

ripening is far advanced the leaf becomes slightly corrugated. In some varieties, the characteristic yellow spots are scarcely visible, but the tip of the leaf curves inwards, and the leaf itself hardens, and seems to become thicker. Fields of ripe tobacco exhale a characteristic penetrating odour, especially in hot weather.

Ripening proceeds from the bottom leaves to the top ones. When harvesting is done by cutting the stalks—the usual method in Canada—the date chosen should be when the top leaves are ripe enough to take a good colour in curing, and before the bottom leaves are over ripe. When the bottom leaves have been left too long ripe on the stem, they have no longer any weight, elasticity or firmness.

Generally speaking, the cutting should be done eight days after the appearance of the signs of maturity on the mid-stem leaves, and when they begin to appear on the top leaves.

There are some cases, however, when ripening proceeds very irregularly.

A long drought will cause the leaves to ripen before they have attained normal development, thus causing a serious loss in the weight of the crop.

It may happen that, with the conditions of ripening satisfactory, and the growth normal, just as the grower prepares to harvest a rain occurs, and the plants get green and start to grow again.

On no account should harvesting be done then as such plants, cut in the full period of growth, would be hard to cure and would take on a green colour. It will be necessary to wait until the signs of maturity have reappeared, but no longer, and then harvest as rapidly as possible. Besides the poor condition in which they are for curing, tobacco plants harvested immediately after a rain are deprived of the gums or resins which exude from ripe tobacco. Such plants are called "washed."

Harvesting should be done in dry weather, when ripening is progressing satisfactorily.

Do not start cutting early in the morning, when the leaves are still covered with dew, and are brittle, as they are too liable to break then, and the water would injure the tissues.

The best time for harvesting is on a bright day, when the dew has all evaporated, and when the leaves, having regained their softness, hang down slightly, and are less liable to break. Under such conditions, the wilting takes place rapidly, and the handling which follows is facilitated. The cutting may be continued until late in the afternoon.

Harvesting may be done either by cutting the stalks or stripping the leaves, (Priming.)

With the first method, the stalk is bent with one hand and cut at the base, as near the ground as possible with a hatchet or strong knife. The stalks are put together, in bunches of from four to eight, according to their size, and are left to wilt on the ground for a certain length of time regulated by weather conditions (cloudy or bright sky.)

When the wilting is done, the stalks are speared upon a lath by means of a V-shaped spear which fits upon the lath. In order to facilitate the operation of spearing, which requires some effort, these laths are laid upon special trestles, or held upright, one end upon the ground. The length of the laths corresponds to the inside dimen-