



Fresno County Sheriff - Coroner's Office Margaret Mims, Sheriff - Coroner

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News Release

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Narcotics Detectives Uproot Nearly 24,000 Marijuana Plants Hidden in Coalinga

On April 20, 2018, sheriff's deputies with the Fresno County Narcotics Enforcement Team seized and destroyed nearly 24,000 marijuana plants. The plants, most which were less than a foot tall, were growing on three different pieces of land off of Lost Hills Road in Coalinga.

The suspected growers tried to camouflage two of the three gardens. They dug large pits, surrounded them with wooden fences and placed a plastic covering over the plants so the structure would sit flush to the ground and be difficult to detect. However, they were easily spotted by crew members operating the sheriff's helicopter, EAGLE One.

Detectives did not find any people on the land. A total of 23,879 marijuana plants were removed.

Anyone who has additional information on this case is asked to contact the Sheriff's Office at (559) 600-3111. You may also call Crime Stoppers at (559) 498-7867. You will remain anonymous and may be eligible for a cash reward.

Under California's Prop 64 law, a person 21 year or older is allowed to grow a maximum of six marijuana plants inside a private residence or accessory structure that is fully enclosed and secure.

Fresno County enforces a strict ban on all cannabis cultivation where more than six plants are present. Violations could result in several consequences:

- 1. Growers can be arrested.**
- 2. Growers can face heavy fines starting at \$1,000 per plant.**
- 3. Property owners, including family members, can be fined too.**
- 4. Prop. 215/SB 420 compliance will not stop enforcement.**
- 5. Additional fines, interest, legal fees and costs of abatement can be charged.**
- 6. County can place lien on property for unpaid fines.**

The Sheriff's Office takes all tips seriously and encourages the public to report suspected marijuana grow sites. If you are aware of any type of illegal drug activity, report it anonymously by calling the Narcotics Hotline at 1-800-660-1086 or Email: drugtip@fresnosheriff.org