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Ann Arbor

# **Ann Arbor psychedelic shroom fest organizers announce entertainment lineup**

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Brennan Andes sits in his widow with his guitar while practicing social distancing on Wednesday, March 25, 2020. (Nicole Hester | MLive.com) Nicole Hester/MLive.com

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ANN ARBOR, MI — Organizers of Ann Arbor's inaugural psychedelic plant and mushroom festival have announced a full entertainment lineup for the event.

Enthefest, a celebration of shrooms and other natural hallucinogens, is scheduled to take place 11:11 a.m. to 2:22 p.m. Sept. 19 on the University of Michigan Diag.

The event is free, featuring musical entertainment and speeches by elected officials and psychedelic activists, including keynote speaker Darryl Brown, a First Nations civil rights leader and surrealist painter. Also known as Barking Dog, he serves as a St. Ignace representative on the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

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“The Entheofest’s aim is to bring the community together to mobilize for the decriminalization and celebration of plant medicines and fungi in the state of Michigan,” said Jim Salame, Decriminalize Nature Michigan deputy director.

Fox 2 News Anchor Anquetta Sarfoh is master of ceremonies for the event, which features music by Ann Arbor’s Brennan Andes and Friends, plus drumming by Lamine Soumah and Sundance Robert DiDomenico, according to [Entheofest.org](http://Entheofest.org).

The speakers lineup also includes author and researcher William Leonard Pickard, who served nearly two decades behind bars until last year for manufacturing LSD; Washtenaw County Prosecutor Eli Savit, who is against prosecuting people for entheogenic plants and fungi; state Rep. Yousef Rabhi, D-Ann Arbor; state Sen. Jeff Irwin, D-Ann Arbor; and former City Council Member Anne Bannister.

Several other activists are on the lineup, including members of organizing groups Decriminalize Nature Michigan and the Student Association for Psychedelic Studies.

The student group has asked UM to reserve the Diag for the event. As of Aug. 20, the group’s application was still under review, according to the university.

### **University of Michigan police say safety will be top priority at psychedelic shroom festival**

The event celebrates the one-year anniversary of Ann Arbor’s move to declare entheogenic plants and fungi the city’s lowest law-enforcement priority, effectively decriminalizing them at the city level. That includes ayahuasca, ibogaine, mescaline, peyote, psilocybin mushrooms and other natural compounds with hallucinogenic properties deemed illegal under state and federal law, though not synthetic compounds like LSD.

City Council voted 10-0 to approve a resolution recognizing September as Entheogenic Plant and Fungi Awareness Month, in hopes of increasing understanding of the potential benefits of psilocybin mushrooms and other psychedelic plants and fungi “for mental health, personal and spiritual growth, as well as honoring the longstanding ancestral practices and relationships with these entheogens.”

EntheoFest will be a “sacred plant and mushroom festival” every September, the council resolution states.

“Enthefest celebrates how far we’ve come in Ann Arbor, but we have much more work to do,” said Julie Barron, another one of the organizers. “We want to encourage further activism and share the message about the powerful healing and spiritual properties of these plants.”

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Humans have been using entheogenic plants and fungi for millennia and scientific research suggests they are effective for treating addiction, recidivism, trauma, post-traumatic stress, chronic depression, severe anxiety, end-of-life anxiety, grief and cluster headaches, Barron said.

While natural psychedelics are now effectively decriminalized in Ann Arbor, UM police enforce state laws and technically still can make arrests for such substances on campus.

Organizers offer this disclaimer to festival-goers: “We neither condone or condemn any practices with entheogenic plants and fungi; however, Enthefest is a celebration of plant teachers and support for the progress being made to decriminalize these substances. We kindly ask that it is not approached as space for consumption and that attendees remain mindful of university space and others around.”

The festival will include educational booths and will be followed by a walk to UM's Nichols Arboretum, organizers said.

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