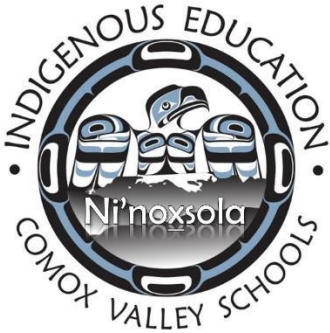


NI'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program
Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools



Sheila Buchanan
Tobacco



Tobacco is viewed as sacred by the Indigenous people. The reason for this is due to the depth of the roots and the smoke it provides when lit. The roots are apparently very deep. It also provides smoke which can reach high into the sky, and it is believed that the smoke can reach the creator and gets to the creator quicker through this procedure.

This is the reason tobacco is always presented to the elders as a welcome gift. It is also used when medicines are taken out of the ground. The tobacco is placed in into the hole where the root was taken from. If a hunter kills an animal to feed his family, tobacco is offered to the creator to give thanks for the nourishment this animal will provide.

When building a sweat lodge, the same procedure is used to give thanks for the soil that the lodge is being built. Any ceremony that is being practiced always begins with the use of tobacco. It does not necessarily mean the person receiving it is a smoker, but if they wish to do so it is not discouraged. It is not to be wasted but used as a gift to the creator when ever it is necessary to do so.

This knowledge was passed on to my inquisitive mind by Elder Bill Noskey as I could not understand the significance to giving tobacco, when it is viewed as harmful to your body. It is not to encourage young people to start smoking, it is intended for sacred uses.

Sheila Buchanan (Kookum)

