

Flowering Tobacco (*Nicotiana*)

(Information compiled by Master Gardener Janice Peterson)

Nicotiana, the genus for all types of tobacco including smoking, chewing and flowering tobacco, is named for Jean Nicot, the 16th century French consul to Portugal who introduced tobacco in the form of snuff to the French courts. This plant, represented by over 70 species, is native to the tropical Americas, Polynesia and Australia. Flowering tobacco was introduced in the gardens of England during the 19th century. *Nicotiana* has perfect flowers (both male and female parts are present) that are pollinated by moths and butterflies of the order *Lepidoptera*. They are attractive to Hawk moths and Sphinx moths in particular. Hummingbirds are also attracted to the tubular flowers, especially the red and pink varieties. The flower colors can range from white, pink, crimson, purple, mauve to lime-green.

Flowering tobacco is grown as an annual in Wisconsin. The seeds are very small and need light to germinate, hence they should be sown carefully and not covered. Plants will reseed freely. They grow in sun to part shade and while not particular about the soil, they don't do well in cool temperatures. *Nicotiana* is drought tolerant once established but prefers steady moisture. Cutting back the old flower stalks after the first bloom will encourage future flushes of flowers.

Fragrance is one of the best reasons to grow flowering tobacco. The most intense fragrance is found in the white, night-opening varieties. Newer varieties may offer a large array of colors, day-opening flowers or more compact plants, but these traits often come with a sacrifice to the intensity of fragrance. Since fragrance is most often experienced in the evening, it is a nice idea to plant flowering tobacco *en masse* where evening breezes will blow the scent toward a porch or window. Flowering tobacco has been a mainstay of many Victorian gardens and its popularity continues to grow as new varieties and hybrids are offered each year. Rotary Gardens will have over 70 varieties of flowering tobacco on display in 2006.

- o *Nicotiana alata* 'Crimson Bedder'
- o *Nicotiana alata* 'Jasmine Scented'
- o *Nicotiana alata* 'Lime Green'
- o *Nicotiana alata* 'Sensation White'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Avalon Appleblossom'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Avalon Bright Pink'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Avalon Burgundy'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Avalon Lime'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Avalon Lime Purple Bicolor'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Avalon Peach'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Avalon Pink Picotee'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Avalon Pink Picotee'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Avalon Red'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Avalon White'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Crimson King'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Daylight Sensation'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino Picotee'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino Antique Peach'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino Antique Shades'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino Crimson'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino Lime Green'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino Picotee Pink'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino Pink Bicolor'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino Purple'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino Purple Bicolor'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino Red'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino Salmon Pink'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Domino White'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Fragrant Cloud'
- o *Nicotiana glauca*
- o *Nicotiana* 'Grand Ol' White'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Havana Appleblossom'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Havana Red'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Havana True Lime'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Havana White'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Hummingbird Cherry Blossom'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Hummingbird Lemon Lime'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Hummingbird White'
- o *Nicotiana knightiana*
- o *Nicotiana knightiana* 'Green Tears'
- o *Nicotiana langsdorfii*
- o *Nicotiana langsdorfii* 'Variegata'
- o *Nicotiana mutabilis* 'Marshmallow'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Nicki Lime'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Nicki Red'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Nicki Rose'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Nicki White'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Only the Lonely'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Perfume Blue'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Perfume Deep Purple'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Perfume Lime'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Perfume Red'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Perfume White'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Saratoga Antique Shades'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Saratoga Appleblossom'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Saratoga Deep Rose'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Saratoga Lime'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Saratoga Purple Bicolor'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Saratoga Red'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Saratoga Rose'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Saratoga White'
- o *Nicotiana sylvestris*
- o *Nicotiana sylvestris* 'Only the Lonely'
- o *Nicotiana sylvestris* 'White Shooting Stars'
- o *Nicotiana tabacum* 'Variegatum'
- o *Nicotiana* 'Tinkerbell'
- o *Nicotiana x sanderae* 'Dwarf White Bedder'