

A GLOSSARY OF TEA TASTERS' TERMS*

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This list is confined as far as possible to terms in daily use on the London market and a good number are omitted, though sometimes used, which convey little or nothing to the planter.

Tasters should endeavour to give definite guidance to a planter who wants to trace a shortcoming in his tea to some incorrect factory procedure.

Some terms are difficult to define, such as "point" which cannot be tied down to any particular property, but is generally used to denote any characteristic, *strength*, *pungency*, *briskness*, which is sufficiently marked in a tea to carry that property into a blend.

The exact meaning of *briskness* is difficult to determine. Most tasters use it to denote a *live* liquor as opposed to a *flat* one, but it does not indicate *pungency*.

Many terms are used to denote the same property or slight variations of a property. Thus *washy*, *weak*, *thin*, describe various degrees of thinness representing something wanting and undesirable. *Light* and *sweet* may be used to describe good liquors, although not so good as those shewing *thickness* and *strength*.

The terms *full*, *round*, *smooth* and *mature* all indicate an absence of bitterness or rawness and suggest strength. Such teas usually cream down well. *Fulness* gradually gives place to *softness* and then *dulness*.

The terms in the glossary below, are collected under four headings dealing with the appearance of the tea, the infused leaf, the liquors, and general characteristics. Particular manufacturing conditions which may account for some of the faulty characteristics are denoted.

* Compiled by R. G. Bradshaw and H. B. Yuille at the request of the Ceylon Association in London.

1.—DRY LEAF.

Brownish	... Leaf which is brown in colour.
Blistered	... Leaf swollen and hollow inside. Results from too rapid firing.
Black	... Leaf which is black in colour.
Choppy Chopped Cut.	... Leaf chopped in the breaker or cutter rather than broken in the roller.
Clean	... Leaf free from fibre and dust and broken leaf or Fannings.
Crepy	... Applied to tea with shell-like crimped leaf.
Even	... Leaf true to grade and consisting of pieces of roughly equal size.
Flaky	... Leaf not twisted, but in flakes.
Grey	... Leaf grey in colour. Results from too much rubbing in sorting and cutting.
Silver tip	... Grey or pale coloured tip (not golden). Leaf which has been over-withered or damaged during sorting may give grey tip.
Some Ends	... Not in general use. Applies to small tip.
Stalk	... Usually indicates red stalk. Results from coarse leaf and too hard rolling.
Tippy	... Containing a large percentage of "pale" or "golden" tip.
Uneven	... Tea composed of uneven pieces.
Well twisted	... Fully withered leaf gives well-twisted tea. Usually applied in describing whole leaf grades.

2.—INFUSED LEAF.

Bright	... Bright in colour, denoting a good tea. The liquors of such infusions are usually bright.
Coppery	... Bright, copper-coloured infusion.
Dull	... Dark, brownish or dull green in colour denoting a poor tea. The liquors of such infusions are usually dull.
Green	... Greenish in colour, results from under-fermentation or insufficient rolling.
Open	... The infusion has lost its twist. If open and bright denotes good quality.

Mixed
Uneven }

The infusion contains red, green and dark colours. Results from uneven jāt, uneven withering fermentation or rolling.

3.—THE LIQUOR.

Brisk	...	Having a "live" characteristic.
Bright	...	Bright in colour and clear, with some briskness.
Body	...	(See <i>Thick</i> .)
Colour	...	Denotes colour but not necessarily a good tea—the term must be considered in conjunction with other characteristics.
Dull	...	Brownish liquors which are neither clear nor bright.
Flat	...	Lacking in briskness and pungency: Generally used to denote a tea that has gone off.
Fruity	...	May arise from over-fermentation or leaf lying wet whilst withering.
Full	...	A strong, coloury tea with no bitterness or rough character.
Raw	}	A liquor which is bitter.
Harsh		
Rasping		
Light	...	Pale in colour but does not necessarily denote a poor tea. Good quality, pungent teas are frequently light. Not to be confused with "thin".
Malty.	...	Suggests slight high firing but not over-fired. Used for quality teas well and properly fired. High firing will not produce a malty tea unless this character is originally present in the leaf.
Mature	...	No rawness or flatness—akin to full.
Pungent	...	Having astringency without bitterness.
Round	...	(See <i>Full</i> .)
Smooth	...	(See <i>Full</i> .) Not so pronounced as "full" but not a bad term.
Strength	...	A combination of thick liquors and pungency or briskness. A tea which creams down well.

Soft	... Denotes a lack of "life", pungency and briskness, not as poor a term as "flat".
Sweet	... A light liquor that is not altogether undesirable.
Thick	... A concentrated, bright red liquor which creams down well.
Thin	... Lacking strength, body and briskness.
Weak	... Thin and lacking in pungency and body. ... Similar to thin.
Washy	... (See <i>Thin</i> .)
Plain	... Lacking in tea characteristics, and wanting in flavour.
Weathery	... A soft undesirable character found in rains teas.
Sour	... Definitely a sourish taste through defective manufacture.
Heated	... A dull, soft, fruity character attributed to defective manufacture.

4.—GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Aroma	... Usually denotes the presence of flavour.
Bakey	... Defective or faulty firing, sometimes slightly over-fired.
Coarse	... A liquor which may have some thickness but is deficient in quality. Results from coarse leaf.
Cream	... A cloudiness obtained as soon as a strong tea which quality cools.
Dry	... Slight bakiness.
Out of condition	... A mouldy or unsound tea.
Flavour	... A tea showing a seasonal or district flavour.
Gone off	... Tea that has lost its fresh character.
High fired	... Fired more highly than is desirable but not burnt.
Melty	... A well fired tea, a desirable characteristic. ... Is present only at quality seasons.
Nose	... Indicating some aroma on the dry leaf. ... May be bad or good according to further description.
Point	... Some marked desirable characteristic. ... Accentuated briskness.
Quality	... Denotes the presence of desirable characteristics

Stewed

... Tea lacking in common tea flavour, results from under-firing, or from too thick spreading on the firing tray.

Sweaty

... May result from unclean factory conditions.

Tainted

... Usually refers to some flavour, quite foreign to tea, *e.g.*, fruit, kerosene, etc.

