



# MAPLE SYRUP

# DIGEST



**VOL. 27 No. 3**

**October 1987**

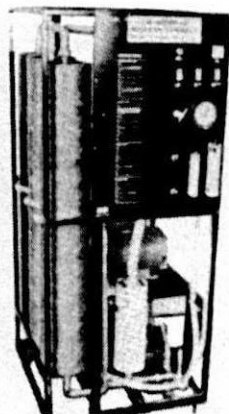
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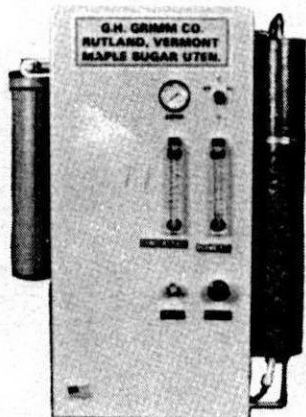
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# MAPLE SYRUP DIGEST

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### FIELD EDITORS

- CONN.** Darrell Russ 203-642-5090  
Westside Rd., Norfolk, Ct 06058
- MAINE** Robert S. Smith  
36 Middle St.  
Skowhegan, ME 04976
- MASS.** James Graves 413-625-9066  
R.D. 1, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
- MICH.** Frank Majszak 616-228-5835  
R.D. 1, Baatz Rd.  
Maple City, MI 49664
- MINN.** Lane Townsend 218-879-9112  
24 Sugar Maple La.  
Esko, MN 55733
- N. H.** Fred E. Winch, Jr. 603-938-2124  
Warner Rd., Rt. 103  
Bradford, NH 03221
- N. S.** J. L. Maxwell Spicer 902-392-2823  
Spencers Island  
NS, Canada BOM 1S0
- OHIO** Ture Johnson 216-834-4206  
Box 241, Burton, OH 44021
- ONT.** Bill Robinson 519-529-7857  
RR 2, Auburn, Ont., Canada
- PENN.** Robert McConnell 814-274-9143  
Box 252, Coudersport, PA 16915
- VT.** Ray Foulds 802-864-6305  
5 Clover Street  
So. Burlington, Vt. 05403-5913
- WISC.** John Roth 715-289-3820  
R.D. 1, Cadott, WI 54727
- N. ENG.** Sherb Doubleday 802-334-2793  
Newport, VT 05855

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## EDITORIAL

A 3 cent increase to 25 cents for a first class letter seems to be inevitable and scheduled some time early next year. This means all postage rates will be increased, something the postal service says is necessary to "Improve" the service. I hate to see it happen because the service will undoubtedly get worse.

About 2 years ago a new system was started to improve the delivery of third class mail. It was all sent to a new sorting terminal in northern New Jersey. My copy of the first issue that followed that route took 2 weeks and 1 day for delivery. I live 18 miles from the post office where it was mailed. I'm sure a turtle could walk it in less time.

In the first place, it isn't necessary for most copies to even go through that sorting terminal because they are all pre-sorted by the print shop and put in mail sacks tagged with their respective zip numbers or states before they are even sent to the post office. For example: All numbers or states before they are even doesn't need to be opened until it reaches Wisconsin. Nearer by, such as in New York State, all 137, 138 and 139 zips are distributed from the Binghamton terminal so they're put in a bag by themselves. The only reason those bags of Digests have to go to New Jersey is because someone decided that's the way it's going to be done.

They told me another rule is: No mail can remain in any terminal over 48 hours. Why it takes 3 to 4 weeks for some to be delivered is beyond me. They don't go through that many terminals.

Yes, that's how long it took for a lot of them close by, in New York, to be delivered in July. I received many complaints because the Vermont Maple-rama and New York Tour were both over before some folks knew when they were scheduled. But please, don't blame it on me, the print shop,

## COVER PICTURE

Fred Boberg's Belgium team. See New York Maple Tour page.

deadlines broken on anything other than the postal service. The July issue was put in the Oxford, NY, post office on June 30th. I have proof of that because that's the day the postage was paid. In fact, even when it is late, I can't remember when it was more than 1 or 2 days after the first of the month that is printed on the cover.

I'm working on the problem through the Commercial Accounts representative of the Postal Service and I'll let you know in future issues how I make out. I may need your help.

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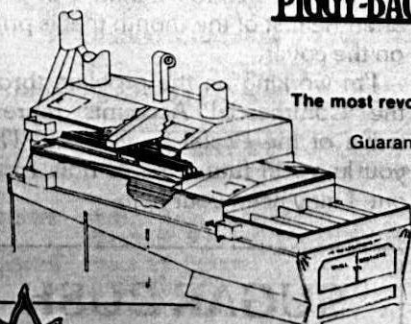
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## GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Hope your plans are in place for our annual get together which this year will be in Duluth, MN. October 22, 23, 24.

We will be voting on seating New Brunswick as a new member to the council. We welcome them.

Will Quebec be next?

Pre-registration packets were mailed in August. If you didn't receive one and would like the information contact:

MN. Maple Producers  
c/o Carmen Mascher, Sec.  
R. 1 Box 132  
Randall, MN. 56475  
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I'm looking forward to seeing you.

John

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## AREA'S "OUTSTANDING MAPLE PRODUCERS"



Robert and Vera McConnell were honored as this year's Outstanding Maple Producers at a banquet held Saturday by the Potter-Tioga Maple Producers Association in conjunction with the annual Potter-Tioga Maple Festival in Coudersport.

Due to ill health the McConnells were unable to attend the event, held at the Crittenden Hotel, and the award was delivered to them personally at their home by members of the association.

The McConnells have been actively engaged in the production of maple products for over 30 years. They credit their nine children as having been most helpful in the establishment of their successful business.

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## NEW BRUNSWICK MAKES 14

New Brunswick has requested to be seated as the fourteenth member of the North American Maple Syrup Council. The board of directors of the Council will take official action at the annual convention in Duluth, Minnesota, October 22-24, 1987. The Council welcomes New Brunswick as a new member and invites other states and provinces to join as well.

During June 1987, New Brunswick hosted the 1st annual "Maplefest" celebration. It was a fun event, but also very informative. The decision to join the Council was also made at this event. We are certain that this decision will be highly beneficial to the Province of New Brunswick, but also to all the maple syrup makers of North America. Welcome, New Brunswick.

Lynn Reynolds  
Secretary

Bob was a prime mover in organizing the Potter-Tioga Maple Producers Association in 1962, and has served as business manager of the two-county maple association since its inception. He was also instrumental in forming the state association and served as its first secretary-treasurer. He has also served as Potter-Tioga's delegate to the state council from its origin until his retirement this year.

The North American Maple Syrup Council honored Bob in 1984 for his outstanding achievements, and in that same year, he was awarded the state's "Golden Syrup Can" award.

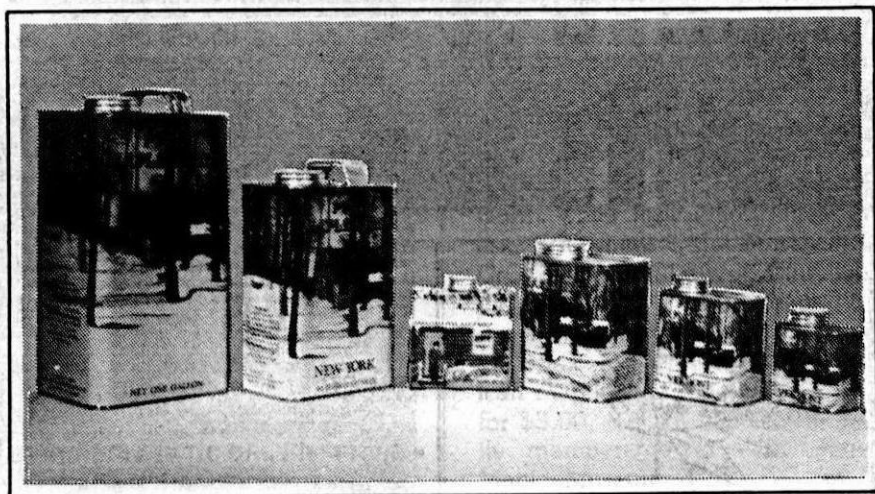
Bob's efforts in promoting the retail sale of maple products have brought about a change in the marketing field throughout the two-county area. The association is now establishing an educational fund in honor of the McConnells' 30 years of effort.



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By Fred Schneider

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hold for the time being.

Last spring it became obvious that a new roof was needed when, at the first pancake day of the season, it was necessary to use every mop pail, sap bucket and garbage can to catch the leaks before the water went through the ceiling and into the dining room. Several display areas were also in danger of water damage.

At the April meeting the directors voted to reroof the building and eliminate the flat roof that was causing the problem. A generous donation from Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lamb got the \$12,000 project underway and a cou-



Jerry Lyndaker helping one of the carpenters build rafters.

ple of other donations along with the major portion of the bank balance paid for an attractive roof that should last several lifetimes.

In an effort to raise money to support the Museum, it was decided to offer memberships. An annual individual membership is \$3.00 and a family membership is \$5.00. This will allow members unlimited admission to the museum for the period and if things work out as anticipated, a newsletter may be published.

Grants from various agencies are in the works but these take time to get and there is a lot of competition for the available dollars. Our main resource for funds has been pancake days and ice cream socials but with the expense of the new roof, it takes a lot of pancakes to raise this much money.

The directors of the American Maple Museum sincerely hope that the readers of the Maple Syrup Digest and their friends will take memberships in this worth while institution. Now, many ask, just where is the Museum. It's in Croghan, NY in Lewis County which is the heart of the maple syrup industry of North America.

To become a member of the American Maple Museum, send your check for \$3.00, individual or \$5.00 for family membership to: The American Maple Museum, P.O. Box 81, Croghan, NY 13327. Thank you for your support.

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**1987 MAPLE TOUR**

"Maple producers should continue a progressive marketing strategy", this was the main theme at the evening program at the 1987 New York State Maple Tour, presented by Gordon Conklin, editor of the *American Agriculturalist*. He went on to encourage maple producers to seek new markets and alternative products "NOW" when markets are good to help ensure that the good market position continues into years of better production. Lisa Hayes, New York State Maple Queen, also encouraged the group to be well rounded in their approach to maple production and marketing. Overall, it was a very enjoyable evening program attended by 237 persons.

The tour which took place on July 21 and 22 stopped at six maple producers' and the Yansick Lumber Mill. At the first stop, John Bathrick's in Erie County, we observed a new style of boiling with a "piggy back" pan. This system uses a second pan and an injection of air to condense steam from the first boiling pan to supply heat to a second pan. The piggy back pan is intended to reduce the heat required by 50%. The concept is very similar to the economizer which we saw at Merle Farms in Wyoming County where steam from the boiling pan is sucked by a fan through trays of inflowing sap. The economizer is intended to reduce fuel costs by 40 - 50%.

At Eric Randall's in Genesee County the tour was able to discuss with the DEC Forester woods-thinning for maple production. Both the Randall's and Boberg's farms were excellent examples of small to moderate size operations with very picturesque locations with neat and efficient sugar houses. Fred Boberg also offered rides behind the team of horses they use to gather sap from their 700 buckets.

Apple Hill Farms in Wyoming County showed us how the addition of an RO

The Fred Boberg Sugar house is two years old and the third sugarhouse built by the Boberg's. Two Belgian horses are used to gather sap from 700 buckets. A 4 ft. by 12 ft. wood-fired evaporator with an oil injection are used for boiling. The sugarhouse is located to accommodate gravity flow unloading. A number of years ago this woods was rated the second sweetest in Cattaraugus County.



allowed them to reduce the size of their boiling operation and replace it with retail store space. The change allowed them to expand their product line and increase sales.

At Moore's Sugar Shack and Pancake House, we discussed the pro's and con's of this type of marketing alternative. It certainly moves a lot of maple products for them, but not without some added costs and complications.

Yansick Lumber in Arcade provided us with a complete and very interesting tour of the facility. It was especially interesting to see that every part of the log is put to use -- nothing discarded. Producing quality logs should be a major concern of each woodlot operation.

Overall, those who attended the tour could find many ideas for improving their maple and woods operations.

Stephen Childs  
Cooperative Extension Agent  
Wyoming County

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Nearly 150 maple syrup producers, from as far away as the U.S. midwest, packed the conference room of the Pres du Lac Motel for the first New Brunswick International Maplefest, June 12 and 13. The event featured seminars, workshops, field trips, equipment exhibitions and displays, and the Maple Olympics.

The theme of the first morning seminar was Hardwood Dieback, or "Maple Decline". Guest speakers researching the phenomenon in Ontario and Quebec brought the capacity audience up to date on the latest studies. Their findings all seem to indicate that there is no single cause of the problem -

but that air pollution or "acid rain" is a contributing factor. Other causes are poor forest sites, insect infestations, and possibly overlapping and over-thinning of maple bushes.

Dave McLaughlin of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment capped off the seminar by outlining nine steps that maple producers could take to help control the problem, emphasizing a more cautious approach to thinning maple bushes.

The afternoon field trip looked at the extent of the problem in two typical hardwood stands in the area. The first was the maple bush of Rejean Gagnon, where the experts agreed the dieback problem, is small compared to many areas in Quebec and Ontario. They however cautioned the producers to be on the alert for further signs of decline.

New Brunswick producers were somewhat relieved to hear that the



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Master Sugar maker of the Year winner, Réal Bossé (left) of St. Jacques with runners up Armand Gagnon and Gilbert Roussel. In the foreground is Ron Turcotte, former Triple Crown winner and special guest speaker at Maplefest '87.

threat of maple decline is not as severe here as in Quebec, where many maple bushes have been wiped out. They will continue to monitor their own bushes, now aware of what to look for.

An impressive array of the latest

maple equipment and products, chip-fired evaporators, candy-making machines, maple cotton candy and maple wine - were on hand at the evening exhibition.

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The following day featured technical workshops on tapping, pipeline installation, and vacuum systems. After a hearty beans and pancake brunch, the producers let their hair down for the Maple Olympics - were they competed in ten different games to test their skills.

The two day affair was capped off with a banquet featuring guest speaker Ron Turcotte, native of Grand Falls, and Triple Crown winner aboard the famous Secretariat. Mr. Turcotte presented awards to the top maple producers in the province. The overall winner of the Master Sugar Maker of the

Year Award was Real Bosse of St. Jacques, Madawaska.

Jim McLellan, President of the New Brunswick Maple Producers Co-op, was overwhelmed with the large turnout for the event. "Everyone who came said they'd like to see this become an annual event. So it's quite likely we'll do it again next year, and try to stage it in a different area of the province each year."

Maplefest '87 was organized by the New Brunswick Maple Producers Co-op and the Department of Natural Resources & Energy Forest Extension Service.

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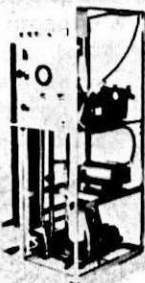
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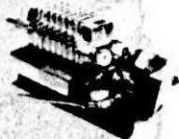
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# NEW SUGARHOUSE AT OTSEGO COUNTY NY, FAIR

By Charles Coons, Richfield Springs

In February, 1986, the Otsego County Maple Producers Association was formed and a Charter was drawn up. On March 9 they had a Old Fashioned Maple Syrup Party at the Otsego County Extension Headquarters in Cooperstown, New York. Jack wax, maple syrup and sugar, brochures, a video tape on maple production and a working evaporator were all on display.

Their next project was to organize a map of all the maple producers in Otsego County. This was so that the public would be aware of where syrup and maple products are available throughout the county.

That summer, the group sold pancakes and syrup, in a tent, at the Otsego

County Fair in Morris, New York. With the success of our booth at the fair, it was decided that we build a working sugar house at the fairgrounds in Morris.

Thru donations and contributions from producers and local merchants, a building was erected, by the producers, and dreams became a reality. The building was completed just prior to the 1987 Otsego County Fair.

At the fair, along with pancakes and syrup, we sold maple shakes and maple sno-cones. Also as a part of our sugarhouse, we had a working evaporator and had several demonstrations on how maple sugar is made. Also on display was some antique maple equipment, which was donated by some local producers.

Another part of our new sugarhouse we were happy to share with a local honey producer. He had an observation hive and sold honey products. We felt

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that maple syrup and honey go together well being they are both natural products.

With our new sugarhouse, we as an organization, feel that we can promote the maple industry in Otsego County and strive to encourage better woodlot management; better methods of manufacture and up-to-date marketing and promotion of fine quality products. A mailing list will be maintained and distributed at all events.

At this time, we have about 25 active members in our association. The producers feel that the sugarhouse was a complete success. The public showed much interest which contributed to the success of our first year in our new sugarhouse.

Further plans have been made to have a Fall Maple Festival at the sugarhouse on October 17, 1987 and crown an Otsego County Maple Queen to represent our County.



Picture courtesy Oneonta Daily Star. Charles Coons on ladder with Robert Knapp, Unadilla.

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# TESTING RELATIVE SWEETNESS AMONG YOUNG SUGAR MAPLES

By Lewis J. Staats  
Dept. of Natural Resources  
Cornell University

Many times the question has been asked, is a sweet tree always a sweet tree? Maple producers using sap buckets that have checked the sugar content of individual trees could probably answer that question. But how reliable are measured sugar content levels of small sugar maples from one year to the next? With the increased interest in identifying sweeter trees in sugar maple stand management and the planting of sugar maples, it was felt the method of identifying individual tree sweetness needed further investigation.

A study to test the relative sweetness of young sugar maples was initiated in 1986 at the Uihlein Sugar Maple Field Station. Twenty-four (24) trees ranging in size from 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " to 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter measured at 12" above ground level were tapped and checked for sugar content during the sap production seasons of 1986 and 1987. The trees had been pre-commercially thinned during 1983 in an area of established natural regeneration resulting from an earlier small clear-cut. The young trees were initially selected for vigor and good form and thinned to a 12 x 12 spacing. They responded well to the thinning making them good candidates for relative sap sweetness testing.

The study was intended to determine if relative sweetness among young individual sugar maples were similar each year of testing which would provide supportive data for identifying the sweeter individuals. This data could also point out the individuals yielding lower sugar content that could be removed in subsequent thinnings. The collection exercise could also help to

develop a method of mini-tapping that would give more accurate sap sugar content readings with minimum labor effort. This procedure would be beneficial to both researchers and maple producers interested in identifying individual tree sap sweetness.

The best results in collecting sap from the small trees were made by using a 16 gauge hypodermic needle connected by sap collecting tubing to a 500 cc plastic container. This procedure is similar to that used by Gabriel (1982). The 16 gauge needle did not clog with wood fiber when inserted in a taphole created by a 1/16" drill bit in a battery operated hand drill. The depth of the hole was 1/2". By using the closed sap collecting container, a larger volume of sap is available for measurement free from the effects of evaporation or rain water. By collecting the sap flow in con-



Sap collecting unit used in mini-tapping procedure.

tainers, the sap measurements could be made at times more convenient for performing other tasks during the hectic production season. A refractometer with a scale reading to one tenth % was used to measure sugar %. Sap volumes of each tree were also measured



and recorded but will not be discussed at this time. Three collections and measurements were taken during each season. Sap flow did not occur on the small trees until snow melted away from the base, due possibly to the cooling effect from snow on the thin barked young trees. Taps were made at the same height and on the same side of the trees each testing year.

More testing will be done on this group of trees and others during future sap production seasons, which will provide more supportive data to this sap testing procedure. The following table showing average sap sugar % for the years of 1986 and 1987 does suggest a level of continuity in identifying average sugar % of individual young trees. Note that tree 17 was high in sugar % both years when compared to the remaining trees. Also note that trees numbered 6, 12, 13, 15, and 24 might be likely candidates for a future wood pile.

Literature cited

Gabriel, W. J.

Mini-Tapping Sugar Maples for Sap-Sugar Testing. USDA For. Serv. Res. Note NE-305. 1982

TREE #	AVE. SUGAR % 1986	AVE. SUGAR % 1987
1	1.6	1.8
2	1.7	2.1
3	1.5	1.8
4	1.5	1.4
5	1.8	1.9
6	1.1	1.3
7	1.4	1.5
8	1.5	1.6
9	1.5	2.1
10	1.4	1.3
11	1.3	1.4
12	1.0	1.1
13	1.2	1.2
14	1.4	1.2
15	1.2	1.2
16	1.6	1.5
17	2.4	2.2
18	1.3	1.7
19	1.7	1.6
20	1.4	1.6
21	1.3	1.3
22	1.3	1.8
23	1.7	1.8
24	1.2	1.3

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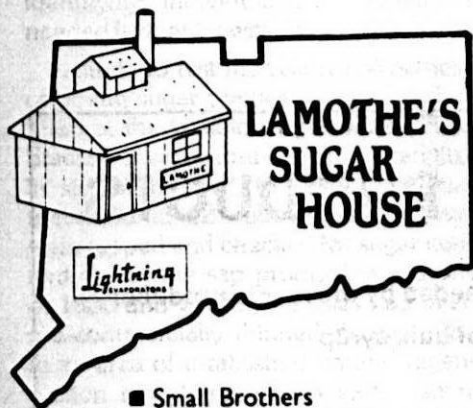
# ARCHIE'S SUGARBUSH

Dear Mr. Editor:

My wife, she sez, "Honest Archie," sometimes she calls me Truthful Archie, "please tell that nice Mr. Editor man about our first try at tubing."

Well, it wuz the year before Paul Bunyan moved his operation into Minnesota. We wuz tapping about 100,000 taps in the area of the Round River. We heard about a guy who invented tubing. Lived somewhere in New York State. Well, we decided to try some.

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Well, it wuz just like I tells it - that sap wuz so sweet it formed crystals in the tubing and plugged the dang thing up from the trees to the tank. That tubing wuz stiff as boards.

Now my wife's brother, Nerd, doesn't work, but he comes up with an idea to shoot live steam in the main line and try and melt those sugar crystals, which we did.

But, don't-cha-know, that thar steam melted those crystals and there was so much pressure it forced the sap right back into the trees. We never made a drop of syrup off that tubing.

From then on we decided to use tubing on the north side of the woods where the trees were only 4 and 5 percenters.

Your truthful friend,  
Honest Archie

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You must have good syrup. It doesn't have to grade Light Amber, Medium Amber is fine if it's in the top half of the medium range. Dark syrup will make the cream too strong for most folks and

the invert content is usually so high the cream will be more like tub sugar.

Check the thermometer in boiling water every day because the boiling point of the cream is very critical. For a start, boil to 21° F. over the boiling point of water. You may want to boil future batches a little higher or lower to make them thicker or thinner. You'll have to decide this for yourself according to how hard you want the cream. We boil to 22° F. over water because it gives a better shelf life with less separation.

After it is boiled, if it has to be transferred to a cooling pan (the pan you're going to mix it in) do it gently. Too much agitation may start it crystallizing. Place the pan of syrup in a larger pan of cold water, preferably with ice in it to cool the syrup quickly, at least down below 100° F. We cool to about room temperature but we have a power machine to stir it. It stirs awfully hard by hand at that temperature.

Stir it slowly with a wooden paddle. You don't have to stir fast or "whip" it as some think, but keep it all moving so large crystals won't form. Stirring by hand is the right speed because commercial power cream machines only run 60 r.p.m. or less. Never, Never use a mixmaster or other kitchen mixer or even a Hobart commercial mixer. This type will cut air into the syrup making the cream foamy and it won't weigh up in the jars like regular cream will. Also, if

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it separates, the syrup will be in the middle, hard sugar in the bottom and foam on top, a real mess.

Stir the cream until it loses the shiny look syrup has and looks dull like flat paint. If you stop too soon, some crystals will grow and it will end up grany. If you add some Maple cream that is already made to the syrup when you start mixing it (mix it right into the syrup) it will crystallize faster and take less stirring. This is called "seeding". Use anywhere from a heaping tablespoon to a half pound per gallon of syrup. The resulting maple cream usually develops the same grain as the seed so don't use a grainy maple cream for seed.

Maple cream will set up quite hard soon after you stop mixing so you have to work fast putting it in the containers. If it sets up too soon, you can soften it

by warming a little in a 150° oven but don't let it melt or it may get grainy when it cools.

If you don't succeed the first time, keep trying. Maple cream is tricky and requires lots of practice. If it's not right, your customers won't like it but this could be an advantage. You won't have to make very much of it.

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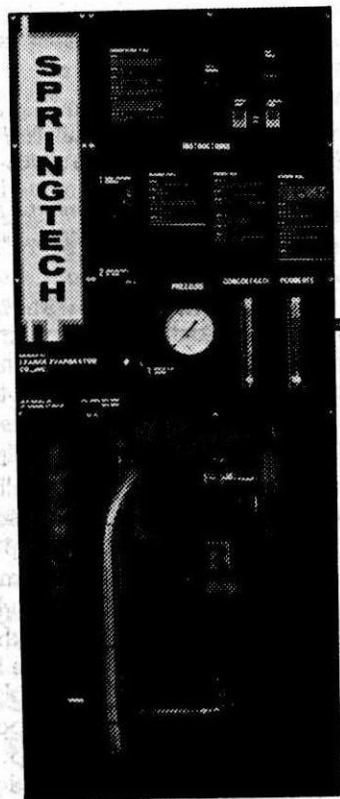
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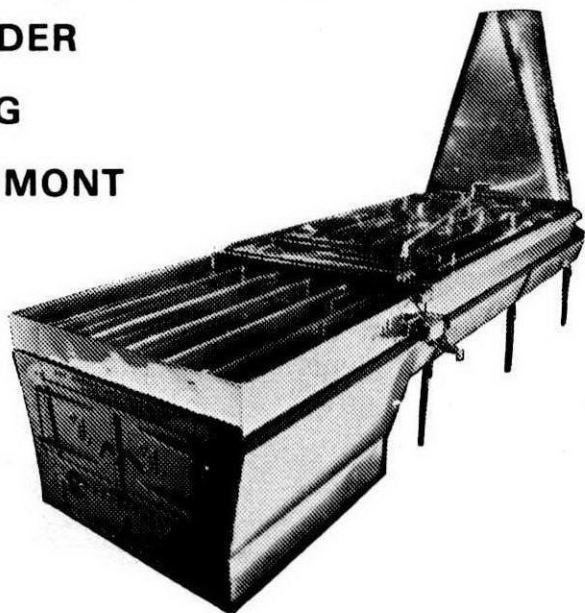


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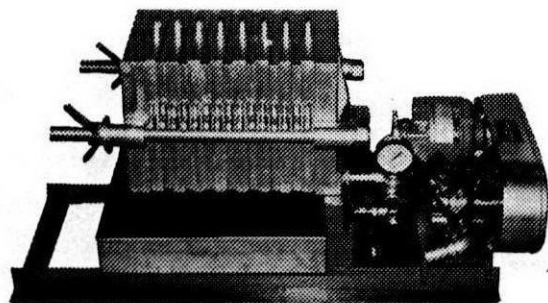
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