

I.

GROWING FLUE-CURED TOBACCO IN ONTARIO.

By D. D. DIGGES, M.S., *Superintendent Harrow Tobacco Station.*

In Canada the growing season for tobacco is of short duration, and a few days lost at the time of transplanting may result either in a frostbitten crop or in one which was necessarily harvested while immature; therefore, an abundant supply of early, thrifty seedlings is of paramount importance if the tobacco grower is to reap a full measure of success with any type of tobacco. This is especially true with the flue-cured type; for, while the crop may escape frost, the climatic conditions prevailing just prior to harvesting exert a very appreciable influence on the final colour of the cured leaf. Cool nights give the leaves a tendency to thicken, and retard the ripening process, thereby making it more difficult to obtain a good cure; and cool, windy weather renders it more difficult to maintain a uniform temperature throughout the kiln, also increasing the difficulty of obtaining a satisfactory cure.

GROWING THE SEEDLINGS.

No phase of tobacco growing yields larger returns for proper care and attention than does the tobacco seed bed, for the degree of success attained in tobacco growing is largely dependent on the seedlings; and a lack of care is nowhere sooner in evidence, for without proper attention the seed bed may become a total failure within a few hours.

Locating the seed bed.—The seed bed should be located on soil with good natural drainage, both surface and underdrainage; where it will derive the fullest benefit from the sun; and, if possible, on the southern side of some building or other object which will serve as a wind-break and still not obstruct the sun's rays. A close board fence may be built around the bed with good results.

The mould.—The soil on which the seedlings are to be grown should be fertile and well supplied with vegetable matter in an advanced stage of decay. A large percentage of the failures in the production of plants, which the writer has observed, were due to the soil being too sandy and lacking in humus. Such a soil packs too tightly for the proper development of the seedlings; and, too, the light-coloured sand apparently gives up its heat more quickly than a darker soil, and the growth of the plants is checked by a lack of heat.

A very satisfactory soil for the growing of the seedlings can be obtained from low, marshy fields. Such soil is practically full of decayed vegetable matter; but, as a rule, is waterlogged and sour. Consequently it should be hauled to a dry place the spring before it is to be used and turned several times during the summer to permit of its being thoroughly sunned and aired. After this treatment, a layer about two inches thick spread over the top of the plant bed is an excellent medium in which to grow the plants. Due to its dark colour it absorbs heat very rapidly and with its high humus content there is no danger of it becoming too tightly packed. If such a