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## Common Tobacco

*Nicotiana tabacum*

### Fast-growing with neat, pink-coloured flowers

**Worth Knowing:** The annual Common Tobacco can grow between one and three meters high and develops up to half a meter big, alternate foliage leaves, with the highest leaves having the best quality for tobacco production. The plant produces neat, funnel-shaped flowers with five pinkish-red coloured petals. The ovaries bear multiple ovules, and a single plant can bring out up to one million seeds. The leaves of the plant contain the poisonous alkaloid nicotine that protects the Common Tobacco as pest repellent. However, the consumption of the *Nicotiana tabacum* dates in the history of South America even back to Mayans. The yellow leaves are harvested in autumn, hung out to dry and later fermented, so the typical tobacco aroma comes to light. Be advised: due to tax reasons the cultivation of the plant is limited. The Virginian Tobacco however, is with its nice pinkish-coloured flowers even for non-smokers an easy to cultivate ornamental plant.

**Natural Location:** The Common Tobacco originally comes from South America.

**Cultivation:** Seed propagation indoors is possible throughout the year. However, since the plant is annual, it is recommended starting the propagation in spring on your windowsill. In mid May, when there are no more frosty nights expected, you can plant your Tobacco out. The seeds don't need any preparation, and can just be spread and gently pressed onto moist potting compost. Cover the seed container with clear film to prevent the earth from drying out, but don't forget to make some holes in the clear film and take it every second or third day completely off for about 2 hours. That way you avoid mold formation on your potting compost. Place the seed container somewhere bright and warm with a temperature between 20°C and 25° Celsius and keep the earth moist, but not wet. Usually it takes about two to three weeks until germination.

**Place:** The Common Tobacco prefers a bright and sunny place.

**Care:** Keep the earth consistently moist, but let the upper layer of the substrate dry out before watering again. It is advisable to give fluid fertilizer for tub plants every three to four weeks.

**During the winter:** As an annual plant, the Common Tobacco doesn't hibernate, but has to be planted new next year.