

Growing Tobacco: When Seeds Become Smoke

Even though remnants of the government may be around and causing their own form of mischief for anyone that escapes the clutches of FEMA camps, cash and a centralized currency will most likely be useless.

While many will resort to looting and crime, eventually these elements will be weeded out and a barter system will arise. If you do not want to offer a survival oriented service (such as gunsmithing, security patrol, food preparation, equipment management, sanitation, auto repair, or making clothes), then growing and trading tobacco may be of interest.

Historically speaking, the tobacco trade was extremely important and in many places was a form of currency that was even more valuable than anything the governments issued. No matter how bad the coming collapse winds up being, there will always be people in desperate need for a pinch of tobacco or a cigarette.

Basics of Growing Tobacco

In order to grow tobacco for survival purposes, you should start off with heirloom seeds. While hybrids may produce more specific plant types, only the heirlooms will guarantee viable seeds from generation to generation.

Most people start tobacco seeds indoors. They should have good lighting and be kept in well drained, but moist soil. When planting seeds, do not bury them, since they will not germinate in the dark.

When growing tobacco, they will need strong sunlight for most of the day. Try to choose a spot where the light is 1000 LUX or greater. It is also important to choose acidic soil, since

these plants do not tolerate alkaline or neutral pH soil.

During the growing season, you can add fish meal and other fertilizers to improve leaf size and quality. Hydroponic methods can also be used as long as you keep the pH of the water and soil in the acidic range.

It is also very important to keep common tobacco parasites out of the growing area. This includes nematodes, which can be avoided by planting marigolds with tobacco.

Also, you should not plant tobacco in the same place more than two years in a row because it tends to drain the soil of nutrients very quickly even as parasites build up.

Developing Tobacco Products

Most people that seek to trade something for tobacco may know how to roll their own cigarettes. On the other hand, there are some other products that you might want to prepare that will help you gain a good reputation and also help you command higher trade amounts during the barter process.

This includes:

- Cigars and tobacco for pipes
- Pesticide that can be used to get rid of aphids and slugs

Advantages

Tobacco is a useful crop to grow in a post crisis scenario because it already has a long standing reputation for being valuable in trade and barter situations. It is fair to say that tobacco contributed to the rise of many civilizations and can easily be used again as a key trade item for both citizens and larger groups of people that begin to form new governments.

Tobacco Homeopathy

- Medicinally it is used as a sedative, diuretic, expectorant, discutient, and sialagogue, and internally only as an emetic, when all other emetics fail.
- A cataplasm of the leaves may be used as an ointment for cutaneous diseases. The leaves in combination with the leaves of belladonna or stramonium make an excellent application for obstinate ulcers, painful tremors and spasmodic affections.
- A wet Tobacco leaf applied to piles is a certain cure.
- The inspissated juice cures facial neuralgia if rubbed along the tracks of the affected nerve. The quantity of the injection must never exceed a scruple to begin with;
- Externally nicotine is an antiseptic.

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Aside from that, tobacco is also an ideal pesticide that you can keep on hand to use when other organic methods may fail.

Disadvantages

It is very important to realize that many people currently smoking cigarettes and cigars may not be well enough to survive large scale riots or other situations that would eventually turn them into good customers. Aside from that, there are some other problems you may encounter when trying to grow and use tobacco for barter purposes:

- Land and other resources that you use for tobacco will not be available for more important crops dedicated to medicine, food, and textile production.
- Looters and rioters may target your farm or bug out location because they will want to steal the tobacco. This means you will need to dedicate a larger amount of resources to defending your crops and keeping your location safe.

- The value of tobacco may shift downward during years when availability exceeds demand. You will need to learn how to balance this by knowing how much to store for years where problems occur that prevent adequate crops.

How to Trade Using Tobacco

The steps associated with bartering tobacco are not so different from what you would use to trade any other product.

First, you must have a good idea of how much demand there is for tobacco, and then how many other sellers are available to meet that demand. You can enhance trade value by offering a better product, and also by offering novel products or services that competitors would find it hard to beat.

For example, if you know the chicken farmer up the road favors pipe tobacco with a certain flavor to it, make it your business to produce a compatible blend. From there, you can set up an arrangement where you automatically deliver a certain quantity per month in exchange for a set number of eggs. Once you establish a good relationship with a trading partner, do what you can to keep that trade balanced, fair, and long term.

To someone with a business oriented mind and an eye for valuable crops, tobacco may look very appealing in a post-crisis world. In order to get started, you can practice growing tobacco now and learn as much as possible about different blends and uses.

You should also hone haggling and other negotiation skills so that each trade helps you get what you want as well as ensure a good flow of repeat trades with the same partner.

*This article has been written by **Carmela Tyrell** for [Survivopedia](#).*

Sources

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