

There are several difficulties to face by any one who attempts to grow, cure, and sell the leaf, and it is probably these difficulties which have checked the industry. The price of labour is the main obstacle, for the crop requires much attention, and that during the busy season of the year, from November to March. Secondly, the plant must be grown to perfection, in order to compete with foreign tobacco in quality and flavour. This limits the areas to suitable soils and favourable situations, where the plantations can be sheltered from wind and lie exposed to the sun for the greater part of each day. Again, until growers could supply leaves in sufficient quantities to meet the demand of manufacturers, the latter much prefer to buy in foreign markets, where from a number of samples submitted they can choose one which when prepared will give them their standard article. Should numerous growers be induced to enter the field for tobacco-growing, this last-named difficulty would be easily overcome, for tobacco of good quality can undoubtedly be grown in New Zealand.

The accompanying photograph of a specimen plant growing at Ruakura will serve to illustrate the success achieved after experimenting with different varieties and manures. A tobacco expert who lately inspected this plot considers the quality excellent, and stated that he never saw better-grown plants in the United States. He estimated the crop at 9 cwt. of dried leaf per acre, and valued it at 1s. 6d. per lb. The soil is of a light sandy nature, shallow, with gravel subsoil. This is not by any means the most suitable soil, a deep well-drained sandy loam rich in humus being far superior for the purpose.

Poultry-manure has given the best results, but when this is unprocureable farmyard manure must be substituted. With either of these manures it is advisable to plough them in some time before planting. With artificial manures, dissolved bone and sulphate of potash surpass all others on this soil. The sulphate of potash adds quality to the leaf. The Maoris applied wood-ashes to their plantations, mixing these well with the soil. The variety which best adapts itself to this climate and soil is one named Pryor Virginia, secured from Australia by Mr. A. Chocqueel, a local manufacturer of tobacco. It far surpasses the Old Virginian, Turkish, or Connecticut previously tried here. The leaves are of a darker shade of green, are larger, and contain more oil. Many of them measure 18 in. across and 30 in. in length, while the largest leaves of Old Virginian do not exceed 11 in. by 18 in.

A few notes as to the cultivation adopted with this season's crop may here prove interesting. The seed was sown in trays under glass on the 14th October, 1912. The seed germinated in seven days, and the young plants appeared above ground on the 25th October. These were transplanted into rows 3 ft. apart each way on the 17th December. The soil was hoed three times to check weeds. Hoing must not be deep close to the plant, as this destroys many fibrous roots. As side