

New Hydroponic Store Supports Homegrown Cannabis

Gabriel Zamorano Launches Medatron: A New Hub for Home Cannabis Growers in Meriden

As a longtime home cannabis grower, Gabriel Zamorano has transformed his passion into a business by opening Medatron at 626 E. Main St., Meriden. After retiring from Ulbrich Steel, Zamorano decided to open a store that offers growing supplies and equipment rentals, and he is particularly excited about teaching others how to cultivate high-quality cannabis plants using hydroponic systems, which use water instead of soil for indoor growing.

“I went this route because it’s legal to grow in Connecticut. So, I just started growing and helping people grow,” Zamorano said. “I learned a lot through trial and error, and my goal now is to help others, so they don’t have to go through the years of grueling failures to figure out the hard way.”

Legal Landscape for Cannabis in Connecticut

As of October 2021, Connecticut state law permits medical marijuana patients 18 years and older, as well as adults 21 years and older, to grow up to three mature and three immature plants in their homes. Additionally, retail sales of recreational-use cannabis to adults 21 and over began in January 2023. With cannabis and hemp products becoming more common, Medatron joins a growing number of cannabis-related stores in Meriden’s business community.

Zoning Laws and Economic Impact

The city has adapted its zoning laws to limit the number of retail adult-use dispensaries to three. ZenLeaf at 1371 E. Main St. and Rejoice at 834 Broad St. have already opened, with a third location in the planning stages.

Economic Development Director Joe Feest commented on the positive impact of cannabis businesses on local tax revenues. “Cannabis is definitely one of the growing and expanding businesses in the state of Connecticut since they were granted the ability to operate,” he said. “We have had several new businesses or businesses that have actually changed their license from medical over to either hybrid or strictly retail.”

Advantages of Home Growing

Connecticut dispensaries must secure product inventory from Connecticut producers, creating legislative limitations that Zamorano believes make home growing advantageous. “No cut to the dispensary, but your worst grow in here is better than their best grow,” he said.

“I have grown a long time. I know how to dry and cure these processes,” Zamorano added.

Business Expansion and Services

Medatron aims to serve both commercial and home growers. Zamorano initially shipped products from his garage but now, with the new store location, the green and purple Medatron truck can make easier commercial deliveries thanks to convenient access to major highways.

Methods of Growing

For home growers, Zamorano outlined three primary methods of growing marijuana: hydroponics, coconut husks, or soil. He compared growing cannabis in soil to crafting wine or cheese, noting that the terpenes in the soil can influence the taste.

“Beginning growers learn how to grow with soil, then you move on to hydro because hydro is much faster with bigger buds and better tasting, but you need to be experienced to learn how to do it,” he explained.

Classes and Equipment Rentals

In addition to classes and tastings, Zamorano offers equipment rentals to help home growers harvest their crops. This includes humidors for drying and curing, various presses, and a preroll maker.

Community Support

Midstate Chamber of Commerce president Roseanne Ford welcomed Medatron to the business community and announced a ribbon-cutting ceremony scheduled for Wednesday from 5 to 6 p.m. Ford also highlighted the growing trend of hydroponics, noting the Kiwanis Club of Meriden’s recent donation of a hydroponic garden to the Meriden Public Library. The library has already harvested a variety of herbs and greens for their programming.

“This is a growing industry,” she said. “Indoor gardens are becoming more popular, especially for individuals who may not have space at their home for an outdoor garden or for folks who live in an apartment setting.”

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