

**HOMEGROW**



## **TOBACCO CURING KIT**

This kit contains the methods and ingredients to produce fine smoking tobacco from your home grown plants. Tobacco you will be proud of and enjoy making.

The process from drying to smoking will take 4-8 weeks. All of the ingredients are natural and chemical free.

This kit contains:

- Instructions for Drying, Curing and Casing
- Methods to produce Cigars, Pipe and Cigarette Tobaccos
- Humectant and Flavourings
- Heat Curing Bag
- Cigar Paste

**SMOKING CAUSES FATAL DISEASES, CHRONIC ILLNESS AND PREMATURE DEATH. YOU CAN QUIT SMOKING. CALL QUITLINE 0800 778 778.**

## DRYING AND CURING

The following methods give details of four types of tobacco curing. The first three methods (Heat Curing, Steam Curing and Air Curing) will give distinctive individual character to the leaf you have grown, while the fourth method (Mild Curing) is simple and produces excellent pipe and cigarette tobaccos.

### **HEAT CURING** (Pipe and Cigar Filler Tobaccos)

Heat curing (kiln drying as used by commercial growers) is used for mature (yellowed) leaf picked directly from the plant. The process takes 5-7 days.

To successfully produce heat cured leaf you will need a controlled temperature cabinet such as a clothes dryer or oven) with ventilation and a temperature range of 30°C to 80°C (80°F to 170°F).

Arrange several hands (3-4 leaves tied at stalk end) in the drier so they are not touching.

With plenty of ventilation, set temperature to 30°C (up to 90°F) and leave 4-5 days until leaves are throughly yellowed.

When the leaves are a bold yellow colour close the ventilation and increase the temperature gradually to 38°C (100°F) and hold this for at least 3 hours. Then again gradually increase to 55°C (140°F) for a further 3 hours. Open ventilation holes and again increase the temperature to 80°C (170°F) and maintain this temperature until the stalks are throughly dry. During all these stages be careful not to overheat the leaf or it will very quickly darken and become stronger in flavour.

When the stalks are dry reduce the heat and recondition the leaf (which will be brittle) by placing a water bowl or wet towel in the drier.

Remove the conditioned leaf and store.

### **STEAM CURING** (Cigarette and Cigar Wrapper Tobaccos)

Steam curing can be used for mature green leaf and for semi air dried leaf and takes 36-48 hours. Once again a controlled temperature drier is needed.

Place your tobacco leaves into the curing bag supplied, seal and leave in your drier at 35°C to 40°C for 24 hours or until leaves have yellowed.

When nicely yellowed, remove the tobacco leaves from the curing bag and air dry or carefully warm dry to remove moisture until they feel quite dry. Store until needed for pressing.

It's important if you're warm drying to take care that the leaves do not darken.

### **AIR CURING** (Cigar and Strong Smoking Tobaccos)

The simplest method of all. Tie your tobacco in hands (3-4 leaves tied at stalk end).

Hang them apart in a warm dry area. This method takes 4-6 weeks in normal summer weather but do ensure good ventilation or the leaves will become mouldy.

The leaf produced should be a light yellow-brown, soft to touch and quite dry. Store until required for processing.

Remember that nicely yellowed leaf will produce better tobacco than an immature green leaf, so do not pick your leaf until it has become a mottled yellow.



### **MILD CURING** (Pipe and Smoking Tobaccos)

The method is unique to **HOMEGROW** and quickly produces a fine smoking tobacco. We use this method regularly and it is our favourite. It is simple to do and produces a very nice mild tobacco.

Take a hand (3-4 leaves tied at stalk end) of air cured leaf and place in a bowl. Pour boiling water over it to cover all the leaves and leave it to stand for 5-10 minutes. This hot leaching process cures and removes harsh flavours in one process. This type of leaf will then readily accept many flavours while remaining mild to smoke. Carefully remove the leaf and hang in a warm dry place to air dry again. This leaf will give you a nice smooth tobacco without further processing.

If you prefer extra mild tobacco repeat the process with redried leaf. Store your dried leaf for processing.

A bonus of this method is the brown liquor produced which is a very effective natural insecticide. Like all insecticides it should be used with caution and washed from any fruit or vegetables before eating.

### **STORAGE (CASING)**

Tobacco and its flavour improves with storage (aging) and commercial tobaccos are cased for up to 1-2 years. Provided your leaf is well dried it can be block stacked in a warm cupboard and left for a very long time. Just ensure it does not dry out completely and crumble. Wooden boxes or strong paper bags with leaf firmly packed into them are ideal. Plastic bags should not be used.

## PROCESSING

Now for the processes to transform your carefully grown, dried and cured leaf into good tobacco.

### FLAVOURING

Strip the central vein from the leaf, together with any major ribs. This leaf can be pressed untreated to produce a toasted flavour tobacco. Included in this kit are a bottle of Humectant (to maintain softness), an enhancer and two flavours. The Vodka in the following recipes is not included! You can experiment with mixtures of your own. Rum with honey and sherry with port are favourites but always remember to use a mixture sweetener with any alcohol. For those who prefer menthol flavours, menthol is readily available at your local chemist.

First make your Humectant by thoroughly mixing 25ml (4 tablespoons) of Vodka (not included) with 5ml (1 teaspoon) of Humectant (bottle 1).

Place 4-5 cured and dried leaves in a bowl and then proceed with one of the following flavouring methods. Ensure flavour bottles are well shaken before use.

**1. Toasted Flavour Roll Your Own Tobacco (Our Special)**

To 50gm of mild cured leaf add 10ml Humectant mixture.

**2. Flavoured Cigarette Tobacco**

To 50gm of cured leaf add 10ml Humectant mixture and 2.5ml Flavour 2.

**3. Light Pipe Tobacco (Cavendish Style)**

To 50gm of cured leaf add 10ml Humectant mixture and 2.5ml Flavour 3.

**4. Heavy Pipe Tobacco (English Style)**

To 50gm of light cured leaf add 10ml Humectant mixture, 2.5ml Flavour 3 and 2.5ml of Flavour 4.

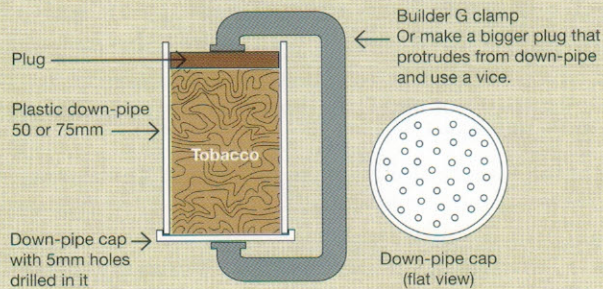
Roll the leaves into the flavouring mixture until they become damp. Allow leaves to drain off any surplus then press.

**PRESSING**

Pressing blends the added flavours with the leaf and converts it into a plug ready for aging, cutting and smoking.

Place your flavoured tobacco into a press and tighten until juice seeps out. Increase the pressure each day until the juice ceases flowing. Continue pressing without increased pressure for 2-3 days. Then tighten again and hold for another 2-3 days.

The simplest presses can be made from lidless food tins or plastic down-pipe with holes punched in the bottom and a wooden plug sized to sleeve inside the tin, then pressed in a vice or clamp.



We are always happy to hear from our customers.  
Please feel free to contact us for advice or with suggestions.

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## **AGING**

Tobacco improves substantially with aging. Like fine wines storage under cool dry conditions for 2-12 months will mellow the flavours and smoking qualities.

Plugs should be wrapped in plain paper first and then rewrapped in greaseproof paper. Store your wrapped plugs in a dry cupboard. Check them regularly in case cupboard is damp and mould starts. Redry the plug if this occurs.

Tobacco plugs should keep indefinitely in this condition.

## **CUTTING AND STORAGE**

When you are ready to smoke your tobacco, finely slice the plug with a sharp knife or razor blade. Slice cigarette tobaccos much more finely than pipe tobaccos. Then thoroughly rub the sliced flake tobacco and place in an airtight jar. If your mixture is a little too damp, dry carefully in your own warming drawer.

For pipe smokers who prefer the American style of crumbled tobacco, a common kitchen grater will produce a very acceptable type.

## **CIGAR MAKING**

Whether you prefer Coronas, Panatallas or Cheroots, very good cigars can be made from home grown tobacco. Remember the look and flavour of cigars depend both on the wrapping leaf and the filler tobacco, so it's easy to produce a wide range of flavours.

### **Wrapper Leaf**

Carefully cut the middle and vein from a selected well yellowed and air dried leaf. Ensure this does not have prominent veins and is leathery to touch. A dark leaf will produce a dark cigar.

### **Filler Tobacco**

A coarsely chopped or grated plug is best, and for extra strong cigars, plain pressed, air dried leaf will be fine. For milder smoking cigars one of the processed tobaccos would be best.

### **Method**

Cut the wrapper leaf to approximately 2cm longer than the length you require your cigars to be.

Prepare the seam glue by mixing a teaspoon of the white powder supplied in a small amount of cold water and then add half a cup of boiling water. Mix thoroughly and allow to cool and thicken.

Place the top side of the leaf face down and evenly tip your prepared filler tobacco along the centre. Remember that many cigars are traditionally thicker in the middle.

Tuck the leaf over the filler and roll the cigar with your palm keeping the filling tightly contained within the wrapper. This may be repeated several times to achieve a tight wrap. Apply the sealing paste along the full length of the inside seam, roll again and then twist the wrapper ends to seal both ends of your cigar.

Carefully transfer your freshly rolled cigar (it will be bendy and soft) to a preheated oven tray and with your palm, roll the cigar body back and forth over the tray. This will set the wrapper leaf and seal the seam. If you prefer a darker cigar this treatment can be done in a heated oven, but remember to roll the cigar frequently or it will end up curved. Finally condition your cigar in a humidor.

Once you have tried our standard mixtures you can produce your own blend by mixing mild cured with air cured leaf to strengthen the tobacco flavour or by adjusting the quantities of flavours used so that you produce a tobacco to suit your own personal taste.