



## Glossary of Tobacco Terms

**Aging:** A mild state of fermentation.

**Agronomy:** The scientific study of agriculture. Specifically, applying the plant and soil sciences to crop production and soil management.

**Air-curing:** One of four main methods of curing, which involves removing all of the natural sap and moisture from tobacco leaves. Air-curing is a natural drying process in which harvested tobacco leaves are hung to dry in an air-curing barn. The barn is a wooden structure that can be either closed completely or ventilated, depending on weather conditions. The barn is closed to conserve moisture in dry conditions; in wet conditions, moisture is removed by opening vents in the roof and/or opening side walls that are specially constructed for this purpose. For the most part, air-cured tobacco is dried with natural heat; however, humid weather conditions may require a limited amount of artificial heat. Tobacco that has been air-cured is typically brown in color.

**Allotment:** During the time of the Price Support System in the United States, the allotment was the specific amount of acreage that could be used by a farmer to grow tobacco in any given year.

**American-blend cigarettes:** One of the main types of blended cigarettes, which are made with a mixture of tobacco varieties. The most popular of the blended cigarettes, these are made with a mixture of flue-cured, burley, and oriental tobacco. The specific percentage of each type varies from brand to brand, but, generally, flue-cured is around 50 percent of the blend while oriental is the smallest percentage of the blend at around 12 percent.

**Aromatic tobaccos:** Those tobaccos in a blended product that are primarily responsible for the aroma and flavor of the cigar, cigarette, or smoking tobacco.

**Auction system:** A process by which tobacco is sold by an auctioneer on a bid basis to a group of buyers, as is the case in the United States, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Today, tobaccos are sold at auction as well as by contract in these markets.

**Bale:** In the United States, this term refers to a cube of tobacco. Flue-cured tobacco bales weigh approximately 750 pounds each. There are two types of bales for U.S. burley tobacco: unitized bales, which weigh approximately 450 pounds, and farm bales, which weigh approximately 75 pounds. Tobacco is packaged in bales to facilitate storage and/or transport. Internationally, bales vary in size depending on the farming and sales systems.

**Bandelier:** The string onto which tobacco leaves must be threaded before they can be hung in a curing barn. The space between the leaves varies depending on the tobacco type and curing method.

**Binder:** The tobacco leaf that holds the filler together in a cigar and gives the cigar its shape. In some cases, the binder may be covered by another tobacco leaf called a top binder. The binder or top binder is then covered by the wrapper, resulting in a finished cigar.

**Black tobacco:** Another name for dark tobacco or tobacco that is dark in color and strong in taste. Black or dark tobacco is primarily used in cigars and dark cigarettes.

**Blade:** On a tobacco plant, the extended part of the leaf that is divided from the base to the tip by the stem; its framework is provided by the veins that extend from the stem. This term is used to refer only to



the blade itself—it does not include any portion of the stem. In contrast, the term whole leaf is used to refer to both the blade and stem of a leaf. Also known as the lamina or web.

**Blend:** A mixture of tobacco varieties. The purpose of creating a blend is to produce a quantity of tobacco that meets a customer's specifications of quality, flavor, and aroma.

**Blended cigarettes:** Most of the cigarettes smoked today are blended, which means they are made with a mixture of tobacco varieties. The main types are American-blend, Oriental-blend, German-blend, English-blend (or Virginia), Maryland, and dark cigarettes.

**Blending:** Mixing different varieties and grades of tobacco in order to produce a predetermined, uniform blend that meets a customer's specifications of quality, flavor, and aroma. The tobaccos are blended according to specific formulas or recipes that dictate the percentage of each type and grade to be used.

**Blue mold:** A disease that can damage both tobacco seedlings and mature plants. It develops in humid conditions and is recognizable by the brown spots which appear on the leaves; these spots rapidly develop a bluish-grey coating, and the leaves eventually wither.

**Bodied tobacco:** The tobacco leaves that grow on the upper half of the stalk; these leaves are thicker and heavier than the leaves that grow on the lower half of the stalk, which are known as thins.

**Body:** A term that refers to the thickness, density, or weight of a tobacco leaf. Body is one of several characteristics that together determine the quality of tobacco.

**Book:** A portion of tobacco that has been prepared for use in making cigars by hand. The tobacco in a book has been stemmed and will be used either as binders or wrappers. Also known as a pad.

**Border belt:** In the United States, the flue-cured tobacco market area located along both sides of the border between North Carolina and South Carolina.

**Breaking:** Dividing tobacco leaves from a hogshead or bale for inspection.

**Bright leaf:** 1) A group of tobacco varieties that are flue-cured or fire-cured, after which the leaves range from light yellow to dark orange in color. Bright leaf is used mainly in cigarettes. Also known as Virginia tobacco. 2) On a burley tobacco plant, the third grouping of leaves from the top.

**Broken leaf:** Unprocessed tobacco in which over 40 percent of the leaf has been lost because of excessive handling. Broken leaf is different from scrap, which is leaf that is broken into small pieces during the processing or manufacturing stages.

**Bulk:** A term for a large quantity of tobacco.

**Bulk barn:** A type of curing barn used to cure bulked tobacco. Because the leaves are in stacks, rather than hung individually from the rafters, a bulk barn must be sealed so that enough air will pass through the dense piles of tobacco.

**Bulk curing:** Curing loose leaves of tobacco in racks or boxes. This method of curing is only used on tobacco that requires a great deal of artificial heat.

**Bundle:** Tobacco leaves held together prior to processing with a tie leaf, string, or raffia. Also known as a hand.



**Burley tobacco:** A type of tobacco that is usually air-cured and light brown to deep reddish-brown in color, with an aroma similar to cocoa. There are two types of burley: Filler type is generally light in body and neutral in flavor, while flavor type is similar in weight to flue-cured tobacco and has a stronger flavor.

**Buyer:** Someone who purchases tobacco for a leaf merchant. Buyers purchase tobacco to fill specific customer orders and/or to have tobacco on hand for orders that have yet to be placed. Buyers must be able to determine if the quality and quantity of a tobacco purchase will meet the customer's requirements and acquire the tobacco at a price that will allow the leaf merchant to make a profit when selling the tobacco to its customer.

**Cheroot:** A small, usually round but sometimes square, cigar that has a straight-cut mouth end and a straight-cut burning end.

**Clean tobacco:** Tobacco that is relatively free of sand, soil, and non-tobacco related material. Tobacco leaves that grow on the upper portion of the stalk usually contain less sand and soil than those that grow on the lower portion of the stalk, closer to the ground.

**Color:** The color of tobacco is a significant indicator of ripeness and overall quality. Monitoring color changes during ripening, curing, and fermentation plays a significant role in producing high-quality tobacco and tobacco products.

**Conditioning:** The process of adding moisture to tobacco so that it will be pliable enough to withstand handling, processing, and manufacturing without breaking into smaller pieces. Special care must be taken to avoid over-conditioning, as this lowers the quality of the tobacco.

**Contract system:** A process of selling tobacco that involves contracting a farmer's entire tobacco crop to one specific buyer.

**Corona:** A cigar that has a thick body, a spherical mouth end, and a straight-cut burning end. The name stems from the La Corona cigar factory in Havana, Cuba, which was the first to manufacture cigars with these characteristics.

**Crude tobacco:** 1) Tobacco that has not yet been re-dried or processed. 2) Tobacco that has not ripened and been properly cured, and consequently remains green in color even after processing has occurred. Sometimes referred to as green tobacco.

**Curing:** Immediately after harvesting, tobacco is cured to remove all of the natural sap from the leaves so that it can be further processed and/or manufactured. There are four primary methods of curing: air-curing, flue-curing, fire-curing, and sun-curing, but all curing focuses on regulating the rate at which moisture is removed from the tobacco.

**Curing barn:** A structure in which the necessary conditions for curing tobacco can be created and controlled.

**Cut rag:** Tobacco that has been cut into fine strips for use in cigarettes. Also known as rag.

**Cutters:** The largest leaves on a flue-cured tobacco plant, which are located near the middle of the stalk. Cutters are prized for their color, moisture content, and elasticity.

**Dark air-cured tobacco:** A type of tobacco that is distinguished from other types primarily by the fermentation process it undergoes. It is the fermentation that gives dark air-cured tobacco its medium- to



dark-brown color and distinct aroma. Dark air-cured tobacco is used in cigars, dark cigarettes, pipe mixtures, and chewing tobaccos. Light air-cured tobacco, in contrast, is not fermented at all.

**Dark cigarettes:** One of the main types of blended cigarettes, which are those made with a mixture of tobacco varieties. Dark cigarettes are made almost exclusively of dark air-cured tobacco, and are sometimes referred to as “black cigarettes.”

**Eastern belt:** In the United States, the flue-cured tobacco market area located in the eastern and central portions of North Carolina.

**English-blend cigarettes:** One of the main types of blended cigarettes, which are those made with a mixture of tobacco varieties. English-blend cigarettes are made almost entirely of flue-cured tobacco. Also known as Virginia cigarettes.

**Fermentation:** There are primarily two types of fermentation, natural fermentation and forced fermentation, with the duration of the process ranging from two days to two months or more. Natural fermentation, sometimes known as aging, is a chemical reaction caused by moisture and warm temperatures; it occurs when tobacco is packaged in bales or hogsheads. Natural fermentation generally gives tobacco a more uniform color and a milder taste. Forced fermentation involves placing tobacco in huge stacks so that the chemical reaction caused by the moisture and warm temperatures is intensified by the pressure the tobacco is under. Forced fermentation generally gives tobacco a more uniform color, as well as a smoother aroma and taste.

**Filler:** 1) Tobacco that has been blended and cut and, consequently, is ready to be used in cigarettes. The tobacco may have also been cased and flavored, depending on the desired end-product. 2) A term that can refer to the innermost portion of a cigar or the tobacco from which it is made. There are two types of filler, long filler and short filler.

**Fillers:** Various tobacco varieties, potentially from various origins, that are used in the manufacture of cigarettes to add volume rather than taste; fillers are very mild in taste.

**Fire-curing:** One of four main methods of curing, which involves removing all of the natural sap and moisture from tobacco leaves. As its name suggests, this particular method of curing involves exposing tobacco to the heat and smoke of open fires; doing so allows the leaves to absorb the aromatic substances in the smoke, which will in turn affect the tobacco's taste. The type and age of the wood, as well as the duration of the tobacco's exposure to the smoke, all affect the tobacco's taste, which is why these factors vary depending on the end-product that is desired.

**Flue-cured tobacco:** A type of tobacco that is cured with artificial heat, after which it ranges from light yellow to dark orange in color and possesses a sweet aroma. It is sometimes referred to as bright leaf or Virginia tobacco.

**Flue-curing:** One of four main methods of curing, which involves removing all of the natural sap and moisture from tobacco leaves. This method of curing uses only artificial heat, such as that provided by oil or petroleum. Flue-curing barns are outfitted with pipes that supply the heat and fans that circulate the heat for even distribution.

**Flyings:** On a burley tobacco plant, the groupings of leaves that are closest to the ground. They are typically thinner and drier and, subsequently, often used as cigarette fillers.

**Frog-eye:** A whitish spot on tobacco leaves that gives the tobacco a ripe appearance; the spot is actually the result of a disease.



**Frog-stripping:** A method of preparing cigar filler that involves removing the stem of a tobacco leaf in such a way that the two halves of the leaf remain joined at the top; this is said to resemble a frog's legs, hence the name. The resulting "frog-strips" are used as long filler in cigars.

**Fumigation:** Using chemicals to control and/or eliminate insects. When tobacco is stored, the storage facility must be fumigated to protect the tobacco from the damage insects can cause.

**German-blend cigarettes:** One of the main types of blended cigarettes, which are those made with a mixture of tobacco varieties. These are similar to American-blend cigarettes, but more oriental tobacco is used in the blend. Also, these cigarettes have a milder taste because the tobacco is not as heavily cased and flavored as in American-blend cigarettes.

**Grade:** A symbol, letter, number, or some combination of the three, which is given to tobacco as an indicator of its quality. The tobacco's stalk position, color, texture, elasticity, and leaf size are among the factors taken into account when determining its grade. B4F, which signifies "fair quality orange leaf," is an example of a grade.

**Grading:** Assigning pre-defined symbols, letters, or numbers to tobacco as an indicator of its quality. The tobacco's stalk position, color, texture, elasticity, and leaf size are among the factors taken into account in the grading process. Most tobacco is graded before it is sold; the grade it receives determines (in part) the price a buyer will be willing to pay for the tobacco. Manufacturers and leaf dealers also have their own grades that are used internally.

**Green tips:** The uppermost leaves of U.S. flue-cured, burley, or dark air-cured tobacco that are still green in color after drying has occurred.

**Green tobacco:** 1) Tobacco that has not yet been re-dried or processed. 2) Tobacco that has not ripened and been properly cured, and consequently remains green in color even after processing has occurred. Sometimes referred to as crude tobacco.

**Green weight:** The weight of tobacco prior to being re-dried.

**Hand:** A group of five to 30 tobacco leaves held together prior to processing with a tie leaf, string or raffia. Also known as a bundle.

**Harvesting:** The process of collecting tobacco leaves from the field at the time when leaf maturity has reached its desired stage; harvesting can be done by either manual or mechanical means. Flue-cured and oriental tobaccos are harvested in stages, meaning that individual leaves are removed from the stalk as they ripen, rather than all at once, a process called priming. (The leaves generally ripen from the ground up.) Harvesting burley tobacco can be done in stages or by cutting the entire stalk near the ground and removing all of the leaves at the same time; the process used is generally determined by the climate conditions of the growing region.

**Hogshead:** A round, wooden container used to hold tobacco while it is transported, stored, or aged. Cardboard boxes and tersa bales are other packaging containers that serve the same purpose as hogsheads.

**Immature:** A term used to describe tobacco that has not reached its peak of ripeness in the field.



**Import quota:** The specific amount of a product that can be imported into a country over a certain period of time. An import quota can be established by directive, legislation, or proclamation. In the past, the United States has established import quotas for tobacco.

**Indigenous tobacco:** Tobacco that is native to the area it is produced in.

**Kentucky tobacco:** A type of fire-cured tobacco that was originally grown in the U.S. states of Kentucky or Tennessee, but is now grown in various other regions and countries as well. Kentucky tobacco is primarily used in chewing tobacco and pipe blends.

**Kilo or kilogram:** A unit of measurement in the metric system used in weighing tobacco; it is recognized internationally. 1 kilo = 2.2046 pounds; 1,000 kilos = 1 ton

**Lamina:** On a tobacco plant, the extended part of the leaf that is divided from the base to the tip by the stem; its framework is provided by the veins that extend from the stem. This term is used to refer only to the leaf blade—it does not include any portion of the stem. In contrast, the term whole leaf is used to refer to both the blade and stem of a leaf. Also known as the blade or web.

**Leaf:** 1) The major component of the tobacco plant; its size, shape, and position on the stalk are indicators of quality. 2) On a flue-cured tobacco plant, the second grouping of leaves from the top. 3) In fire-cured and dark air-cured tobacco, a general term for all of the leaves located in the top third of the tobacco plant.

**Light air-cured tobacco:** Tobacco that is cured primarily with natural rather than artificial heat and is typically brown or light brown in color. In contrast to dark air-cured tobacco, which is fermented, light air-cured tobacco is not fermented at all. Also known simply as “air-cured tobacco.”

**Long filler:** Large pieces of leaf that are used in making the innermost portion of a cigar. Short filler is used in the same manner as long filler, but it is made up of relatively small pieces of leaf. Also known as “frog-strips.”

**Loose leaf:** As its name suggests, loose leaf is tobacco that has not been grouped together in bundles; it is usually in the form of a bale or pile.

**Loose leaf auction:** A method of selling tobacco in which the tobacco is laid out in piles on the auction floor for inspection by potential buyers; it is popular because it eliminates the expensive and time-consuming task of bundling the tobacco or tying it in hands before it is sold.

**Lugs:** 1) On a flue-cured tobacco plant, the second grouping of leaves from the ground. 2) The largest leaves on a burley tobacco plant, located near the middle of the stalk. 3) The middle grouping of leaves on fire-cured and dark air-cured tobacco plants.

**Manipulation:** A general term for various processes applied to oriental tobacco leaves, such as cleaning, sorting, blending, packaging, and fermentation.

**Manufacturer:** In the tobacco industry, the term manufacturer refers to any company that purchases tobacco as a raw material and uses it to produce finished tobacco products, such as cigarettes and chewing tobacco, which are then sold and consumed.

**Maryland cigarettes:** One of the main types of blended cigarettes, which are those made with a mixture of tobacco varieties. As their name suggests, Maryland cigarettes are made almost entirely of Maryland tobacco and are mild in taste.



**Mature:** A term used to describe tobacco that has reached its peak of ripeness in the field.

**Maturity:** A term used to qualify the state of ripeness of tobacco in the field.

**Middle belt:** In the United States, a small area of flue-cured tobacco markets located between the Old belt and the Eastern belt.

**Midrib:** The smaller stem that extends from the main stalk of a tobacco plant and divides each leaf from its base to its tip. In larger tobacco leaves, the midrib must be removed during processing. Also known as the stem.

**Moisture content:** The amount of water within tobacco leaves. High moisture content gives the leaves elasticity, whereas low moisture content makes the leaves brittle. For this reason, the moisture content of tobacco is carefully controlled so that handling, storing, and manufacturing does not detract from the tobacco's quality or cause it to break into smaller, less desirable pieces. Moisture content is essential to the fermentation process.

**Nested tobacco:** Tobacco that has been deceptively packaged so that only high-quality leaves are visible, and the presence of poor-quality leaves and/or non-tobacco-related material is concealed.

**Non-tobacco-related material (NTRM):** Any material other than tobacco that is inadvertently included with tobacco leaves, such as stones, glass, string, pieces of metal, etc. Removing non-tobacco related material during processing is called picking the tobacco.

**Offal:** The name given to the dust and minute tobacco pieces produced during processing; too small to be used in the manufacture of tobacco products, offal is disposed of along with non-tobacco-related material.

**Old belt:** The name given to regions within the U.S. states of Virginia and northern North Carolina where tobacco is grown. Flue-cured, burley, and Virginia are the types of tobacco usually grown in the Old belt.

**Oriental-blend cigarettes:** One of the main types of blended cigarettes, which are those made with a mixture of tobacco varieties. As their name suggests, Oriental-blend cigarettes are made almost exclusively of oriental tobacco.

**Oriental tobacco:** A type of tobacco characterized by its small leaves and strong aroma. The oriental tobacco plant produces a larger number of leaves than other tobacco types and is primarily grown in the Mediterranean countries of Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, and the former Yugoslavian republic of Macedonia.

**Packaging:** The final stage in tobacco processing. Tobacco can be packaged in hogsheads, bales, tersa bales, or cardboard boxes; it is then either stored or transported to a manufacturer of tobacco products.

**Pad** 1) A grouping of tobacco leaves (in green form) held together from natural compression due to handling or processing. 2) A portion of tobacco that has been prepared for use in making cigars by hand. The tobacco in a pad has been stemmed and will be used either as binders or wrappers. Also known as a book.

**Picking:** Removing non-tobacco-related material and undesirable leaves from tobacco during processing. Picking can be done when the leaves are still whole or after they have been threshed (cut into strips); it can be done pneumatically or by hand.



**Pile:** As its name suggests, this term refers to a pile of loose tobacco leaves; no sorting or bundling of the leaves has occurred. The term pile is most often used in the context of the auction system, which involves placing piles of tobacco on the auction floor to be inspected by potential buyers.

**Pound:** A unit of measurement used, primarily in the U.S. and Canada, in weighing tobacco. Internationally, the weight of tobacco is measured in kilos or (metric) tons. 1 pound = 0.45 kilos

**Priming:** A method of harvesting that involves removing individual leaves from the tobacco stalk as they ripen rather than removing all of the leaves at once. Priming is generally associated with flue-cured and oriental tobacco.

**Primings:** A subdivision of the lugs on the U.S. flue-cured tobacco plant, primings are the leaves located closest to the ground. Because of their proximity to the ground, these leaves often come in contact with sand and soil and, consequently, must be cleaned before they can be processed. Also known as sand leaves.

**Prize room:** The area in a processing facility where (processed) tobacco is packaged and weighed prior to being stored or shipped to a manufacturer.

**Processing:** A general term for all of the processes applied to tobacco after it has been cured and before it is used in the manufacture of tobacco products. Processing involves various stages, including blending, threshing, re-drying, and packaging.

**Rag:** Tobacco that has been cut into fine strips for use in cigarettes. Also known as cut rag.

**Raw tobacco:** Recently harvested tobacco that has not yet entered the curing phase.

**Reconstituted tobacco:** Paper-like sheets of tobacco comprised mainly of scrap and stems. Reconstituted tobacco is produced by a variety of methods, all of which have a single purpose: to allow cigarette manufacturers to make the most efficient use of their tobacco by utilizing scrap and stems instead of discarding them. The paper-like sheets of reconstituted tobacco are then cut into strips and used in cigarettes.

**Red leaf:** On a burley tobacco plant, the second grouping of leaves from the top.

**Re-dried tobacco:** Tobacco in which a pre-determined moisture content has been obtained in the leaves by the re-drying process.

**Re-drying:** One of the stages in tobacco processing, the purpose of which is to obtain a uniform moisture content specified by the customer. Re-drying involves removing moisture from the tobacco leaves by applying heat and then injecting the leaves with steam until a pre-determined moisture level is obtained.

**Re-grading:** Prior to being purchased, tobacco is given a grade that serves as an indicator of its quality. Once purchased, the tobacco is sent to a processing facility where it is graded again, a process known as re-grading. The purpose of re-grading is to maintain consistency and ensure that the quality is uniform throughout, especially with respect to customer blends.

**Roasting:** A process generally reserved for dark tobaccos that will be used in pipe mixtures or dark cigarettes. Roasting controls the moisture content of the tobacco and enhances the aroma.

**Roll-your-own (RYO):** The name given to cigarettes that are made by hand with cut tobacco and cigarette papers; they do not have filters.





**Run of the crop:** A processing phrase used to describe a blend of tobacco that includes leaves from all of the different stalk positions on a tobacco plant. Because the quality of a leaf is partially determined by its position on the stalk, a run of the crop blend contains a mixture of various qualities. Creating a run of the crop blend is expeditious and lowers processing costs, thereby making the blend cheaper for customers.

**Sample:** A small quantity of tobacco (around two kilos) typically pulled from the process after the re-drying operation and compressed into a block measuring approximately 13 inches wide by 17 inches long by 4 inches thick. The purpose of a sample is to provide a representation of the overall quality and color of the tobacco being processed and to ensure consistency and uniformity within the blend.

**Sample room:** A room or location where interested parties, such as sales personnel, buyers, and customers can inspect samples of tobacco. Hand-rolled cigarettes are often prepared and smoked in the sample room to determine the taste and burning quality of a specific tobacco sample.

**Sand leaves:** A subdivision of the lugs on a flue-cured tobacco plant, sand leaves are the leaves located closest to the ground. Because of their proximity to the ground, these leaves often come in contact with sand and soil (hence the name) and must be cleaned before they can be processed. Also known as primings.

**Saucing:** Applying a pre-cutting solution or sauce to tobacco; the solution is composed of a variety of ingredients, such as sugar and aromatic substances. Also known as casing.

**Scrap:** A category in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's grading system denoting tobacco that has been broken into small pieces; scrap does not include any portion of the tobacco stems. Scrap results from handling tobacco during processing or manufacturing, whereas broken leaf results from handling that occurs prior to processing.

**Scrubs:** A general term for low-quality tobacco, it can denote tobacco from an inferior variety or the smaller ground leaves of a certain variety.

**Seconds:** 1) On a burley tobacco plant, the second grouping of leaves from the ground. Seconds are often thin and/or damaged due to their proximity to the ground. 2) Low-quality cigar tobacco, reserved for use in less-expensive cigars. 3) Tobacco leaves harvested from a second crop.

**Shattery:** Tobacco leaves that are dead or too dry and, subsequently, very brittle. The cell structure has either been damaged or destroyed in these leaves.

**Sheet:** Around 250 pounds of tobacco loosely packaged in burlap. Tobacco is often transported from the purchase location to a processing facility in sheets.

**Short filler:** Relatively small pieces of leaf that are used in making the innermost portion of a cigar. Long filler is used in the same manner as short filler, but it is made up of large pieces of leaf.

**Sound:** A term used to describe tobacco that is free of damage and excess water.

**Stalk:** The primary stem of an entire tobacco plant. The position or location of a tobacco leaf on the stalk is one indicator of its quality.



**Stem:** A side shoot that extends from the tobacco plant's primary stalk and divides each leaf from its base to its tip. In larger tobacco leaves, the stem must be removed prior to processing. Also known as the midrib.

**Stemmed:** A term for tobacco that has had the stems removed from the leaves.

**Stemming:** The process of removing stems from tobacco leaves; it can be done by hand, as it is for cigar wrappers, or by machine, as it is for cigarette tobaccos. Also known as stripping.

**Straight-laid:** A term for tobacco that has been packed in rows with all of the stems facing the same direction. The term tangled, in contrast, is used to describe leaves that have been randomly layered in a bale or package.

**Stringing:** The process of threading tobacco leaves onto a string or piece of twine so that the leaves can be hung up for curing. Using a needle, the stem is pierced near the base of the leaf and the string is then pulled through the hole. The spacing of the leaves on the string varies according to the type of tobacco and curing process. For the most part, stringing is done by hand.

**Stripping:** 1) The process of removing stems from tobacco leaves; it can be done by hand, as it is for cigar wrappers, or by machine, as it is for cigarette tobaccos. Also known as stemming. 2) The process of removing tobacco leaves from the stalk; primarily associated with burley tobacco.

**Strips:** Long pieces of leaf that have been threshed or cut away from the stem. At this point, the strips will be blended, compressed, and cut to produce rag.

**Suckering:** Removing suckers from a tobacco plant; this can be done by hand during harvesting or, at an earlier stage, by cutting the suckers or spraying the plant with a chemical that inhibits the growth of suckers.

**Suckers:** Side shoots that grow after the flowering head of a tobacco plant has been removed. Because suckers rely on the main plant for water and minerals, their growth can lower the quality of the main leaves. Suckers are removed when the quality of the plant justifies the labor and expense needed for their removal. They can be removed by hand or with the use of chemicals.

**Sun-curing:** One of four main methods of curing, which involves removing all of the natural sap and moisture from tobacco leaves. This method of curing involves exposing tobacco leaves to full sunlight, thereby drying the leaves completely. All oriental tobacco and certain types of Virginia tobacco are sun-cured.

**Tangled:** A term for loose tobacco leaves that have been randomly layered to form a bale or package. Straight-laid leaves, in contrast, are packed in rows with all of the stems facing the same direction.

**Tariff-rate quota:** A specific type of import quota that allows a certain quantity of imports at a low tariff rate and subjects imports above that quantity to a very high tariff rate. In the past, imports of leaf tobacco into the United States have been subject to tariff-rate quotas.

**Tersa bale:** A large cube of packaged tobacco; the head and base are wooden and the sides of the cube are wrapped with a clear plastic material. Other containers used to package tobacco include wooden hogsheads and cardboard boxes. The word tersa is an acronym for Tabaco en Rama S.A., the Mexican company that first developed this type of packaged bale.



**Thins:** A general term for tobacco leaves that grow on the lower half of the stalk; as their name implies, these leaves are thinner than the bodied tobacco that grows on the upper portion of the stalk.

**Thresher:** A machine used in tobacco processing facilities to cut the blade of the leaf away from the stem.

**Threshing:** A stage in tobacco processing that involves cutting the blade of the leaf away from the stem with a machine called a thresher, resulting in fairly small pieces of leaf blade suitable for use in cigarettes. The threshing process is a key operation in achieving particle size distribution of re-dried tobacco.

**Tie leaf:** A tobacco leaf that is used to tie several leaves together at the base of their stems. Once tied together, the leaves are called a hand.

**Tips:** 1) The uppermost leaves on a flue-cured tobacco plant. 2) The uppermost leaves on a burley tobacco plant. 3) The pointed ends of tobacco leaves (located farthest from the stalk), which are often removed during processing.

**Ton:** A unit of measurement in the metric system used in weighing tobacco; it is recognized internationally. 1 (metric) ton = 1,000 kilos

**Topping:** The process of removing the flowering blooms that develop at the top of a tobacco stalk; part of the stalk and some of the topmost leaves may also be removed in the process. Topping can be done at various stages in the plant's development, but when done early and extensively the tobacco leaves will grow larger and heavier.

**Trashes:** 1) On a burley tobacco plant, the second grouping of leaves from the ground. 2) On fire-cured and dark air-cured tobacco plants, the grouping of leaves closest to the ground; they are usually thin, low-quality leaves.

**Variiegated:** A term that applies to any tobacco in which the color is not uniform after curing. Variiegated leaves remain green, yellow, or bleached in some places, while the rest of the leaf has the normal coloring of its type.

**Veins:** In a tobacco leaf, the bundles of tissue that extend from the stem and form the framework of the blade.

**Virginia cigarettes:** One of the main types of blended cigarettes, which are those made with a mixture of tobacco varieties. Virginia cigarettes are made almost entirely of flue-cured tobacco. Also known as English cigarettes.

**Virginia tobacco:** Air-, fire-, or flue-cured tobacco that was originally grown in the U.S. state of Virginia but is now grown around the world. Depending on how it is cured, Virginia tobacco is used in cigarettes, pipe mixtures, and chewing tobacco. Also known as bright leaf.

**Web:** On a tobacco plant, the extended part of the leaf that is divided from the base to the tip by the stem; its framework is provided by the veins that extend from the stem. This term is used to refer only to the leaf blade—it does not include any portion of the stem. In contrast, the term whole leaf is used to refer to both the blade and stem of a leaf. Also known as the lamina or blade.

**Whole leaf:** This term refers to a tobacco leaf in its entirety, including both the blade and stem of the leaf. In contrast, the terms blade, lamina, and web refer only to the blade of the leaf and do not include the stem.



**Wrapper:** A tobacco leaf used as the outermost covering of a cigar; it surrounds the binder or top binder. Relatively few tobacco leaves can be used as wrappers because they must meet several requirements for quality; for example, their appearance must be nearly flawless and uniform in color.