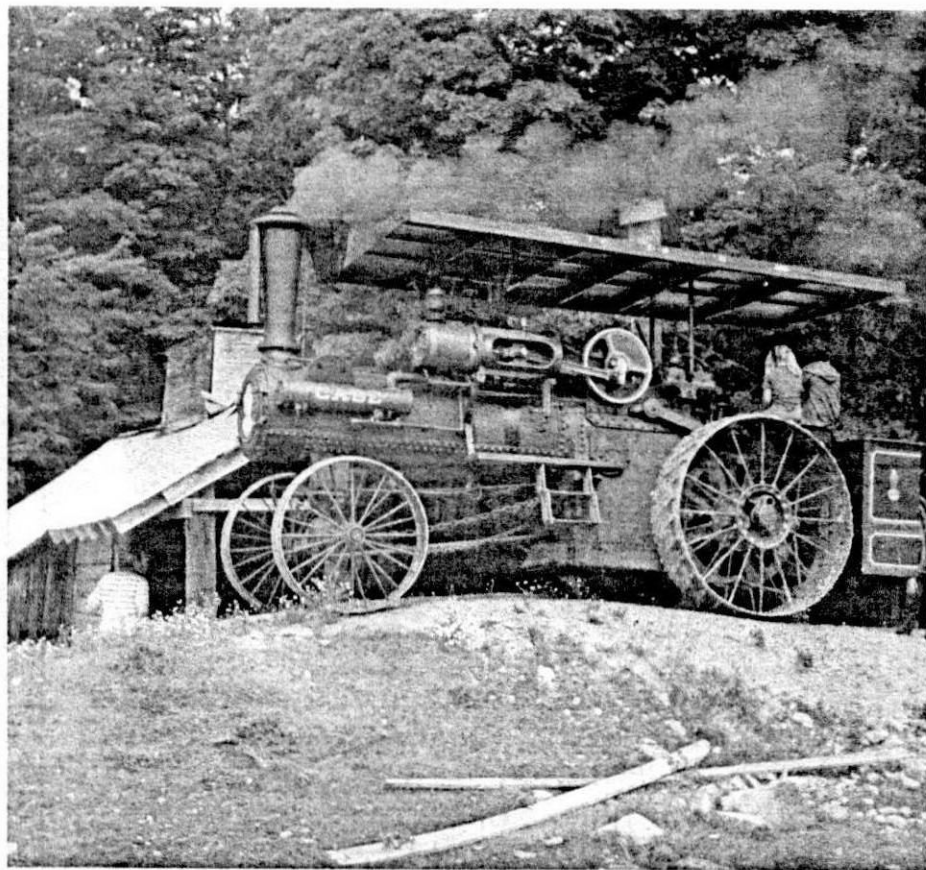


NATIONAL MAPLE SYRUP DIGEST NATIONAL



Vol. 18, No. 3

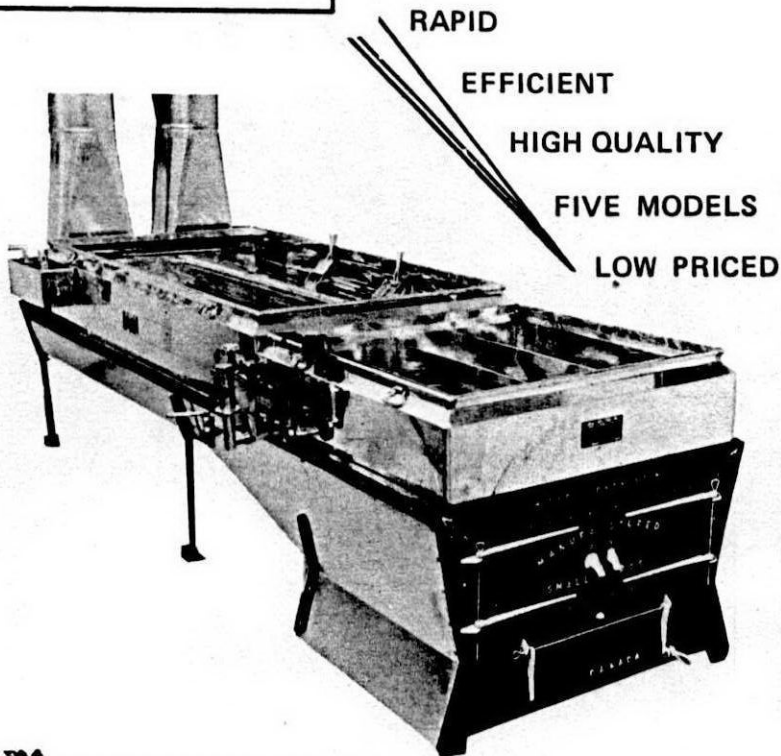
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COVER PICTURE

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See article: "Vosburg's"

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TREE FARMING

By
Lloyd Sipple



Roadside trees and plantation near
Walton, N. Y.

Most folks think tree farming consists of planting seedlings and growing nursery stock or Christmas trees. Some realize it also includes good forest management practices for the production of pulp and timber from both softwoods and hardwoods. But there's another kind of tree farming known to only a very small percentage of the public. Let's call it "Sugar Tree Farming."

Of the over 80 varieties of maple trees in the world only two are considered good enough to produce maple syrup economically. These are the well known Hard Maple, sometimes called Rock Maple but more often called Sugar Maple, and the Black Maple. Since there are few Black Maples around, let's just talk about the Sugar Maple.

Every Hard Maple tree is not necessarily a Sugar Maple because a Sugar Maple is a very special kind of tree. In a dense woods, a maple grows tall and straight with few branches and a small crown. It's like a bean pole with a feather duster on top - excellent for timber but makes very little sugar be-

cause it has few leaves.

A "Sugar" Maple tree is a hard maple (*acer Saccarum*) that grows where there is plenty of room, like in front of your house. It has about 8 feet of clear bole before the limbs come out in profusion. From that point on there's so many knots in the trunk it's difficult to even make firewood out of it. This type of tree will produce twice as much syrup per tap as the "bean poles" in the woods.

Years ago, New York, as well as some other northeastern states, had an abundance of sugar trees. They literally lined the roadsides, driveways and fence rows, and for a good reason. They shaded the roads so the sun couldn't dry out the surface. This reduced the maintenance required to keep the road in shape.

In the mid-eighteen hundreds, townships gave landowners a tax reduction for each roadside tree on their property. The approved species included Hard maple, Ash, Elm and Black Walnut. Since Hard Maple was the main

source of sugar for the early settlers, it was the favored species, and those who planted them were the original "Tree Farmers."

As the farmers learned the value of the "bushy" trees, many attempted to improve their woods. Thinning and culling produced "sugar bushes" which were comparable to apple orchards with the trees spaced at regular intervals. Some attempted to plant maple seedlings and a few succeeded but excessive rodent damage practically eliminated this approach. Also, it's very difficult to interest anyone to go to all the work of planting trees when they are facing at least 30 years before they start producing.

But the day when there are no more sugar trees may be fast approaching. Not from a disease like the chestnut and elm; sugar maples have a few enemies other than various caterpillars that can be controlled. The worst one fits the following description: He is about 6 feet tall, 180 pounds and carries an axe in one hand and a chain saw in the other. He kills trees by cutting them off at the base and his motive is usually dollars. Sometimes he drives a big machine called a skidder. This is a mechanical monster that kills more small trees by running over them than are actually cut. Other times he works for a highway crew that cuts all roadside trees just for the fun of it. Their objective is to get rid of all roadside



New row of maples set well off right of way.

trees so that there's nothing to slow down the drunk drivers when they run off the road before they hit your house. In any way, the sugar maple should be added to the endangered species list.

What can be done? I wish I knew. Our town has a "Trees for Tomorrow" committee. We're raising maples in a nursery to "setting out" size (6' to 8') that can be sold to landowners at a reasonable price. This time they'll be planted along roadsides but off the right-of-way or in plantations if anyone wants to bother to protect them from rodents.

With everyone's help we hope to return the roads in both our town and village to the cool, shaded, "friendly" type they once were instead of the hot, glaring, "hostile" speedways they are fast becoming. Maybe we can prolong the life of the Sugar Trees a few more years and keep making that product that's the best thing that ever happened to a pancake.

Anyway, I'll bet we have a whole lot of "mini" tree farmers.

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Why Leaves Change Color

Contributed by
Bob Huxtable
Lansing, Michigan
Author Unknown

Few spectacles in nature can equal the splendor of hardwood forests in autumn. The red, yellow, crimson, purple and brown colors bedazzle our eyes with a special beauty that comes but once a year. These bright colors are pigments that are in the leaves when they grow in spring, but the green pigment, chlorophyll, dominates all other colors throughout spring and summer because the tree replaces this chemical as rapidly as it disintegrates. However, as nights lengthen toward fall, production of new chlorophyll diminishes. Without chlorophyll, the leaf loses its green color, and once the green is gone, the bright colors of autumn emerge. All the colors we see are produced by three pigments, either singularly or in combination. Yellow comes from carotenoids, a mineral substance found commonly in carrots, daffodils, egg yolks, and of course leaves. Scarlet, lavender and purple come from anthocyanins, a set of pigments commonly found in Concord grapes and cranberries, as well as leaves.

Tannins, the third basic set of pigments, give autumn leaves their glossy

brown color. These brown pigments are also present in tree bark, walnut husks, and bitter tasting foods such as acorns.

Weather affects how much of these leaf colors we are allowed to see. Cool nights and warm "Indian Summer" days favor colorful reds, lavenders and purples. Freezing temperatures stop the revelation of these pigments, causing leaves to wither and darken. Direct sunlight stimulates the formation of the red (anthocyanin) pigments, so that a partly shaded leaf will turn bright red on its sunlit portions, while remaining green or yellow on the shaded parts. The genetic characteristics of a particular tree species also determine autumn colors. When autumn colors fade, leaves begin to drop, thus ending the color spectacle. This is not caused by colder temperatures, as is commonly believed, but rather is believed caused by the shortening length of daylight. Experiments have shown that trees kept warm artificially, will still lose their leaves as the days shorten. However, trees kept artificially lighted will retain their leaves long after the temperatures drop to wintry levels.

Whatever the cause, hardwood forests produce magnificent color spectacles each year that have become a hallmark of our country's beauty.

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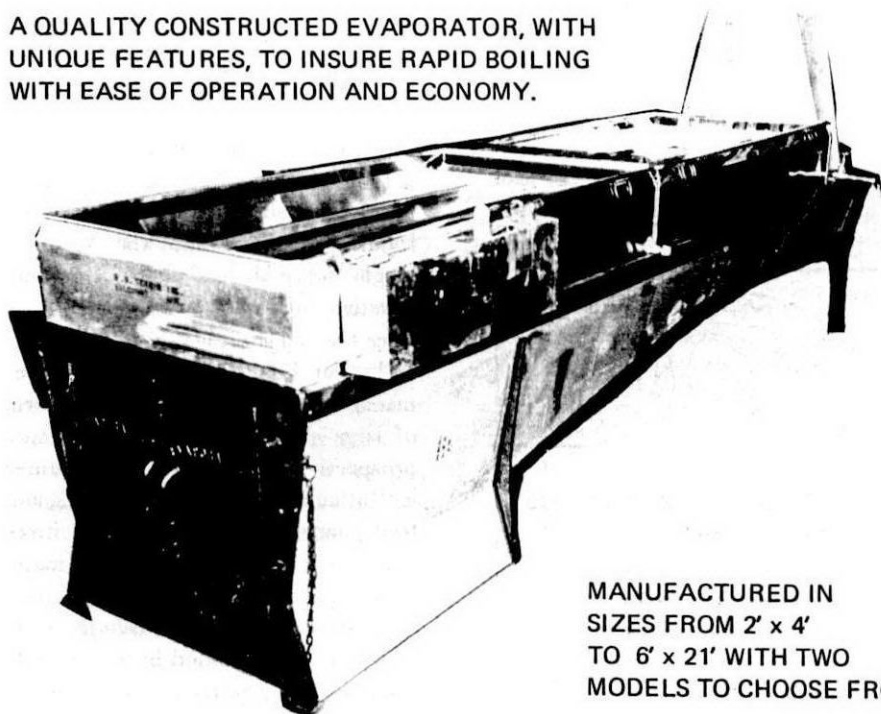
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ducers in all the maple producing states, these men felt it would be best to forestall any threatened "take over" by people who had only a profit interest in Maple Production.

Leader Evaporator Co., Inc. stockholders regret the news reports of its' decision to start a syrup can manufacturing unit which has created and distorted ill feeling among Vermont Maple producers.

Leader Evaporator Company Inc., acting through its Executive Committee has membership in the Vermont Maple Industry Council and the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association and is active on its' "Can Committee" ever since the can shortage appeared.

Leader Evaporator Company Inc. management gave support in the form of large orders for finished cans, to a prospective independent manufacturer in Rutland, visited his operations, and took part in conferences and investigations relative to the matter, before deciding that a better and more permanent solution of the can problem, could be accomplished by enlisting its full resources, reputation and financing into the concept of a more expansive and modern can productions unit, which involves seasonal storage of finished cans and timely distribution to users.

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Bob Lamb

THE VOSBURG'S

NEW YORK MAPLE TOUR

Sue Bennett

Up in the hills of Centerville is a very lovely spot where Ethel, Wellington, Brad and Fran Vosburg have a growing sugar operation.

Wellington started the operation over sixty years ago on his own after working with his father before that. He started with a stone arch and one pan as his first sugaring venture. Wellington, better known as Stub, started with about 800 taps in 1930 in a sugar house that was built in 1900 by his uncle. They used a team of horses for gathering until about eighteen years ago. Now a crawler type tractor and a homemade wooden bob are used for the deep snow. When the snow melts they switch to a farm tractor and wagon. They now tap about 30 acres of woods and have one huge old tree that dates back to the Indians. This tree always has the sweetest sap of all the trees. It stands right behind the sugar house and is always tapped first.

Fifteen years ago an addition was added to house a thirty Horse Power boiler that came from the cheese factory in Centerville. They have a stainless steel milk tank that boils the sap using the steam boiler. About fifteen gallons of syrup are made in the tank at one time. Later a woodshed and

kitchen were added to complete the setup.

Brad came into the operation a few years before graduating from high school. He now takes care of all the tapping and gathering while Ethel, seventy-three, takes care of the wood evaporator and Stub, seventy-six, the steam boiler.

In 1970 they started using plastic tubing for about two hundred taps. It is all gravity-flow pipeline and goes into storage tanks. Last year they had about 2,000 buckets and 800 plastic taps.

It is completely a family operation with a lot of volunteer help from their children and twenty-five grandchildren. They are brought back when they're small and grow up learning and expecting to help with the gathering. They now have eleven great-grandchildren who are already coming to the sugar bush. It won't be long before they are helping.

Their syrup is sold all from their home in cans to customers who come back year after year. Everything is usually canned except the last batch which is put into drums.

In the spring this is a very busy spot with people who come to visit, watch, taste and pick up their syrup. The Vosburg family makes everyone feel so at home that people come back year after year with their family and friends. This was also a stop on this years New York State Maple Tour.

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Dear Mr. Editor,

My wife she sez, Honest Archie, (sometimes she calles me truthful ARCHIE) Please tell that nice Mister Editor man how we won first prize for maple syrup at the Calico County Fair.

Well, ya see, in order to produce good syrup youse gotta have the right filtering equipment. We got us a tripple acting, sub-atomic multi-splined separator. The kind that runs off a hot shot battery. Well to do the job right it needed some modification. (Montgomery and Ward supplied the instructions) But the blame thing wouldn't work unless it had 5000 gallons as back pressure.

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ted the bionic units from the sub atomic. This produced a syrup which was out of this world, as fine as Gooka Feathers (peach fuz, that is)

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Ohio River which caused sand bars and the tug boats ran aground. The Corps of Engineers forced us to quit. We had a good thing going for us for a while.

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Archie

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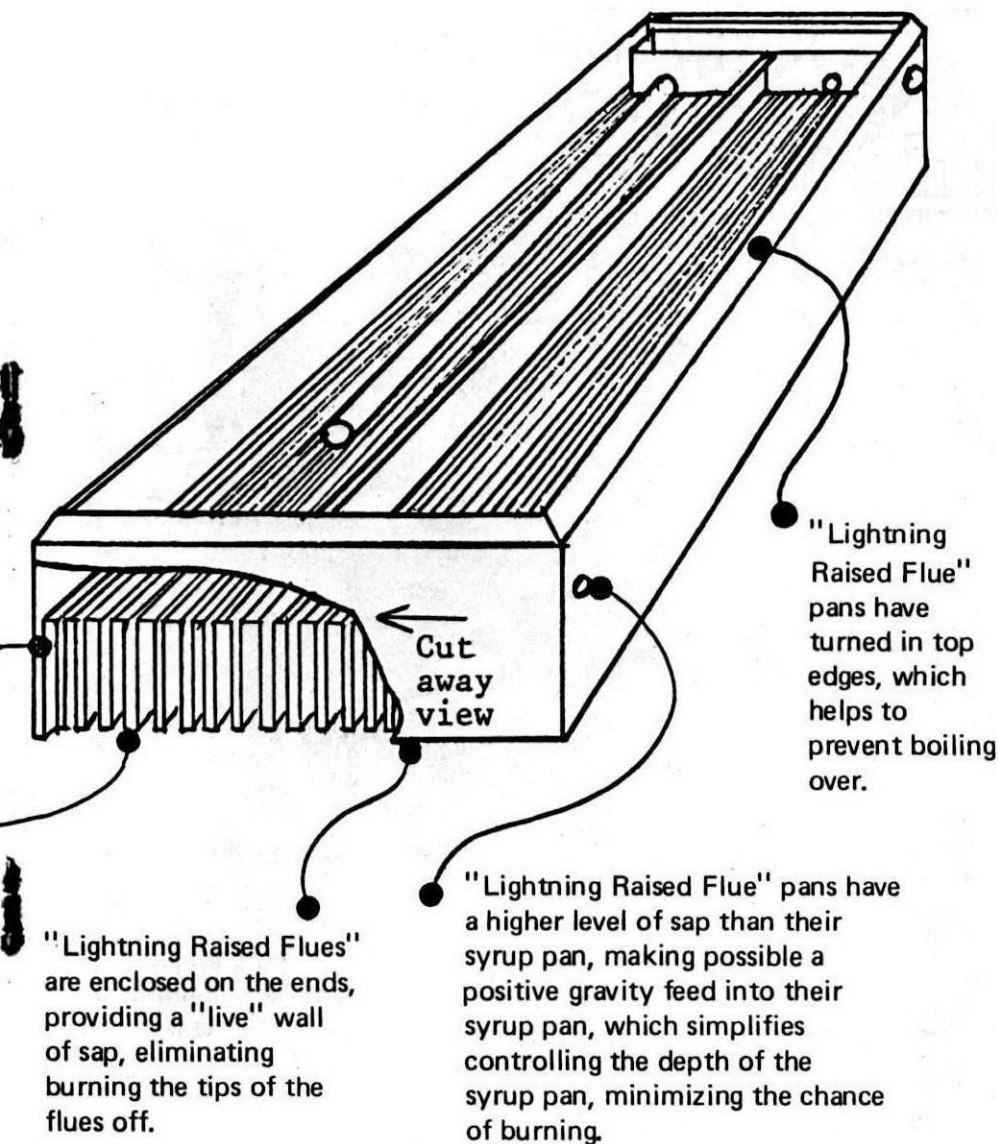
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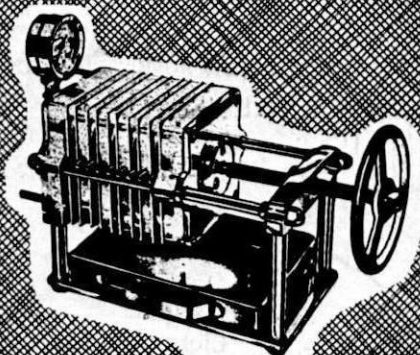
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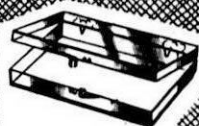


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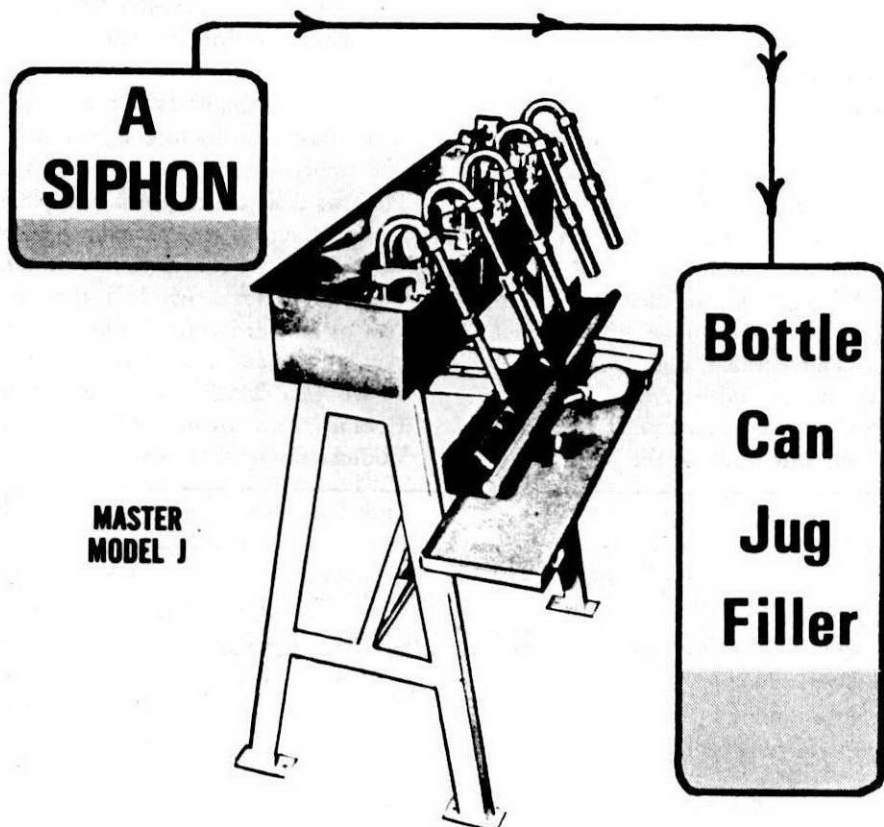
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OUR CATALOG SHOWS LOTS OF THINGS!

Vermont Maplerama

Shirley Coombs

"Everything has its season." However in Windham County Vermont, sugaring had its second season so to speak, while hosting the 1978 Vermont Maplerama.

Registration began at 9:00 A.M., August 11th at Coombs Maple Products, Inc. in Jacksonville. A total of 260 persons registered during the two day event. Coffee and doughnuts were served by the Coombs family. Visitors were invited to view maple sugar being made and packaged in the Coombs plant. The canning of maple syrup was demonstrated using a vacuum filter. Several sugaring equipment dealers displayed their merchandise. A log splitter was demonstrated, reminding us that winter would indeed eventually come. After enjoying a lunch provided by the Mr. and Mrs. Club of the Jacksonville

Community Church, the buses loaded for the afternoon tours.

One of the stops was the farm of Lewis Corse and Sons in Whitingham. Sap from 5500 buckets is boiled in a 5 x 18 and 6 x 18 evaporators. Production for 1978 totaled 1380 gallons of syrup. The Corses retail the entire crop.

The Corse family farm also supplements its income by logging, pulpwood and firewood sales. A milking herd of 25 cows is kept along with 30 replacements. A new barn and milking parlor will house 50-60 milkers this winter. Approximately a hundred thousand feet of lumber has been sold since the family purchased a saw mill in 1976.

We met another member of the Coombs clan when we stopped at Coombs Beaver Brook Sugar House in

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Wilmington. Bob and Shirley Coombs' son Bill and his wife Sally own and operate this business. It was purchased from his parents in 1971. All the sap for this operation is purchased. In 1978 three trucks picked up sap from sixteen producers and 14,000 taps. An extra good crop of 4,300 gallons of high quality syrup was made. Most all was packed for retailing.

Sap is processed with two direct oil flues with pre-heaters on them. Syrup is finished in a steam pan which is fired by a 100 h.p. boiler. This set up makes an efficient one man operation. A gift shop featuring Vermont made gifts and crafts is open year-round.

The final stop of the afternoon was at the Hermitage, owned by Jim McGovern. This inn is famous for fine dining, in addition to taking guests year-round. A gift shop and wine cellar are also part of the enterprise. As a Cross Country Ski Touring Center, sugar maples must be tapped high to permit the terrain for this use. Tubing was first strung through the woods in 1977 and connected to vacuum pumps at the new sugar house. As only six acres is actually owned sugar bush, operations rely heavily upon the use of trees on adjacent properties. Forty five hundred taps are set.

After checking in at motels, campgrounds and the like everyone met at the Holiday Inn in Brattleboro. Some exhibitors were set up in the lobby for browsing. A sumptuous banquet followed when 188 persons enjoyed

"Breaking Bread" together. Dwight Miller, Jr. lead singing of several old favorite tunes. Norman Lewis followed doing his characterization of "Danny Gore from Avery's Gore", keeping everyone laughing during his routine.

Saturday dawned dark and very wet. However; the crowd was in good spirits. After a breakfast of pancakes and Pure Vermont Maple Syrup, we went to Putney to visit Don and Maddy Harlows Sugarhouse. The maple plant has oil and wood fired evaporators: In 1978 sap from 7,000 owned taps, plus another 7,000 purchased taps yielded about 3200 gallons of syrup. Several years Don has made his tubing work with a vacuum system. The sugar lot is 90 acres. A maple candy making and packing room, refrigerated fruit storage room and cider mill are also in the large building which houses a fine gift shop and the evaporators.

Don's other interests includes 20 acres of apples, 20 acres of strawberries and 15 acres of blueberries.

We boarded buses to visit Dwight and Gladys Millers Farm. About 3000 taps produce 500-600 gallons of syrup. About half the taps are on tubing and most of them are on vacuum. Last year a new steamhood preheater was installed. An underground cistern that is nearly 100 years old is used to keep the sap cool underground.

During the past 20 years more than 25 acres of young sugarlot have been thinned from one to three times and some young trees are now included in

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the tapping. The trees were tested for sweetness during sugaring, sugar percent was noted. A sweet tree thinning demonstration was conducted.

The 500 acre farm includes 55 acres of apples, 7 acres of peaches, some pears, strawberries and blueberries. Dwight also has 200 Southdown and Dorset sheep.

"The Vermonter", a delicious drink made of pure Vermont maple sryup, milk and ice cream, was served by the Windham County Dairy Committee from their dairy trailer as a treat.

We next stopped at the Martin Collins farm in Westminster West. This property was selected as "Vermonts Outstanding Tree Farm" in 1976.

Tubing is used entirely in this operation. 40% of it is on "sap-sucker" pumps. The tubing is washed in place, using gravity and pumps. Spiles are covered and left setup in the woods, ready for another year. The tubing seems to be withstanding the weather well even after two full years. This stop gave us an opportunity to actually see an operational suspended tubing system

in place.

Six hundred gallons of syrup were made from 2500 taps. Martin operates on shares with a neighbor who has a sugarhouse. Gathering is done from a pick-up truck. Two other part-time helpers work during sugaring.

A considerable amount of firewood and a few select Christmas trees are marketed. Martin builds houses (from logs and lumber harvested in the woodlot) to be rented or sold.

Gil Cameron, county forester remarked that the rain didn't seem to bother too many folks. He said it was an experience asking questions and answering them with water running off everyones hats and noses. (his own included!) Several were heard to remark that they had sugared in worse weather.

Upon returning to Harlow's at noon time a chicken barbecue was enjoyed by all. Paul Wade was the chef and he certainly produced a tasty meal cooked over wood coals. (in the rain)

The last segment of our maplerama tour took us to New Hampshire about 30 minutes away. We took our cars and

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drove to Ken and Bruce Bascom's Sugarhouse in Alstead, N. H. This operation has 22,000 taps and purchases sap from another 8,000 taps.

Vacuum pumps pull the sap from trees nearly a mile away to the pumping station where a deep well pump lifts sap to a half way station. A second pump completes the lift. Vacuum is controlled by thermostats and poultry timers.

There is storage for 27,000 gallons of sap at the sugarhouse. The sap is sterilized under ultra violet lights. It goes through two oil fired evaporators before it is finished in the steam evaporator. The syrup passes through a filter press and into one of the large bulk syrup tanks protected by ultra violet lights. One man can carry on the operation of the sugarhouse.

Tables for 75 persons are in the sugarhouse to accommodate visitors who can enjoy sugar-on-snow and "maple doughboys" served under the direction of Ken's wife, Ruth. About one third of the crop is sold retail from the farm. Another third is sold by mail orders and the remainder is sold wholesale. We enjoyed the coffee and cookies served by the Bascoms.

Following this stop we all left to go our separate ways. It was good to see old friends and make new acquaintances. We have many pleasant memories stored up till we meet next time.

Dave Key, Windham County Agricultural Agent did a great job helping the committee coordinate Maplerama plans. We are indeed grateful to him and also our County Forester before mentioned.

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"MAPLE POWER" NEWS BULLETIN FOR 1978

ATTENTION ALL PRODUCERS 3rd ANNUAL TUBING SCHOOL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1978 SHERWOOD FACTORY, ARGYLE, N. Y.

Experts in the field will give objective advice and recommendations on Installation & Economics of Tubing Systems and Sugarbush Operation.

This year's meeting will be devoted to ALL phases of "Sugarmaking" including evaporators, preheaters etc — informal question/answer session all day!! Free literature available on all equipment.

Exhibit will begin promptly at 10:00 A. M. and continue all day at SHERWOOD FACTORY located: 40 miles north of Albany, near Glens Falls; from Canada take Route 87 (Northway), from Vermont take Route 4* from Rutland easy connections from NY thruway.

NOTE, THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR THIS PROGRAM, BUT YOU MUST RESERVE YOUR PLACE BY POST CARD NOW!! MORE INFO BY MAIL!!

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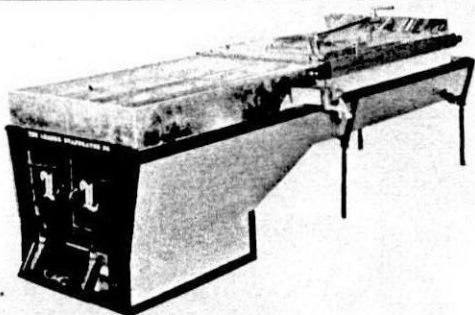


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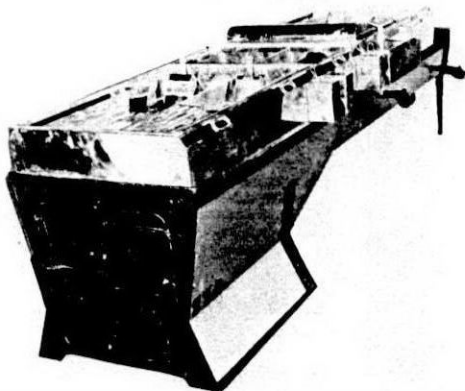
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