

ROCK ISLAND WOMEN GROW



BOTTOM LEFT ALYCIA BARNHART
TOP LEFT KENDRA ALSPACH
CENTER BILLIE GILLESPIE
RIGHT STACY HEDEEN

"I'd like to start with a little history...

I grew up in Illinois on a farm, south of our Rock Island cultivation center. My first job was selling our family-grown sweet corn at the farmers market. Our family still grows sweet corn on the farm every year, so it's easy to see that growing is in my roots. Through the years, I've been working with plants in greenhouses up until I started here at GTI three years ago. I really do love to grow!

The medical marijuana industry has made it possible to grow the most natural medicine that our beautiful Mother Earth has to offer. Natural medicine is a huge passion of mine as a cannabis grower, beekeeper, and yoga instructor. As a patient, I am ecstatic that I can get natural medicine without big-pharma side effects. As the Assistant Grower, I am proud to come to work every day to grow natural, clean, and organic medicine.

Being a female in this rapidly growing industry is definitely challenging. I have worked really hard to earn respect and have my voice heard in this male-dominated industry and culture. As the industry keeps expanding, I hope women are given more of a voice to influence operations and leadership. Most women who struggle in this industry do so because of a lack of cannabis cultivation experience, especially in Illinois. However, with the right mentor and knowledge, our opportunities are endless! Working here at GTI has given me the opportunity to not only be mentored, but to actually be a mentor myself, as the Assistant Grower."

-Billie Gillesp

"I believe most women have an innate desire to care for things. So women working (and crushing it!!!☺) in cultivation makes sense.

Take it all in. Listen and learn from everyone but also be sure to trust your own judgement and instincts."

-Stacy Hedeem

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"Cannabis is something that is important to a lot of different people from a lot of different backgrounds and the potential for opening up a dialogue and working together to grow and to learn and educate about cannabis is really exciting. It's awesome to see women in the cannabis industry and to be involved in cultivation. It seems that it's primarily men in the cultivation field specifically, so it's cool to be a woman working in that area.

GTI is very welcoming to women and is supportive of women in all different areas of the cannabis industry. I feel like GTI would be supportive of whatever path in the industry I wanted to take, and it's great knowing that the company you work for has your back and wants to support you.

I'm a woman in the cannabis industry, and I'm inspiring impact!"

-Kendra Alspach