

# Freeze Dried Wheatgrass —Does it Work?

Extracted from [Wheatgrass Nature's Finest Medicine](#) by Steve Meyerowitz, Sproutman®

Sheldon Farms is the newest and smallest manufacturer of powdered grass and is unique in several ways. Compared with the outdoor producers, this grass is different in how it is grown and how it is dried. It looks and tastes different, too. They are currently the only bottled grass product manufacturer in distribution that does its growing in greenhouses—three of them to be exact. If you are a home grower, a connoisseur of juice bar wheatgrass, or a graduate of any of the wheatgrass retreat centers, this juice will taste like the fresh squeezed wheatgrass you are used to. It tastes completely different from any of the outdoor grown grass powder discussed in this chapter. This juice concentrate has that same sweet home-grown, fresh squeezed grass taste.

## Growing & Juicing

Growing indoors has many differences over outdoor farming. Although this is not the place to discuss the pros and cons, (see *Nutrition* chapter) one of the biggest differences is in the management of the soil. Grower Mark Sheldon actually makes his own soil from five different ingredients including organic compost and rock dust powder—a highly concentrated source of minerals and trace minerals. In addition, he fertilizes with a proprietary eighty-eight mineral formula that includes microbes and enzymes. High protein organic wheat is sprouted in two inches of the special soil and watered with water from an artesian well. The grass is harvested at a height of six to eight inches and from eleven to fourteen days, depending on the season. And here's another advantage. There is no off-season. They can harvest all year round.

What farmer wouldn't want to control the weather! At Sheldon Farms, that is exactly what they do. Temperature and humidity in the greenhouse are automatically regulated according to the grower's settings. The quarter-acre sized greenhouse has sides that open and close as does the roof. This is how they control air circulation, temperature, and light. The roof is made out of a crystal clear poly-acrylic material called *Dynaglass* that blocks UV-A and UV-B rays. It has a slightly higher light transmission rating than glass, so you may feel the need for sunglasses inside but you could never get skin cancer. There are no grow lamps; only natural light. When it's winter, there is an energy-saving blanket that stretches across the growing area like a ten foot ceiling trapping the radiant heat and warming the grass significantly. The soil spreading and seed sowing are all done automatically enabling this operation to easily produce 1,000 trays per week or more if needed.

As soon as the grass is cut, it is juiced in a high volume two stage custom juicer. First the grass blades are pulverized, then a press squeezes out all the liquid (juice), and it's off to the freezer where a harsh minus fifty degrees Fahrenheit (-45EC.) freezes the juice in under thirty minutes. This locks in all the nutrients and enzymes. Then all the air is sucked out creating a vacuum and the temperature is warmed to a balmy negative twenty degrees (-29EC.). In this environment the water molecules from the grass ice are drawn to the much colder condensing coil through a process called sublimation. Since the juice is ninety-six percent water, when sublimation is complete, only the grass solids remain. One hundred pounds of grass juice condense down to four pounds of grass solids. This concentrate holds the enzymes and nutrients in suspension until they are reactivated by adding water.

The wafer-like concentrate is then reduced to flakes in a climate controlled clean-room and automatically added into HDPE (#2 on the bottom) plastic bottles. There are no additives, fillers, binders or preservatives—just 100 percent pure freeze dried, certified organic (and Kosher, too) wheatgrass juice concentrate. When you look at it, it sparkles in the light. Its tiny crystals remind you of snowflakes. They grind it to a smooth powder for filling capsules and each capsule bottle includes a desiccant to reduce moisture that could have entered during the encapsulation process. Believe it or not, even though it is the same grass, you won't find the word "organic" on the front of the capsule bottle, only in small print on the back. This is because the veggie caps, made from cellulose, make up a little more than twenty percent of the product weight. Even though that cellulose may be more preferable to you than the gelatin capsules derived from cattle bones and pigskins, it is not certified organic. Therefore, while the powder bottle loudly proclaims its "organic-ness" on the front, the capsules bottle quietly speaks it on the back. One is 100 percent organic; the other is only about eighty. The products are good for one year. You can extend their shelf life beyond that by storing it in the freezer. This is one company where all growing, juicing, and packaging are done under one roof. If you can't find the product in your local store, visit their website and have it shipped direct to you.

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