

Well-equipped site was a sophisticated grow operation

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Hoses and other equipment used to pump water from a nearby creek were strewn on the ground, and the pungent smell of the fresh plants filled the air.

Originally about 10 feet high, the marijuana plants behind Hornby Park— on land owned by a private company— had already been cut to about half their size by the people running the operation, police said.

Although isolated behind the park, one of the plots was visible from Hwy. 401, said Det. Sgt. Nishan Duraiappah of Halton police's Drugs and Morality Unit.

A winding pathway— formed from people coming in and out to tend to the crop, police said— led through a wooded area to the clearing where the plants were grown. Each was hand-planted, Duraiappah said, and were well tended and maintained.

"They're (the growers) obviously good at this and have done it before."

Duraiappah said most landowners aren't aware the grow operations are on their property.

Within minutes of Percy speaking to media about this latest discovery, police had ripped out the marijuana plants and piled them high, ready to be taken to a storage facility to be kept as evidence.

No arrests have yet been made in connection with the grow-op's production, but two suspects were arrested Friday afternoon, spotted just as police were arriving for the media announcement, and one was



arrested Wednesday for allegedly stealing some of the crop, police said.

Two Cambridge men, aged 25 and 27, and a 46-year-old Kitchener man have been charged with possession for the pur-

pose of trafficking. Police are continuing their large-scale eradication efforts for local grow operations. Less than two weeks ago, five people were charged after police seized about 1,500 marijuana plants with an estimated street value of \$2 million in about 20 grow operations. And on Thursday, police seized about 200 pounds of marijuana with a street

value of about \$300,000 from a grow-op

near Sixth Line and 10 Sideroad in Halton Hills. Two men, from Oakville and Niagara Falls, have been arrested and charged in connection with producing a controlled substance.

Percy said there'll likely be more such arrests and discoveries.

"We're not naïve enough to think this is the only grow-op around here in Halton."

Photos by Ted Brown

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