



CANNABIS TRAILBLAZER – CURTIS WALLACE

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It's anyone's guess what planted the seed for the Lancaster, Ontario native Curtis Wallace to become the cannabis grower and industry trailblazer that he is today. Maybe it was the hours he spent as a toddler mucking around in his grandmother's garden, or that first hit from a joint shared with his high school buddies. Whatever it was, the passion and joy that Wallace feels about his work as a cannabis expert still burns, 15 years after he jumped into the industry.

Wallace did not prepare for this career studying horticulture. In fact, after high school, he enrolled in a college architecture program. But there was a restless entrepreneur inside of him that craved a different path. He withdrew from college and together with his mother ran a couple of restaurants in nearby Hamilton, until one day he got to talking with a customer who was dabbling in the emerging medical cannabis field.

Health Canada's legal framework on medical cannabis opened the door for Wallace. Armed largely with brains and chutzpah, Wallace would end up serving in various consulting roles for a number of commercial growers over the years, in research and development on growing and processing cannabis, as well as facility building and expansion.

Wallace taught himself by doing and by learning from his mistakes. "I think those mistakes have made me a better grower," Wallace says. "It's helped me in designing and managing different projects with different companies and helping my clients alleviate mistakes because I anticipate the problems that I've experienced."

In 2016, Wallace became the owner of Cannabis Solutions Canada Inc. offering expert consulting in commercial-scale medical and recreational cannabis cultivation.

Two years ago, he oversaw the design and construction of a five-acre hybrid greenhouse for one of Canada's first outdoor growing licenses, WeedMD (now called Entourage Health) and then became the company's director of cultivation for 27 acres of over 20,000 plants.

This year, one of his company's clients asked him to come on board as a full-time employee. He accepted the offer and is now general manager for [Aleafia Health](#) where he is putting fifteen years of his creativity, practical know-how and business savvy to work.



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Wallace says the work of cultivating cannabis never gets boring due to the many factors that affect the outcome of the crop. "By no means do I consider myself a 'master,' as I feel no one is a master of nature. The environmental influences vary. You have the spectrum of the sun, the DLI [daylight], how much sun intensity your plant gets throughout the day, each day, and in different parts of the province and the country," Wallace explains. "Then, you throw in the different characteristics of the strains, and it's like a game of chess, there's trillions of different factors and combinations of outcomes."

As for his favourite strains, Wallace has no trouble naming several vintage ones with names like Headband, Sugar Lemon Haze, and White Shark; throwbacks to a different time, though not so far into the past as the infamous 1936 propaganda film *Reefer Madness* that Wallace viewed at age 22.

"You can't help but laugh," says Wallace recalling the sensational classic. "But it's sad that people thought you would go crazy as a psychotic murderer if you smoked cannabis. Yet so many patients have told me how much cannabis has changed their lives for the better."