had grown in all different types of plastic containers, ... different grow bags, I'd used every type of grow container there was—multiple styles of growing—but I'd never seen an aeration container before." He began working with the product in hydroponic, greenhouse and outdoor settings, and he found that his yields were increasing when he used the Smart Pots—which are BPA-free and lead-free. "It's a great way to cultivate. It's an American-made product that lasts a long time."

The gist of the Smart Pot system is that it circumvents

the costs of ball-and-burlap cultivation while actively pruning a plant's root structure and allowing it the room it needs to become a healthier cannabis plant. After being developed first at The Tree Farm in Oklahoma, the product line has gone on to be sold around the world.

For cannabis growers in California's formerly gray market, the product proved to be a success.

"One of the biggest changes Smart Pots did was they helped change the way people cultivated," Fraser said. "They gave people an affordable, easy way for medical patients to cultivate very large plants on restricted plant count numbers. They allowed the mom-and-pop gardener who can legally grow only six plants

apiece in their yard ... to grow monster plants that could produce upwards of 10 pounds per plant. They gave the small gardener the ability to produce a huge yield."

And the product fits into grows of all sizes: At The Tree Farm, Smart Pots' tree bags support larger crops. At High Country Genetics, Fraser said that the bags have been invaluable for how he's worked in the rapidly evolving cannabis industry.

Fraser, who's also expanding his business into Oklahoma's new medical marijuana market, adds, "They set a new standard in garden set-up, and I attribute to them the changing techniques throughout Mendocino and Humboldt County. It allowed far more people to garden with a smaller amount of space or with less-desirable terrain—especially if they have poor soil or they're on a mountainside. They allowed that ... gardener to really get a good root mass on the plant and grow a large plant."

Back in 1980, the product was a simple solution to an ongoing problem for growers in many horticulture industries. And today, that solution remains the same.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HIGH COUNTRY GENETICS