

III.A. Recognising dagga

(cannabis, marijuana, ganja)

Dagga is a plant that grows well in many parts of South Africa, especially the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. It is also widely grown in Lesotho, Swaziland, and Malawi. Figure 1 shows a dagga plant before being harvested. Figure 2 shows the flowering tops, which is the part of the plant that is sold for smoking.

Dagga comes packaged in many ways, but the most popular are matchboxes (Figure 3), bank bags (bankies) (figure 4), and various other paper and plastic wraps (Figure 5). It can also be compressed into bricks. Dagga from Malawi is rolled into distinctive wraps called 'cobs' 'kops' or 'heads' (Figure 6). Large amounts of dagga are

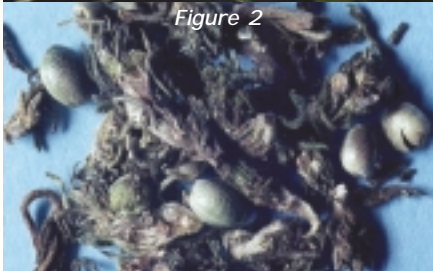
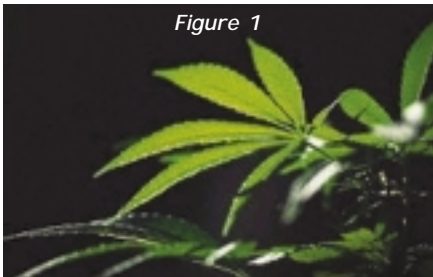


Figure 4

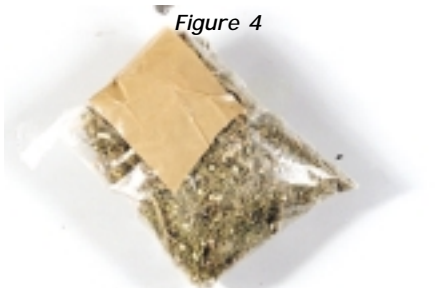


Figure 5

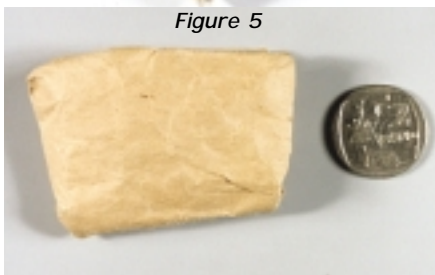


Figure 6



Figure 7

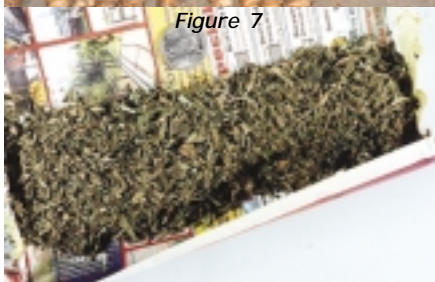
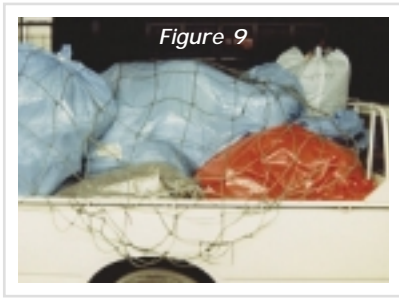


Figure 8

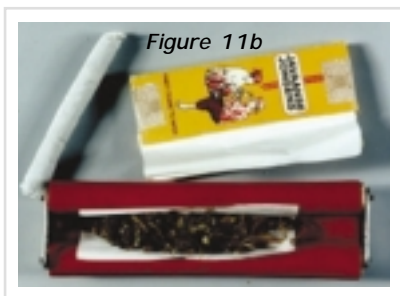




wrapped in 'arms' (Figure 7) or may be stuffed in 50kg mealie bags (Figure 8) or other containers, such as plastic rubbish bags (Figure 9). Dagga is often transported hidden in the panels of cars or taxis.

Dagga is consumed by smoking. It can be smoked after being wrapped into a cigarette; stuffed in a wood, metal, or even an apple core pipe (Figure 10); or in a water-filtering device ('hubbly-bubbly' [hookah] or a bong) (Figure 11). Small 'alligator' clips or medical haemostats may be used to smoke short cigarettes. Trace amounts of dagga found in these items can be the basis for a charge of possession, as the legislation specifies no minimum quantity.





Other paraphernalia include cigarette rolling papers or accessories, such as 'Rizla'-type rolling machines (Figure 11b).

Dagga is sometimes mixed with other drugs before consuming. The section on Mandrax below discusses the 'white pipe' combination. Other drugs that may be mixed in dagga include crack cocaine and heroin.

Two special kinds of dagga are worth mentioning. One is 'majat', a weak form of dagga used in white pipes, usually appearing as a more powdery version of dagga, which may be treated with volatile fluids. The second is hashish, which is the pressed resin secreted by the dagga plant, a far more potent version of the drug. It appears as a solid chunk of material, the colour and texture of which can vary (Figure 12). Hashish may also be processed into a dark oil, which is added to other substances and smoked. Hashish and cannabis can also be used in cooking, as THC (the primary psychoactive chemical in dagga) is soluble in fat and alcohol.