

Western North Carolina Farm & Garden Calendar

The Farming and Gardening Survival Book

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Tobacco

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Sow tobacco

(solanaceae family; *Nicotiana tabacum*)

in greenhouse **4-8 weeks before last frost** so that is mid March to mid April.

Tobacco is a member of the **nightshade family** that includes eggplant, peppers, potatoes and tomato. Tobacco has similar growing needs as tomatoes. (For **tomato sowing and growing**, see March Greenhouse. See "Plant Families" in back of manual.)

An ounce has 300,000 seeds. Can mix 1 part seed to 2 parts sand to make it easier to spread seed. Soak mixture with water before sowing seeds. It is **legal to grow tobacco** if you only grow it for your own use.

To **germinate** seed, temperatures need to be at least 65. Seeds need light to germinate but not bright sun. So cover with a light cloth until seeds germinate. Or can cover with plastic to keep soil moist. Once seedlings just begin to emerge, remove the plastic because they need good air circulation. Germinates in 7-10 days.

After last frost plant outside 2-3 feet apart in rows 4 feet apart. Grows to 3-6 feet tall. Matures in 90-120 days.

Care: Likes full sun. Likes soil pH around 5.8. Likes well drained soil. Fertilize the same as you would for tomatoes, potatoes and pepper.

Cut off the **tops** (remove terminal bud) of the plant as soon as the flower forms. This lets the upper leaves get larger and thicker.

Usually, each tobacco plant produces about 3-4 ounces of dry, **cured tobacco**. A pound of tobacco will produce about 2 cartons of cigarettes. You need about 4 plants to produce 1 carton. Tobacco should be aged, so the first year you grow, double your normal tobacco needs for the year.

Cigarettes sold in stores can have up to 599 additives. Many of these are added for flavor, or used in the glue, bleach, and dyes on the paper.

The variety, how grown, and how dried/cured, all affect the taste of the tobacco. You can mix 2 or more varieties for different tastes. Tobacco is poisonous. Use with care. Consult your doctor and/or health care specialist.

Varieties:

1. Cigarette Tobacco: Argentinean, Big Gem, Black Sea Basma, Black Sea Samsun, Burley Original, Burley Hampton, Burley Variation, Walker's Broadleaf, Dark Virginia, Del Gold, Blue Tree Glauca, Gold Seal Special, Lizard Tail Orinoco, Lizard Tail Turtlefoot, Monte Calme Blonde, Original Wild Rustica, Salamena Blue, Stag Horn, Turkish Izmir, Virginia Gold Types, and Maryland.

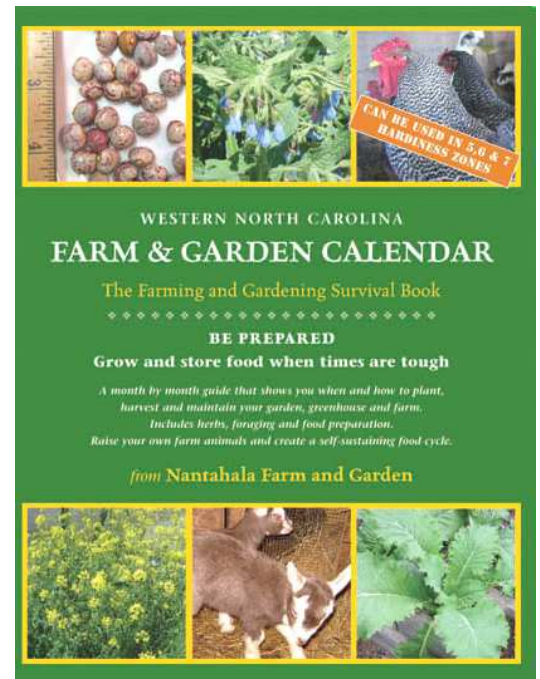
2. Cigar Tobacco: Black Sea Samsun, Black Stalk Mammoth, Burley Hampton, Burley Variation, Walker's Broadleaf, Cuban Habano 2000, Cuban Criollo 98, Dark Virginia, Gold Dollar, Greenwood, Isleta Pueblo, Little Crittenden, Lizard Tail Orinoco, Lizard Tail Turtlefoot, Monte Calme Blonde, Narrow Leaf Madole, Original Wild Rustica, Shirey, Stag Horn, and Turkish Izmir.

3. Pipe Tobacco: Argentinean, Big Gem, Black Sea Basma, Black Sea Samsun, Black Stalk Mammoth, Burley Hampton, Burley Original, Walker's Broadleaf, Cuban Habano 2000, Cuban Criollo 98, Dark Virginia, Del Gold, Glauca Blue Tree, Gold Dollar, Greenwood, Isleta Pueblo, Little Crittenden, Lizard Tail Orinoco, Lizard Tail Turtlefoot, Original Wild Rustica, Narrow Leaf Madole, Perique, Salamena Blue, Shirey, Southern Beauty, Turkish Izmir, and Maryland.

4. Snuff Tobacco: Argentinean, Black Stalk Mammoth, Black Sea Samsun, Burley Hampton, Dark Virginia, Del Gold, Gold Seal Special, Greenwood, Shirey, Stag Horn, Turkish Izmir, and Virginia Gold Types

Saving Seed: It is usually **self pollinating** but can sometimes cross pollinate. If growing more than 1 variety, grow them as far apart as possible. If you are growing only 1 variety, then you do not have to be concerned about cross pollination. Let several plants form seed. The seed pods turn brown and dry in late summer.

(For **transplanting**, see June Garden-Plant but most details are in this section. See August Garden-Harvest. For **using tobacco to treat mites and lice in poultry**, see March Farm Animals.)



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Transplant **tobacco** (solanaceae family; *Nicotiana tabacum*) from **greenhouse to outside**. Plant similar to tomatoes. Final planting outside for tobacco is 2 feet apart in rows 3 feet apart in **early June**.

Needs full sun. In the **summer** the tops should be removed so upper leaves get larger. After the tops are removed, remove suckers or axillary buds if they grow to an inch or more.

Remove flower buds unless saving seed.

August page 10.



Harvest **tobacco** leaves when buds start to form. Cut off buds unless

saving seed. Bottom leaves are harvested earlier. Harvest continues for a few weeks as leaves develop.

To Dry: Cut a slit near the end of the center rib of each leaf, put a stick or wire through it and hang the leaves. Leaves should not touch when hanging. Throw away any leaves that have mold or fungus on them or that smells moldy.

Air Curing: Hang somewhere dry, out of the sun, and airy. Let hang for 2-3 months to 2 years. It is low in sugar (for light, sweet flavor) and high in nicotine. Cigar and burley tobaccos are air cured.

Fire Curing: Smoke from a slow burning fire permeates the leaves. It takes 3-10 weeks. It is low in sugar and high in nicotine. Pipe, chewing, and snuff (inhaled through nose) are usually fire cured.

Flue Curing: Keep it in an enclosed heated area. It takes about 1 week. It is high in sugar. It is medium to high in nicotine. Virginia tobacco is usually flue cured.

Sun-Curing: It dries uncovered in the sun. This method is used in Mediterranean countries to produce oriental tobacco. Sun-cured tobacco is low in sugar and nicotine. It is used in cigarettes.

To prepare, cut out the center rib and any large ribs. Then cut into pieces. To shred can put in a food processor. Or use other similar method.

Storage: Store cured tobacco in jars or vacuum sealed bags. It improves in richness, color and smoothness with age. It can be stored 4-5 years or longer.

Uses: Consult your herbalist, doctor and/or health care specialist. The active ingredient in tobacco is **nicotine** which is very alkaline. **In large doses it is very poisonous.** In large doses it produces nausea, vomiting, sweats and muscular weakness. Smoking or chewing it can cause disease.

In small doses it increases blood pressure and activity of gastrointestinal muscles. In large doses it lowers blood pressure and activity of gastrointestinal muscles. Use only with advice of a doctor.

Tobacco is a **sedative, diuretic** (increases urination), **expectorant** (treats cough), **laxative, and sialagogue** (increase saliva). When injected into the rectum as smoke or rolled leaves, it acts as a cathartic (laxative). A wet leaf applied to piles (hemorrhoids) is supposed to cure it. Apache Indians used it to treat toothache by chewing or smoking it.

It reduces the pain and swelling of **bee stings, mosquito bites** and other bites/stings. It neutralizes the acidic nature of a bee or other insect sting. Plus it reduces swelling. **To use,** wet a small amount of tobacco and rub it on the sting. Hold on skin or wrap with bandage for 5-10 minutes. Repeat if needed.

It is used to treat **mites and lice in poultry**. Consult your veterinarian or County Extension office. (See March Farm Animals.)

(For **sowing and growing details**, see April Greenhouse. See June Garden-Plant.)



Read the book "How to Grow Your Own Tobacco: From Seed to Smoke" by Ray French.)
