

out with too much green. On the other hand, if the yellowing process is too slow, that is, if the temperature and ventilation are not increased fast enough during the latter stages of the process, a pumpkin-yellow colour will result—the tobacco will be too sappy to take a curing heat without scalding—the leaves will become spotted with red, called sponging—and may all run totally red before the curing is completed. When the tobacco begins to sponge the only remedy is to give all the ventilation possible and raise the heat as fast as possible not to scald. The main idea in the yellowing process is to change all the tobacco to a nice, flesh-coloured, not a pumpkin-coloured, yellow and at the same time to dry the tobacco out sufficiently, by gradually increasing the temperature and the ventilation, to enable it to stand a quick curing heat when it comes sufficiently yellow. Yellowing is generally done between the temperature 85° F. and 110° F. While the leaf may yellow a little at temperatures up to 120° F. it is rapidly killed after the temperature passes 110° F. and should be practically through yellowing before the latter temperature is passed. Usually a slow fire should be built immediately after the barn is filled and the temperature run up to about 85° F. in two or three hours after the fire is built, if the weather is fine and warm; if cool and windy do not go over 10° F. above the outside temperature at first. Hold the temperature at 85° F. for several hours, then gradually raise the temperature, at the rate of about 5 degrees an hour, to from 90° F. to 100° F. The rate at which the heat is raised will depend on the tobacco; if it is heavy and sappy the heat must be raised more slowly than if it were lighter in body or there will be danger of scalding it; however, if the tobacco is very light it will also be necessary to go very slowly in raising the heat or the tips may dry out before they are sufficiently yellow. A good plan here is to watch the tobacco just above the point where the flue enters the firebox, which is the point at which the heat strikes hardest, and if it shows signs of drying too fast or scalding, lower the heat. The tips will begin to dry and turn up when it is scalding. As a rule the more heat, up to 110° F., the tobacco will stand in yellowing the brighter it will cure. Hold the temperature at from 90 to 100° F. until the bottom leaves are yellow, then raise it gradually to 105° F.

Usually, it is best to begin to ventilate slightly after the bottom leaves become yellow unless the tobacco is very light in body. The idea is to try to dry the bottom leaves sufficiently to prevent them sponging while the other leaves are yellowing.

When the leaves in the body of the plant become a nice flesh-coloured yellow raise the heat gradually to 110° F., at the same time increasing the ventilation. Hold at 110 until all of the leaves are sufficiently yellow to fix the colour. Generally, it is best to begin to fix the colour while the leaves still have a greenish-yellow cast and there are traces of green around the veins. Curings handled this way generally give the clearest, brightest leaf.

*Fixing the colour.*—The next stage is called fixing the colour, and is the most critical of all the stages in the curing process. It is at this stage that the leaf gives off its moisture fastest and it is here that the most ventilation is needed. The idea here is to stop the yellowing of the leaf and to dry the leaf as quickly as possible without scalding. This is accomplished by gradually raising the temperature from 110 to 125° F. and increasing the ventilation. A good plan at this stage is to watch the tobacco at the hottest place in the barn (where the flue enters the firebox) and at the coolest place (in the corner just over the first elbow joint) and govern the increase in temperature according to which place the tobacco is doing best. If the tobacco has the proper temperature and sufficient ventilation it will feel silky when the tails of the leaves are allowed to slide over the back of the hand; however, if it feels sticky the heat should be held steady and the ventilation increased until it does feel silky. This procedure should be repeated until the heat has been raised to 120° F. If the tobacco should begin to sweat very profusely during this stage the temperature had best be lowered a little and the ventilation increased until the sweating is considerably decreased.