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## HOW TO GROW TOBACCO.

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MR. W. A. PETREE BEFORE THE STOKES COUNTY FARMERS' CONVENTION AT DANBURY JULY 27, 1905.

Gentlemen, and fellow farmers of Stokes, I am glad to see you here this evening, for your presence tells me that you are not satisfied with your present amount of knowledge about your business as farmers. Your presence tells me that you are imbued with, and being actuated by a spirit of progress. It tells me that you feel an interest in your business, and that you realize that you do not know all that may be learned about it, but that you are seeking to learn more. And now while I realize that there may be among you many better farmers, many better tobacco growers than I am, and while it is with some degree of embarrassment I undertake to address you, yet as I am requested to contribute my little mite of experience in tobacco culture, I wish to say that, if I can offer any suggestions that will add to your interest and profit in this business, I feel that the effort will not have been made in vain.

Now there is a right way, and perhaps many wrong ways to do almost anything; and it seems to me that if we would work to the best advantage or cope with the requirements of our business as farmers, we should think more. We must think more. We, perhaps more than any other people, live in close touch with nature, and have good opportunities to acquaint ourselves with her laws as they relate to animal and vegetable life; and we should study, and acquaint ourselves as far as we can with the nature of every plant or crop we cultivate, in order that we may know how to supply their needs and get the best results for our labor.

Now, as I am no theorist, I wish to talk about what seems to me to be the more important features of tobacco culture, from a plain practical standpoint, the standpoint of my own experience and observation. So we will now begin with the tobacco seed, not at the plantbed, nor with such seed as we can get from a thoughtless, careless farmer, but we must have good seed; and I know of no better way for the intelligent, thoughtful farmer to get them than to grow them himself. So now let us think just a little about growing good tobacco seed. Now, I don't know how all you farmers grow your tobacco seed, I don't know how you select your seed plants; neither do I know how you treat your seed plants after you select them. But I know what has been my observation along this line. I have been used to seeing the farmers select good thrifty looking plants for their seed. And they turn out from one to sometimes as many as a half dozen seed plants all in one little spot of land. Then they prime off the bottom leaves just as if they were going to top the plants, then they break off the small leaves from around the stalk at the top so as to leave each plant with just about the same number of leaves they leave on a topped plant. Then they keep the worms off and care for the plants till they ripen their seed as best they can. Now, I practiced this method for several years, giving the matter little thought as to whether it was right or wrong. In fact, I acted just as if I thought that just so I grew my tobacco seed that was all that was necessary. But my tobacco kept deteriorating, it would

speck, frog-eye and rot on the field; and it kept getting worse from year to year. So I began to study as to what was the cause, and while I thought the seasons had something to do with it, I was satisfied that the principal or primary cause lay in the fact, that I had weakened the nature of my tobacco and its disease-resisting powers by crippling up my seed plants from year to year by breaking off so many of their leaves. Just about that time I heard other intelligent farmers talking about the same thing, so I quit breaking any leaves off my seed plants, and after that the tobacco stopped rotting so badly, and began to improve in many other ways. Now, it is the nature of all plants to reproduce themselves. They naturally exert their forces to develop and perfect their seed, and the tobacco plant needs all the leaves nature gives it to enable it by the help of the sunshine to elaborate or prepare its gums and juices for a proper development of its seed. Not one single particle of the carbon that enters into the sugary and starchy combinations necessary to the development of perfect seed can the plant take up through its roots, but it must all be taken in from the atmosphere, in the form of state of carbonic acid gas; and the plant has no way of taking in this gas only through its leaves. The leaves are its lungs through which it takes in all the atmospheric gases necessary to develop its seed. And no more can there be a perfectly healthy, and natural tobacco plant—one that will produce perfect seed without all its leaves than there can be a perfectly healthy man without all of his lungs. If men and women were crippled up from generation to generation, by clipping off a little of their lungs and diminishing their breathing power, in time the race would become so weak and sickly it would die off. And analogical reasoning would teach us that the same is more or less true of the tobacco plant. So, brother farmer, as long as we continue to cripple up the seed plants from which our tobacco crops grow, we cannot expect the tobacco to remain sound and healthy and have the power to resist the diseases unfavorable seasons bring about.

Now, about the selection of seed plants, I think each farmer should have an ideal, that is, he should form a mental picture of just what kind of type or plant of tobacco he wants. His mental picture should be one of the tobacco plant including all its desirable features or characteristics. And with this picture in his mind he should go into his tobacco field and select seed plants as near like his picture as he can find. I like to select plants with good medium sized leaves of good shape and length, and with relatively small stems and fibers, and the leaves not too close together on the stalks. I like to select plants of quick growth, but not plants that button or head out too low down. Neither do I like plants that grow up too high before they button or head out, as I think this is an indication of lateness.

Now as uniformity of growth and character are things we want in the tobacco crop, and as every plant has its own individual characteristics, and as it is the nature of plants to take on like features

or characteristics of the parent plants, I do not think it is a good plan to mix tobacco seed off different seed plants. One good seed plant will produce seed enough to plant many thousand hills of tobacco; but of course if the farmer wants more seed than he can get off of one plant, he can save seed from other plants, but he should keep them separate, sow them in separate beds, plant the plants in separate portions of the field and cut and cure the tobacco in separate curings.

Another thing, I do not think it is a good plan to turn out more than one seed plant at any one place in the field. I do not know just how it is, but I think that on account of the winds and insects, the plants are likely to cross and mix when they stand close together. If they do mix in this way, it would be an impossibility to ever get any set or fixed type of tobacco as long as we continue to mix up our seed and seed plants.

The next thing I wish to speak of is the preparation of the plant land. I am aware that the farmers have been in the practice of burning their plant beds, and they have wasted thousands and thousands of dollars worth of wood, and done thousands of dollars worth of hard labor to prepare and burn the wood, when it all might have been saved had they just thought a little and practiced a different method. Burning does not add one single particle of plant food to the soil, only that which is in the ashes, and I have seen farmers even push the ashes off the land before they worked it up ready to sow their seed. If we want our plant beds to have ashes, we can supply them in other ways than by wasting our wood to burn the land. Then, I am sure that the burning of the land, especially if it is burned hard, drives off large quantities of not all the nitrogen that is in the soil; and this necessitates our having to manure more heavily in order to get a good crop of plants. All the good that I can see the burning does, is to kill the weed and grass seed in the land, but this can be done much more cheaply than by burning the land. So, if you will pardon me for referring to my own methods, will tell you how I have been making tobacco plants for the last few years. But first, I will have to tell you how I make turnips, because the preparation of my tobacco plant land begins with, and is included in the preparation of the land for my turnips. Just as soon as I can after harvest, I go into my stubble field and select a place, neither too wet nor dry for tobacco plants. I always select a place that lies to the south or south east, and having selected the place I give it a good coat of manure and turn it under just about as deep as I can with a one-horse turning plow. Then I let it lie eight or ten days, till the weed and grass seed in the manure and land begin to sprout and come up, then, I take a long bull-tongue plow and plough the land thoroughly, twice, crossing the first ploughing with the second. This kills all the young weeds and grass and thoroughly mixes the manure with the soil. Then I let it lie a few days longer or till more weeds and grass begin to come up, then I cultivate the surface of the land thoroughly. This kills all the weeds and grass, mellow up the land, breaks up the capillaries of the surface of the land and shuts off the evaporation of moisture from the soil and holds it in store for the turnips. I

keep up this surface culture as often as it is necessary to keep the grass killed, and the land stirred on top to conserve the moisture in the soil till the time comes to sow the turnip seed. Then I get everything in readiness and watch out for a rain, and when I see the rain coming, I mix my turnip seed with a liberal quantity of some good fertilizer rich in potash, and sow them down on the land and rake or harrow then in lightly; and when the rain comes the seed sprout and come right on up and the young plants get rooted in the soil before it dries out. After the rain, and before the seed come up I always give the land a dressing of tobacco stalks. I always save the stalks from one or two curings of tobacco just to go on my turnip patch. Now, gentlemen, I have been practicing this method about sixteen years, and have never failed in a single instance to make the very finest kind of turnips. I often make them to weigh 8 and 10 pounds. And one time and the only time I ever sent any of them to a fair they took off a premium. As dry as it was for turnips last fall, I pulled about 50 bushels off a spot not over 35 or 40 feet square. But I am digressing, so I will get back to the tobacco plantbed. Having sprouted and destroyed the weed and grass seed in the land while preparing it for turnips, the land is in fine condition for tobacco plants so far as the grass is concerned; and when the time comes to sow the tobacco seed, I go and pull the turnips off the land where I want to sow the seed, if they have not already been pulled off, I rake off the old tobacco stalks, if they are not rotten enough to work into the soil, I then give the land another good coat of manure, free from grass seed, throw some fertilizer over it and work it all well into the land, making the bed perfectly mellow and fine. Then I smooth it off with a rake, mix my tobacco seed with a little fertilizer and sow them down on the bed, putting on about half of the seed while going over the first time; then I turn and go across the other way and sow the other half of the seed. This distributes the seed evenly over the bed and insures a regular stand of plants. After the seed are sown I rake them in lightly, and firm the soil by tramping; a little later on I put on the canvass, and the bed is done, and all without burning a single stick of wood. Now I have practiced this method a few years, and I have not failed in a single case to make the very best kind of tobacco plants. The advantages of the plan are these. In the first place, it gives you a fine crop of turnips, something every farmer likes to have. In the next place, it give you a fine lot of tobacco plants, just what you are working for. Then, it saves your wood and all the hard labor of preparing and burning it, and then from year to year you are getting up or making little spots of land in your fields rich, and these do good to other crops for years to come. Whereas, if you haul your manure out and throw it on plant beds in the forest, as is usually the case, when the beds are burned the manure does you no good only for the one year. [Just here, some one asked the speaker if he had any particular time to sow the tobacco seed, and whether or not he was in any way governed in the work by the phases of the moon.] And continuing, he said: I prefer to sow the seed about the second week in

## A SUCCESSFUL MEETING.

Rev. J. T. Rattledge Writes About the Elkin Sunday School Convention.

I had the pleasure of attending the District Sunday School Convention at Elkin, in part. It was indeed inspiring to be in this body. It was composed of Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Friends, etc., and all working harmoniously together. As the saying goes with us, "they all seemed like Methodists."

I will not attempt here to give a full report of the Convention, but wish only to give you something of its spirit. Mr. N. B. Broughton, of Raleigh, who has for a long time been officially connected with the work, was present with his genial face and inspiring talks, which added much to the Convention. Other prominent speakers whose presence and speeches contributed greatly to its success, were Profs. G. H. Crowell, of High Point; Z. H. Dixon, of Yadkinville; J. H. Allen, of Dobson; George, of Rowan; and Mr. J. Guy Carter, of Dobson.

The greatest themes of this Convention were, Sunday School and Temperance. Many inspiring and helpful things were said, but to this writer the most hopeful feature of all was the fact that we of the different faiths were one in this Convention. In these Conventions there are apparent the cords of love and sympathy that are drawing into oneness the great heart of the Sunday School.

Well, the Convention was a success in every respect, and so will be ours at Danbury, August 26th. Our programs are out and you can see what a treat we have for you.

Yours,  
J. T. RATLEDGE.

## SHARP INSTITUTE.

Intelligence, N. C., Aug. 27.—On August 29th there will be a General Educational Rally and Farmers' Picnic at Sharp Institute. The Programme will be as follows: 9:30 A. M. music, followed with prayer; 9:45, introductory and address of welcome by Prof. J. M. Sharp. 10 A. M. address by Prof. Albert H. King. 10:45 A. M. address by Prof. Chas. C. Barnhardt. 12 o'clock general picnic luncheon. 2 P. M. address to farmers. 3 P. M. general conference of representatives of the North Carolina Farmers' Protective Association.

The entire public is invited. This will mark the opening of the fall term of Sharp Institute. All who are close enough will please bring a basket. The exercises will be instructive as well as enjoyable.

Yours very truly,  
PROF. J. M. SHARP.

## PECULIAR DISAPPEARANCE.

J. D. Runyan, of Butlerville, O., laid the peculiar disappearance of his painful symptoms, of indigestion and biliousness, to Dr. King's New Life Pills. He says: "They are a perfect remedy, for dizziness, sour stomach, headache, constipation, etc." Guaranteed at all drug stores, price 25c.

later, and sometimes earlier than this. We have to be governed more or less by weather conditions and state of the ground. I pay no attention to the moon, and think it would be better for us to study well the needs of our crops, and plant them nearer home than to go away off to plant them in the moon.

[To be continued next week.]

## SUNDAY SCHOOL DISCUSSION.

O. L. Pulliam Answers F. G. Southern.

Germantown Route 1, Aug. 14.  
Mr. Editor:  
Allow me space in this issue to answer Mr. F. G. Southern's question of Aug. 10th. I will just say though that I think it would be better for Mr. Southern to call another secretary, as he and his present one can't get out a letter that anyone can get any sense out of, or it seems so from those they have written.

Now as to the question he asked me in the issue of Aug. 10th, I will just ask Mr. Southern to step back and read the first letter he wrote. You remember you said these words: "I wish that they would admonish their pupils to conduct themselves better than some of them do when they go to preaching." And then you spoke of the friend of Mr. Thos. Willis and Mr. Hilary Burton, and left the impression that he was a Sunday School scholar. And to make a long story short, you had just as well said this man was taught this misbehavior that you spoke of in Sunday School.

Now as to me as a Sunday School teacher, I am one. As to me teaching crime in Sunday School, I deny the charge. Although I'm not astonished at you saying anything about me or anyone, for I have heard you say that you had no confidence in none of your neighbors nor even in yourself.

Now, readers, what sort of a shape is he in? What can you think of such a man? And here he comes again with the words friend and teach. I wish he could find out what they mean. I guess that is what he wants. Is it Mr. Southern? Or what do you mean? You asked me privately what these words meant and I told you. And then you asked Mr. Redding in your reply to him. And now say something again in your last letter.

I wish you would explain yourself. Now I am certainly glad that F. G. Southern was in D. W. Hall's and B. F. Pulliam's Sunday School one Sunday and don't you see the only thing he makes mention of was the reading of the 4th chap. of Matthew, by D. W. Hall and B. F. Pulliam. Now, Mr. Southern, did these two men read this chap. by themselves? Was there no one else that could read. Why didn't you help them, you say the reading was alright, and be hands off of that stuff that was all wrong. You did not say what that was, and now will you please state in your next letter what that was that was so terrible that happened after the chap. was read.

Now about that investigation I wanted you to let's make. You failed to mention it, but you did say this, that you think there is seventy-five per cent. of the rising generation risking their selves in the hands of Sunday School teachers for their salvation.

Now, Mr. Southern, I want you in your next letter to give the name of just one person who has told you this. Just one, not 75 per cent. of the rising generation. I am with Sunday School people every Sunday and I have never heard one say anything of the kind.

I will agree with you that there are 75 per cent. of the rising generation who are attending Sunday School.

And now again, I ask you let's make this investigation that I spoke of in my first letter and see what per cent. of the criminals came from Sunday School.

O. L. PULLIAM.