Weed

No book on Maui during this time period would be complete without a stony chapter. Yes kiddies, if your parents live on Maui back then they probably smoked weed, no matter what they tell you. I was a part of a group of people who figured out how to grow killer buds by trial and error experimentation. There was no cloning, grow lamps, hydroponics or medical marijuana back then. We were all under 30 years old learning how to grow from experience and sharing growing tips. No older growers existed to teach us. Many have followed in our footsteps and are growing today, but nothing compares to this OG golden age of discovery on Maui.

The four tales in this chapter come from my years growing killer buds in Hana that became known as "Maui Wowie". All the tales and photos in this chapter are from before 1980 and describe the highs and lows of growing buds in Hana back in the day. There are many stories about the development of the pot that became known around the world as "Maui Wowie", most of it bullshit. I actually thought the name was stupid the first time I heard it, it sure didn't come from Hana. All these stories are true tales from my bud growing days in Hana with photos to back them up. I have lost track of most of the people in this chapter. The following tales happened a long time ago in a far out place, during a era that is long gone.

"Maui Wowie" the Beginning" is the story of the fun days of growing buds in the Nahiku jungle.

"The Pakalolo Poster Trip" shows the results of a stony idea to make Maui bud posters in 1977.

"Uncle Joe's Ripoff" tells a tale of how the dark side took over growing buds for money in Hana.

"Tomato Rotten" chronicles the mishaps of my last attempt to grow buds at my place in Hamoa.

This chapter is about great friendships and deep betrayals as the forces of human nature changed the mellow, beautiful lifestyle of growing buds in Hana. Just to be clear, all the tales and photos in this chapter are for historical purposes only and are not meant to promote or condone illegal activity. Like alcohol, I don't advocate or object to people using pot responsibly.

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Maui Wowie, The Beginning

After years of experimenting with ways of producing the sensemilla buds so common today, I started growing pot commercially by myself in the jungle above my place in Nahiku in 1975. We all grew outside in the beginning because there were no helicopter Five-O raids yet. Even rip offs were somewhat rare. Once another grower found one of my patches in the jungle and left a note on my pot to come over for a beer. We were all guerrilla growers in the beginning and it was really fun. Some of the growers even had a softball team called the Nahiku Gorillas that played other teams at the Hana ballpark. These were the peaceful glory days before the government raids, rip offs, and other crap that made growing a dangerous job about money. While I sold some of my buds, I also turned a lot of people on. There was a certain amount of pride in being a master bud grower.

I planted in 10 gallon bags and hauled every thing I used up the jungle stream beds, which left no trails. Sometimes it was a bitch, especially when the streams flash flooded, but other times it was paradise with waterfalls, deep pools and no critters that could hurt you. My Nahiku cabin had a old metal shed that hid things and was perfect for drying buds. Growing in the jungle was difficult, but if you knew what you were doing you could harvest elbows (lb) of tasty, dakine buds worth more than their weight in gold. I would have made a fortune if George Harrison hadn't bought my Nahiku stash house and kicked me out. But, I did harvest all my patches down there after moving to upper Nahiku.

My buds quickly got a reputation for being "dakine" and were always in high demand. From locals to the rich and famous, my buds really kicked ass. Willy and Kristofferson bought a lot of my weed. I won the "best buds" contest between growers one year and the quarter oz of coke prize. I always had a paper shopping bag full of buds to share with people. That got me a lot of "Aloha kokua, mahalo bumbai" and it seemed I was always welcome wherever I went.

Growing weed was a lot of fun in those first few years and helped distract me from a painful divorce. It was also critical in financing my photography and building the farm in Hamoa, which all kind of happen at the same time.

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View from My Stash House

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Nahiku Garden of Eden

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Cooling off in the Office Pool

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Nahiku Jungle Patch

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Nahiku Jungle Flash Flood

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"Maui Wowie, The Beginning"

Maui Wowie?

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Browne wrecks the Drying Shed

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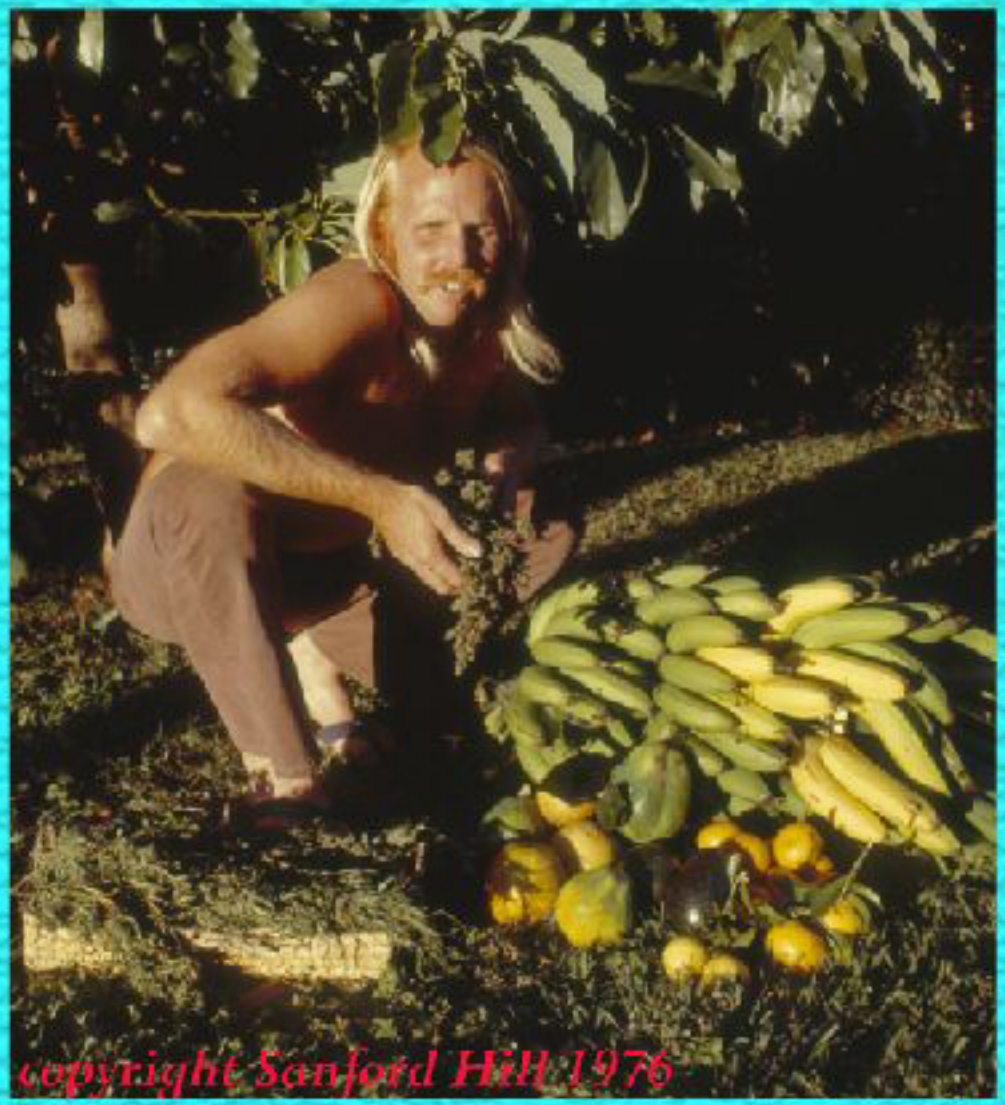

Hana Harvest 1976

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Pakalolo Poster Trip

One of the problems of growing killer buds is that you smoke a lot of them and come up with ideas that sound great when your high. In 1977, me and a good friend figured we could make a fortune selling posters of our buds, which were better than anything shown in the new High Times magazine. We paid his brother in law and girlfriend to fly over from Oahu to model for us and I shot these photos. It was a real fun shoot that was totally off the wall, even back then. All the photos are posed and the models have nothing to do with the pot, which is why we used models. We harvested the buds as the photos were taken and they were smoked or sold a long time ago.

I wanted to capture not only the unreal buds, but the fantasy lifestyle of growing in Hana. My friend really did live in the jungle shack in upper Nahiku that's in the photos. The water fall was near by and the bud hedge was real, until the first helicopter raid forced him to pull them out. He hid the pot in a cave and replanted it when the raid was over. We all didn't have much respect for the law.

I lived in the jungle near by at that time and remember the first "green harvest" raid by the National Guard well. I was awaken by this racket and opened my back door to see what the hell was going on. There was a helicopter gun ship hovering over some trees close by with all its weapons pointed at me. I was naked and raised my hands in mock surrender. The raid was kind of a cartoon, total overkill, and didn't find any of my plants. The worst thing was the attention the raids brought to our secret little paradise. Soon everyone knew there was a lot of pot growing in Hana.

Luckily, we never got it together enough to actually make, and sell, the posters, which would have brought even more unwanted attention to our bitchen lifestyle. I found out later that someone I knew stole the idea, and took photos of some girls with Maui buds and began selling them. They were all promptly arrested. Karma?

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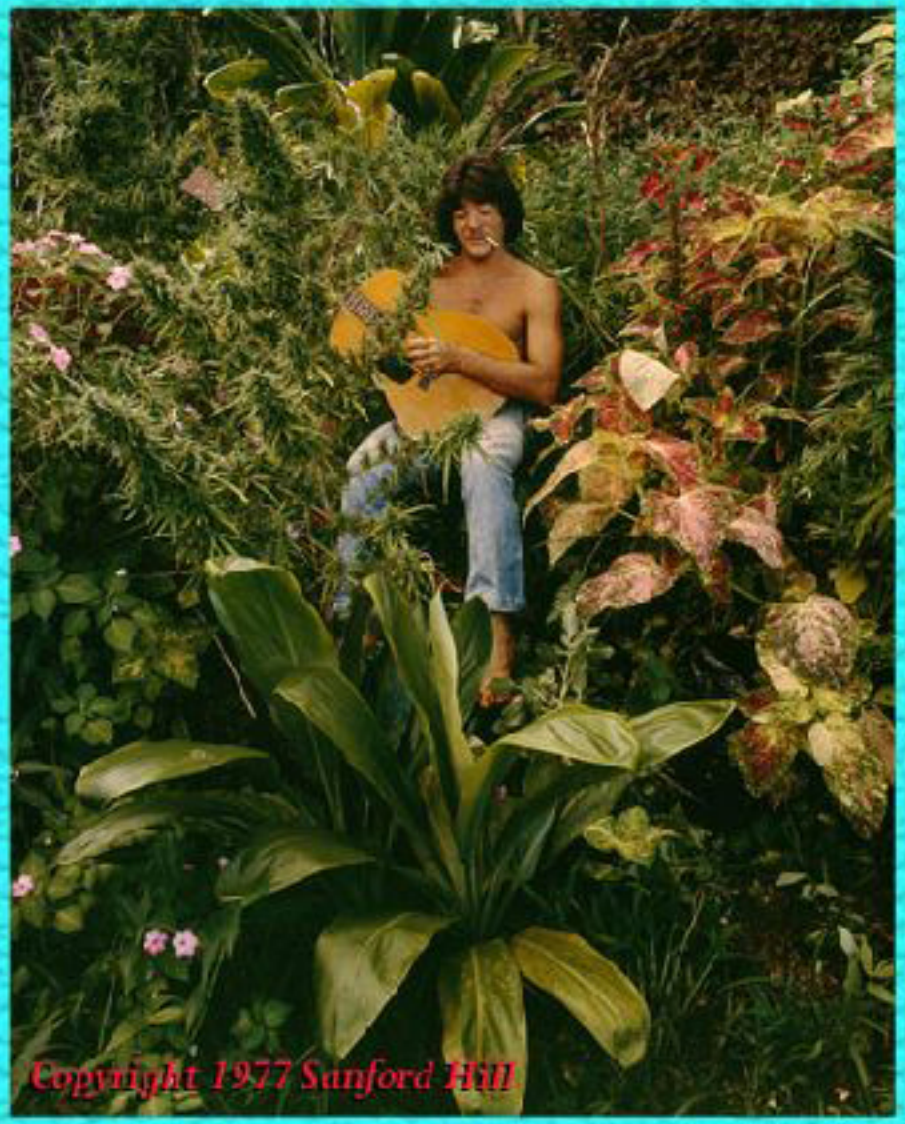
"Pakalolo Poster Trip"



Nahiku Jungle Music

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Nahiku Jungle Shack

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"Pakalolo Poster Trip"

Dakine Hedge

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Playing in the Garden

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Jungle Love

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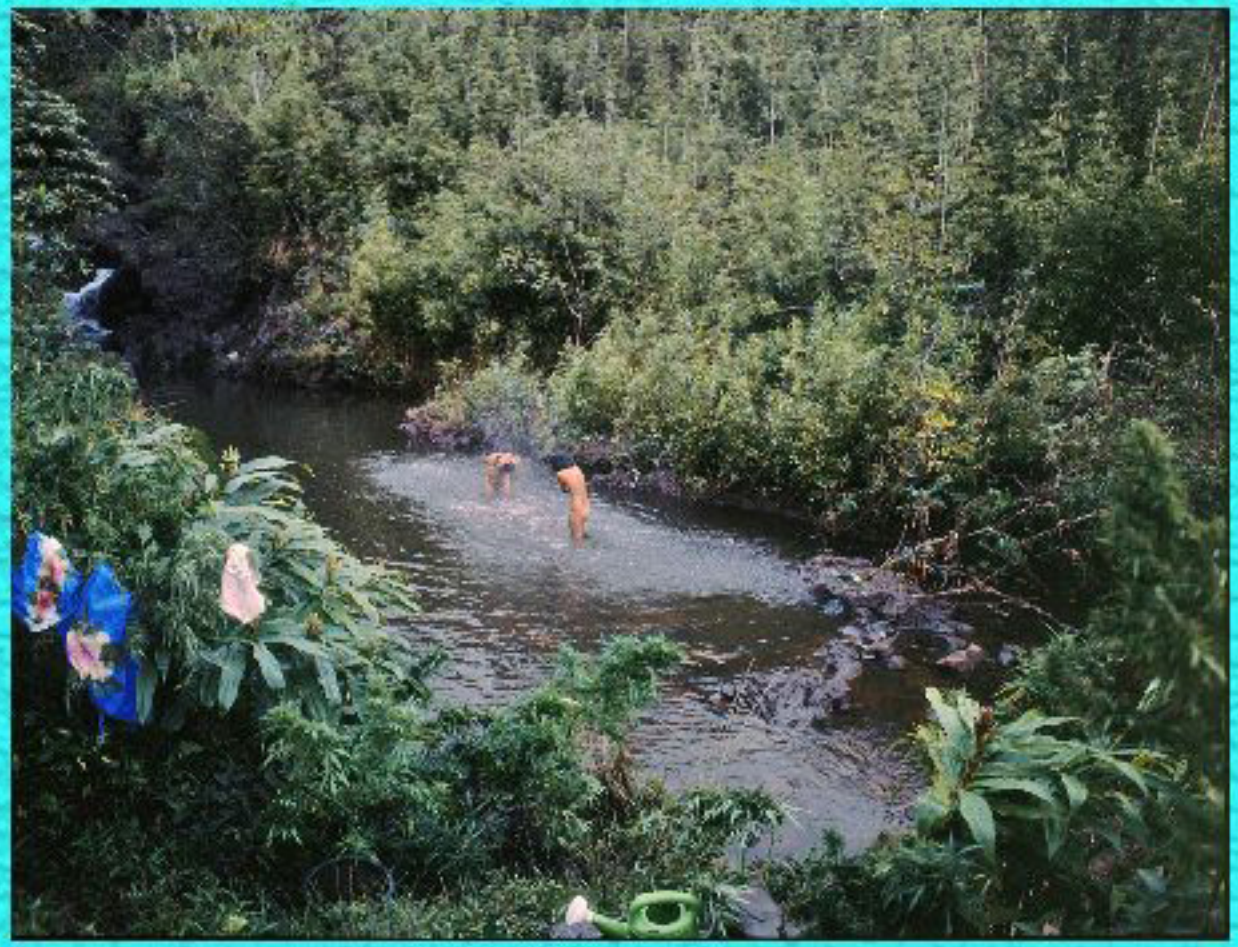
"Pakalolo Poster Trip"



Too Much Fun

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Pakalolo Pond

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Bringing Home the Goods

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Monster Buds

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Uncle Joe's Ripoff

This is a tale of what happened when I got to cocky and trusted the wrong person to grow with in 1977. Uncle Joe was a older Hawaiian man who lived in Hana and leased 20 acres of undeveloped land next to mine in Hamoa. He seemed like a nice guy who carried a deputy state sheriff badge and revolver. He was also well connected to the heaviest criminal syndicate in the state. Most people don't know how connected drug dealers and the government people really are.

I had made a lot of money growing pot in Nahiku, but it wasn't enough to pay for and develop my land in Hamoa. Knowing and selling to the biggest drug dealers on Maui and partying with a prosecuting attorney gave me a sense of power and over confidence. I figured with Uncle Joe's resources and protection I could grow enough to retire. I had a big head and got stoned a lot.

Joe tapped into the main Hana water line, we hauled up truck loads of mix , and used a cement mixer to prepare soil. We grew 250, 12ft tall, female maxed out Afgan-Thai plants. I was one of a very few people at the time who knew how to grow this kind of killer bud on a large scale. I didn't really trust Uncle Joe but knew he couldn't grow pot like this without my experience and skill. I didn't think he was stupid enough to ruin a such a profitable trip. Boy was I wrong.

Uncle Joe was greedy and dumb. He would have gotten half of the $500,000. in 1977 dollars those plants were worth and we could have planted for years. But, that wasn't good enough for him. After we trimmed the first 10 lbs, all the pot was ripped off while I was partying on the other side. I found out later that Uncle Joe and his friends did it. I also found out later that he had killed my two German Shepherds that I really loved and was thinking about killing me.

I played dumb and told Uncle Joe that I quit growing pot, which was true. Growing was no longer fun and the price not worth the hassle. I concentrated on building the farm house above Hamoa and threatened to turn in anyone I found growing up my road. This story is about the lost of innocents because people who were to lazy and ignorant to grow their own became rip offs.

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Welcome to The Jungle

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Going for Broke

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End of Innocents

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Tomato Rotten

In a few years I'd finished the Hamoa house and was living up there broke again. Things cooled down and Uncle Joe was no longer a factor. So I tried growing pot on a large scale one more time with a good partner of mine who I'd been surfing and partying with since I moved to Hana. He had also been growing around Hana for along time and was as experienced as I was. He had developed his own strain of seeds and was starting pot in a hot house, planting only the females. It made growing a lot easier. Soon total indoor growing became the only way to go.

Moving the young plants from his hot house to our land became a comedy of errors. A week after we finished moving the plants up to our grow spot using my army truck and 4x4 tractor, the government began a large "green harvest" operation. I didn't think they had found anything until I saw a little scout helicopter slowly searching around the giant Mango tree were we had hidden our plants. We spent the night moving the plants off our land. My friends were not happy about that, but the government had started confiscating land pot growers owned. A few days later six National Guard helicopter came screaming up from ocean and search my land good. They found nothing. The cost of searching my land was far greater than we would have made from the Weed.

My friend thought I'd lost my nerve and he was right. We split the plants up and they moved their plants to other patches. I never grew large scale with partners again, and planted my share of the weed here and there. These are photos of that pot.

In 1982 my photography was published internationally and within a few years I was doing video production on Maui and Oahu. By the mid 80's I was working in LA for a film studio. I returned in 1989 to sell my land as there was nothing for me in Hana anymore. No one I knew was ever arrested for pot, or anything else, and I'm sure the statutes of limitations ran out a long time ago for anything illegal we may have done back then. This may be the only record of those times.

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New Ways of Growing

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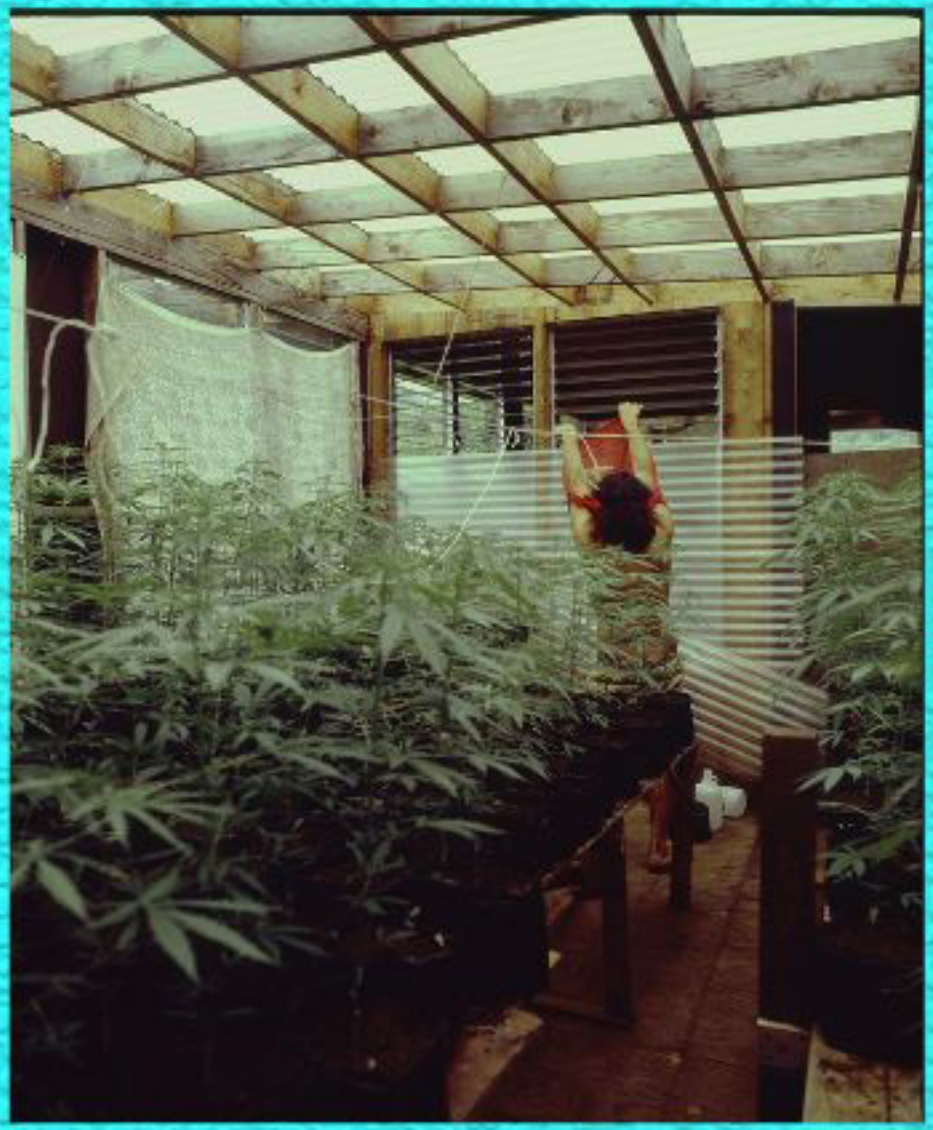

Taking Care of Da Babies

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"Tomato Rotten"

Jungle Tech

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Planters Moon

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National Guard Green Harvest

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The Survivors

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"Tomato Rotten"

Harvest Moon

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Weed

"Tomato Rotten"

High above Alau Is.

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Last Harvest

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