

**DOMESTIC MARIJUANA  
ERADICATION PROGRAM**



**2002 ANNUAL REPORT**



**Prepared for Governor Jeb Bush,  
Members of the Florida Cabinet,  
State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies  
by the**



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# **Domestic Marijuana Eradication**

## **2002 Annual Report**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Florida's warm climate and wide-ranging rural woodlands provide a fertile environment for the criminal to cultivate cannabis plants (marijuana). The eradication of this product at the source immediately strikes a blow against drug dealing and abuse by reducing the availability of marijuana on our streets. Eradicating marijuana before it can be cultivated also increases citizen and officer safety and reduces overall investigative cost.

Through the coordination of the Domestic Marijuana Eradication (DME) Program, federal, state and local law enforcement authorities have found a cost effective and measurable means to prevent a sizable amount of domestically cultivated marijuana from reaching our streets. This is evidenced in the statistical success of Florida's DME Program and its federal counterpart, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program (DCE/SP). For over twenty years, the combination of these two programs and the support they have received from federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities has resulted in the detection of over 23,000 illegal grow sites, eradication of over 2 million marijuana plants valued over \$1.57 billion and the arrest of over 8,700 cultivators in Florida.

Since its inception in 1981, the Florida DME Program has set national standards and has served as a role model for other states. In addition to being known for its progressive program, Florida's DME program is also noted for its specialized law enforcement training in the areas of aerial detection and indoor grow investigations. During 2002, the program in concert with DCE/SP continued its work in this area by providing specialized training for federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies at no cost to their agency.

The Florida DME Program's success is due to its ability to support law enforcement efforts and adapt to the changing culture of the illicit cultivator. The initial Florida DME Program mainly focused on the outdoor cultivation of marijuana. However, due to the success of the aerial detection program and with the increase in Florida's urbanization, the illicit cultivator has moved indoors. For that reason, the Florida DME Program now supports law enforcement efforts to eradicate outdoor and indoor marijuana sites.

## HISTORICAL DATA

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PLANTS ERADICATED</u>	<u>NUMBER OF GROWING SITES</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ARRESTS</u>	<u>ESTIMATED VALUE</u>
1981	48,206	No Record	61	\$18.0 Million
1982	43,500	341	149	\$16.3 Million
1983	139,707	903	286	\$52.3 Million
1984	106,645	769	426	\$40.0 Million
1985	104,281	1,272	329	\$39.0 Million
1986	97,408	1,332	333	\$36.5 Million
1987	96,842	1,498	335	\$36.3 Million
1988	134,794	1,568	358	\$50.4 Million
1989	79,176	1,153	259	\$79.1 Million
1990	92,901	1,148	330	\$92.9 Million
1991	105,066	1,801	690	\$105.1 Million
1992	243,452	1,893	784	\$243.4 Million
1993	145,384	2,033	696	\$145.3 Million
1994	99,862	1,406	501	\$99.8 Million
1995	102,075	1,260	437	\$102.0 Million
1996	96,661	1,059	362	\$96.6 Million
1997	108,178	1,144	477	\$108.1 Million
1998	55,311	604	404	\$55.3 Million
1999	56,838	573	466	\$56.8 Million
2000	32,219	611	408	\$32.2 Million
2001	28,206	551	325	\$28.2 Million
2002	37,897	550	347	\$37.8 Million
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>2,054,609</b>	<b>23,469</b>	<b>8,763</b>	<b>\$1.57 Billion</b>

## 2002 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

During 2002, successful aerial detection techniques continued to be a vital part of the effort to eradicate domestically cultivated marijuana. Other investigative techniques such as ground searches and surveillances were also used to counter this illegal activity. The Florida National Guard at no additional cost supported each one of these techniques.

In 2002, cultivated marijuana was identified in 54 of Florida's 67 counties. Through the efforts of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and the Florida DME Program, a total of 550 indoor and outdoor marijuana grow sites were detected, 37,897 marijuana plants were eradicated and 347 marijuana cultivators were arrested. These efforts reduced the potential of over 37,000 pounds of marijuana from being illegally distributed on our streets and in our communities.

A closer examination of the overall 2002 effort revealed that marijuana production in Florida spanned the entire state, from the sophisticated indoor grow sites to the use of isolated woodlands for outdoor cultivation. Examination also revealed that Miami-Dade County led the state in the eradication of marijuana by seizing a total of 4,934 plants, followed by Walton County, which eradicated a total of 3,479 plants.

Historically, the primary focus of the Florida DME Program has been on the disruption of outdoor grow sites in Florida and the use of federal funds received annually from DCE/SP to support these efforts. However, in 2002 the Florida DME Program also began utilizing the federal funds received from DCE/SP to support law enforcement efforts to investigate and eradicate indoor marijuana grow sites. These efforts resulted in the detection and dismantling of 181 indoor marijuana grow sites in 37 Florida counties and the reimbursement of some local law enforcement investigative expenses.

Violence associated with marijuana cultivation continues to be a concern for law enforcement authorities and the recreational users of public lands. The fact that Florida has not experienced a significant problem with booby traps or violence can be partially attributed to the Florida DME Program and the aggressive eradication efforts by law enforcement agencies. In 2002, there were no incidents of violence or booby traps reported in connection with cultivation activity. However, 347 firearms were seized from the 550 indoor and outdoor grow sites detected in 2002.

## 2002 STATISTICS BY COUNTY

(Florida counties participating and reporting statistics in the DME Program)

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>INDOOR</u>		<u>OUTDOOR</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>		<u>ARRESTS</u>
	<u>SITES</u>	<u>PLANTS</u>	<u>SITES</u>	<u>PLANTS</u>	<u>SITES</u>	<u>PLANTS</u>	
Alachua	11	815	11	389	22	1,204	12
Baker	0	0	5	531	5	531	1
Bay	5	18	7	90	12	108	6
Bradford	0	0	1	89	1	89	1
Brevard	1	9	4	41	5	50	3
Broward	22	1,503	0	0	22	1,503	25
Calhoun	1	73	4	174	5	247	3
Charlotte	1	3	3	21	4	24	2
Citrus	0	0	2	34	2	34	0
Clay	3	1,121	3	231	6	1,352	8
Collier	3	247	3	696	6	943	4
Columbia	3	87	9	536	12	623	10
Dade	45	4,934	0	0	45	4,934	47
DeSoto	0	0	1	402	1	402	0
Dixie	1	646	3	477	4	1,123	3
Duval	6	925	17	280	23	1,205	16
Escambia	5	65	13	196	18	261	13
Flagler	1	104	0	0	1	104	1
Gilchrist	0	0	6	58	6	58	0
Gulf	0	0	7	110	7	110	3
Hamilton	0	0	1	137	1	137	0
Hardee	0	0	2	136	2	136	0
Hernando	5	183	7	62	12	245	5
Highlands	2	21	8	134	10	155	7
Hillsborough	5	630	0	0	5	630	5
Holmes	0	0	6	2,868	6	2,868	1
Indian River	3	273	2	9	5	282	8
Jackson	1	2	11	222	12	224	3

## 2002 STATISTICS BY COUNTY – Continued

(Florida counties participating and reporting statistics in the DME Program)

<u>COUNTY</u>	<b>INDOOR</b>		<b>OUTDOOR</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>ARRESTS</b>
	<u>SITES</u>	<u>PLANTS</u>	<u>SITES</u>	<u>PLANTS</u>	<u>SITES</u>	<u>PLANTS</u>	
Lafayette	0	0	3	169	3	169	0
Lake	2	7	3	50	5	57	2
Leon	0	0	1	25	1	25	0
Levy	1	186	18	479	19	665	17
Manatee	1	1	8	83	9	84	3
Marion	3	480	18	521	21	1,001	17
Martin	1	230	1	21	2	251	1
Okaloosa	0	0	9	364	9	364	1
Okeechobee	0	0	3	188	3	188	0
Orange	0	0	1	560	1	560	0
Osceola	1	19	0	0	1	19	3
Palm Beach	6	1,095	1	1	7	1,096	22
Pasco	6	684	7	42	13	726	6
Pinellas	7	311	7	21	14	332	9
Polk	6	184	14	227	20	411	17
Putnam	3	2,157	3	451	6	2,608	7
Santa Rosa	1	99	27	1,145	28	1,244	5
Sarasota	8	438	12	190	20	628	14
Seminole	5	91	14	691	19	782	12
St. Johns	2	106	0	0	2	106	0
St. Lucie	2	564	1	4	3	568	4
Suwannee	0	0	3	78	3	78	2
Taylor	0	0	10	985	10	985	2
Volusia	1	42	23	647	24	689	10
Walton	1	4	29	3,475	30	3,479	3
Washington	0	0	17	1,200	17	1,200	3
<b>2002 TOTALS</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>18,357</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>19,540</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>37,897</b>	<b>347</b>

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The 2002 Domestic Marijuana Eradication efforts were a success. This success can only be attributed to the continued support received by the entire law enforcement community, Florida National Guard, Civil Air Patrol and the dedicated citizens who report these and other illegal activities to their local law enforcement agencies.

In 2003, the Florida DME Program and DCE/SP will continue to support law enforcement efforts in the detection and dismantling of illegal marijuana grow sites. This support will include the use of federal funds received from DCE/SP to finance the aerial eradication activities by local law enforcement and to reimburse some costs associated with the investigation and dismantling of indoor and outdoor grow sites. The Florida National Guard and the Civil Air Patrol will continue to support the 2003 efforts.

To better serve the law enforcement community, the Florida DME Program, DCE/SP and the Florida National Guard will offer seven regional program orientations. The delivery of these regional orientations begins in April 2003.

Support from an informed public, combined with law enforcement efforts, is essential to the success of both the Florida DME Program and DCE/SP. To ensure this success, FDLE provides an ongoing public awareness effort through the use of the Internet, educational appearances, publications, and training to the law enforcement members of this state. FDLE also maintains a toll free telephone "hot-line" (1-800-342-SPOT) for citizens to report suspicious activity relating to domestic marijuana and other drug activity.



