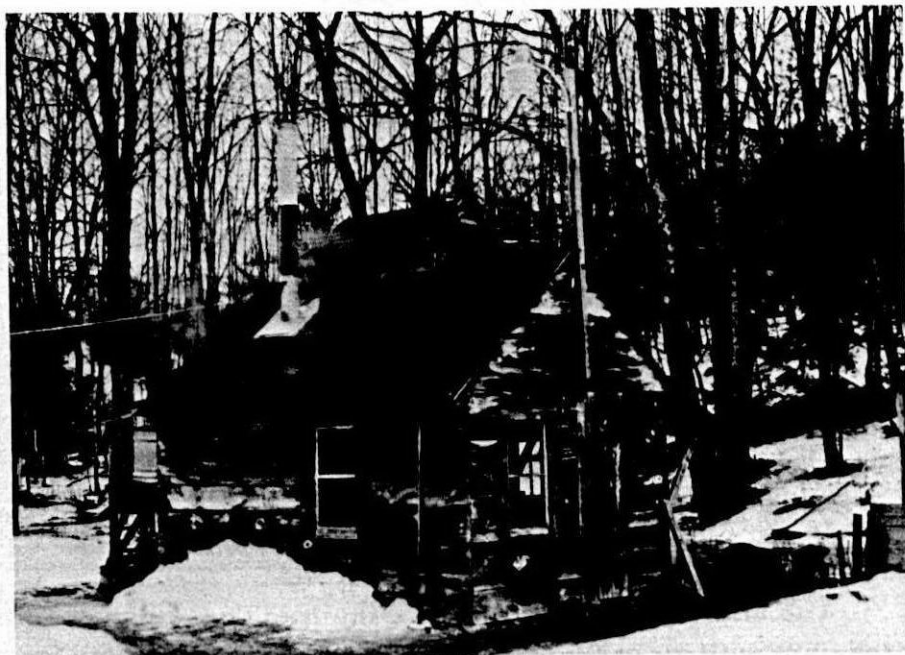




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DIGEST



VOL. 3A, NO. 2

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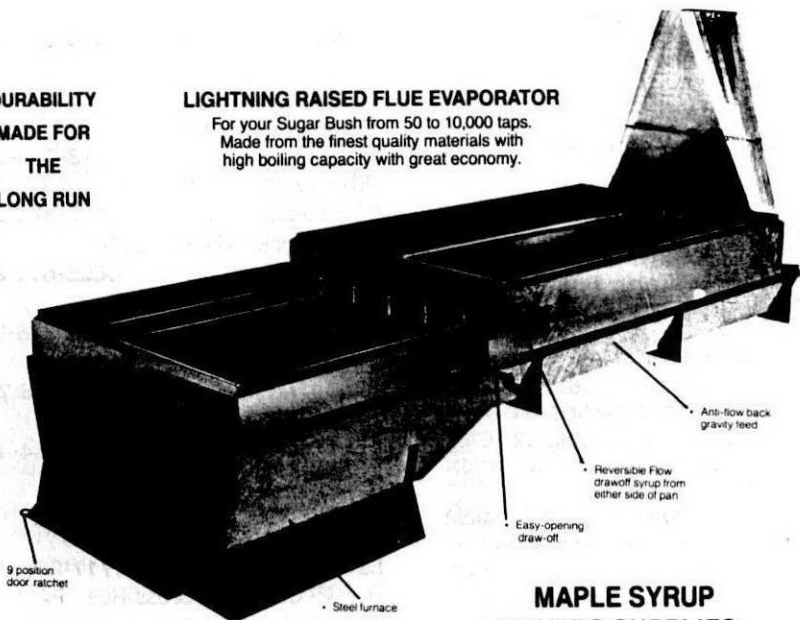
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MAPLE SYRUP DIGEST

Official publication of the
NORTH AMERICAN
MAPLE SYRUP COUNCIL

DIRECTORY

Published and Edited by:

ROY S. HUTCHINSON
P.O. BOX 240
CANTERBURY, NH 03224
Phone: 603-783-4468

Published four times a year
(Feb., June, Oct., Dec.)
Postage paid at:
Canterbury, NH 03224

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- Column Inch. 19.00
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EDITORIAL

Another sugar season is gone. I guess most of us had nearly a normal year. The surplus of syrup and declining prices have to be a concern for all of us. Fortunately, the retail price of syrup locally is still around \$35.00 a gallon. Let's hope something will come out of the NAMSC meeting in October.

We are currently in the process of updating the mailing list. We hope to have it completed before this mailing but some associations won't have their list in much before we mail, so if you see that your expiration date hasn't changed don't panic, it will. Also we are pulling all names that are not current. The cost of mailing and the cost of returns prohibits us from any more "free rides."

On a personal note — I am looking forward to this summer with great expectation. As soon as this issue is in the mail I am heading for Alaska. I am leaving June 1st and will return late August. If anyone has a problem please *write*, don't call. Someone is picking up my mail and will tend to any pertinent problems while we are gone.

Enjoy the summer!

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INDIANA FORMS ORGANIZATION

At a meeting held at Gaston, Indiana on April 13, 1991, a group of maple syrup producers met and organized the Indiana Maple Syrup Association. Eldon Campen, Maple Syrup Specialist for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, stated that this is a statewide organization with membership open to anyone who produces maple syrup or is interested in the maple syrup industry. There are an estimated 200 maple syrup producers in Indiana with an annual production of 10,000 gallons of syrup. The objectives of this organization are to encourage increased development of the maple industry in Indiana and to provide opportunities for members to meet and discuss their mutual problems and solutions.

The officers for this new organization are: President, Kenneth Shipley, Gaston, Indiana; Vice President, David Hamilton, New Castle, Indiana; and Secretary-Treasurer, Dan Garner, Bloomington, Indiana. Also on the Board of Directors are: Eldon Campen, Bedford, Indiana; Bradley Klingaman, Cromwell, Indiana; Earl Walker, Waterloo, Indiana; and Marvin Williams, Rockville, Indiana.

Future meetings include a board of directors meeting and a general membership meeting on the first Saturday in December at a place to be determined.

Anyone desiring a membership application or further information should contact the Indiana Maple Syrup Association, P.O. Box 873, Bedford, Indiana 47421.

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GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



Here it is about summer again and another maple season has passed. Judging from all reports the U.S. has finally had a pretty good season, not a record breaker, but good in both quantity & quality.

Maple people will now have to concentrate on good marketing and promotion. Let's hope we don't have to resort to "cut-throat marketing."

Since the writing of the last Digest the U.S. has been thru another war and hopefully this dark cloud is gone. We look forward to a brighter economy and consumer optimism.

Quite a lot of shuffling is going on in Canada as of this writing which will effect the future pricing of their bulk syrup. Something to watch. Also the Canadian government has established a rule concerning importation of certain U.S. agricultural products including maple. I have a concern as to how this fits into a so called free trade policy. U.S. producers should watch this one. Perhaps this should be an agenda item for our October meeting.

Other things to think about.

Apparently the EPA registration on para-pellets has expired, leaving them now illegal in all states.

Question: If they are to be registered, who would do it and how would it be paid for? Also, how much logic is there in having it

done. This only fuels the fires for "Organic Maple" which in it self has become a growing problem for the maple industry.

If we can't come up with funds to re-register pellets or better yet decide it's in everyones better interest not to, then does it make much sense to expend money on research in this direction? A lot of serious matters to think about from now until October.

Meantime, let's do a "fair" marketing job on maple!

Sincerely,

Bill Clark, President

CONNECTICUT NEWS

By Paul M. Williams

Greetings from Connecticut! The 1991 Season is behind us. It began a little earlier than usual with most producers making Syrup by the first week in February. However, the weather warmed quickly causing slightly shorter season. A poll of members across the state revealed average amounts of syrup for the season.

At a meeting of the Officers and Directors of the MSPA of Connecticut, dates and locations were set for the November and January meetings. The Annual Meeting will be held on November 9th, 1991 in Thompson, hosted by Doug Langer. The Spring Workshop will be held January 18th, 1992 at the Northwest Parks Nature Center in Windsor. More information will be forthcoming in the Drop in the Bucket.

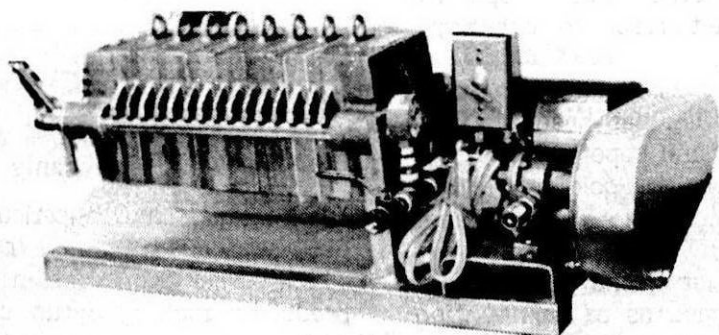
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GUEST EDITORIAL—"AN INVITATION"

By Lynn Reynolds

Our industry is in tough times. Surpluses, price slashing, depressed prices, limited (or non-existent) buying by major packers, government intervention, and undisciplined production is the name of the game. The existing maple syrup surplus is of major proportions. Another good crop on top of a normal world's annual production already in storage, boggles the mind. Company versus Company competition surpasses even the most extreme parameters. "Dog eat Dog" does not begin to provide the image evident in the maple market place. "Only so much market and too much syrup." Instead of reduced production to control supply, it is reported that expansion was obvious during 1991 in some areas to off-set future production quotas. I believe chaos best describes what I see. From first hand knowledge, our family has already experienced the consequences of these tough times and disastrous conditions. We have taken the necessary steps to protect ourselves, but if the industry needs an example as to the seriousness of the situation, we are it. I am now concerned about the future of our industry. Please take notice. This may only be the beginning.

In the past, I might have spoken about retail prices in New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles as being low. Today, I can accurately refer to retail prices to the consumer in Wausau or Green Bay, Wisconsin at

\$3.99 per quart. These prices represent national packers, not some local isolated producer. Prices are being reported as low as \$3.59 per quart in some areas. Wholesale prices of half gallons to Wholesale Clubs on the West Coast are common at \$8.00 delivered. I am certain you may find even lower prices in your geographical location. The problem is International in scope, not regional. And needless to say, these syrup prices are below cost of production.

The writing is on the wall: To state the obvious — the small will survive because they do not depend on the income — the very large can survive because of the insignificance to their overall welfare — the ones in between could succumb to oblivion or be absorbed into larger units. Could the maple syrup industry become — say three? — or two? — maybe one company? I have watched the situation steadily deteriorate. I am now watching it continue to slide. The extent of my concern cannot be simply expressed. We are in trouble. We need to address our problems now. To wait for a "poor crop or two" may not be in time. The North American Maple Syrup Council and The International Maple Syrup Institute, in cooperation, must provide the industry foundation for solution of these complex and serious problems.

I may not know the answers, but to the best of my ability, I have described the problems. What

should we do? Should we market more? — produce less? — diversify? — give up? — produce by quota? (self determined or government enforced?) — cut the trees? (c'mon now!!!). Whatever the answers are, I suggest we act voluntarily now, before we are forced into something we don't like by someone else. I believe it will take a concerted effort on the part of every packer, producers, researchers, foresters, extension employees, university employees, Governments (Provincial, State, or Federal), interested individuals, and concerned citizens, to produce a viable industry for the future. All entities of the maple industry working through and with the leadership of the NAMSC and the IMSI, have the best opportunity to find solutions. I ask each and everyone of you to organize your thoughts for action. I call upon the

IMSI and the NAMSC to coordinate these proposals for stabilization and improvement of the situation. We may not solve all the problems, but to not address them could be catastrophic.

The Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Council invites the NAMSC and the IMSI to extend their forums for a World Conference addressing these formidable problems, during their annual International Conventions to be held in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, October 24, 25, & 26, 1991. I urge both organizations to provide adequate time for maximum input by the general audience attending. I urge all interested parties from the various segments of the maple industry to attend this conference. It may be our last opportunity to initiate constructive platforms towards improvement. You are invited. Plan now to attend.

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GEAUGA COUNTY MAPLE FESTIVAL

By Tom Hoffman

The 62nd Geauga County Maple Festival was held April 4, 5, 6 & 7 1991 in Chardon, Ohio. The high point of the festival is always the Hall of Fame and Maple Producer's Awards Luncheon held Friday noon of the Festival weekend.

This years inductees to the Geauga County Maple Syrup Hall of Fame were Iona and Samuel Patterson and Ed Soubousta.

Iona and Sam have produced maple syrup on the family farm continuously as the farm was transformed from general farming to fruit production. This Springtime tradition of syrup making has not changed over the years. They are both involved in community service ranging from Farm Bureau, 4-H, Extension, soil conservation and school leadership.

Ed Soubousta has lived his entire life in Geauga County and no one has more interest in maple syrup production than he. Four times he has won the title of Outstanding Geauga County Maple Producer, 1969, 1974, 1986 and 1990. In addition to farming and planting maple trees Ed is a generous man. Many school children experienced their first walk through a sugar-bush and taste of syrup while visiting his woods. Each year he donates loads of pumpkins to the Chardon Boy Scouts for their fund raiser.

Following the introduction of the Hall of Fame inductees, announcement of the 1991 Maple Syrup Awards was made.

Gauga County Winners were:

1. Richard Barnes Family — Received the Geauga Times Leader cup.

2. Ken Nelson
3. Ed Soubousta
4. Elmer Franks
5. Jim Cermak
6. Richard Burnett
7. Rhodes Sisters

Out of County Winners were:

1. Charles Keiter
2. Tom Hoffman
3. Larry Wolf
4. Blake Malkamaki
5. Edwin McConoughey
6. Levi E. Miller
7. Ed and Margie Shook

Novice winners were: (less than 300 taps)

1. Lee Edic
2. Cryer and McDivitt
3. Dennis Lupca
4. Tina Peine
5. J.R. Blanchard
6. Roger Roseum
7. Charles Veleba

In addition, Clare Timmons received the award as overall winner in the Maple Candy Contest. This is the combined best score obtained in hard sugar cakes, one pound bricks, novel design, stirred sugar and maple cream.

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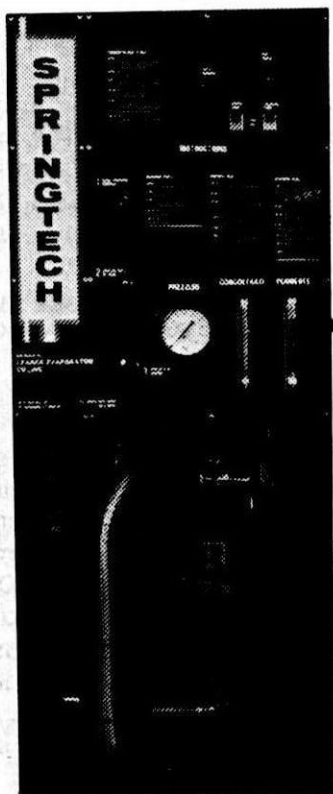
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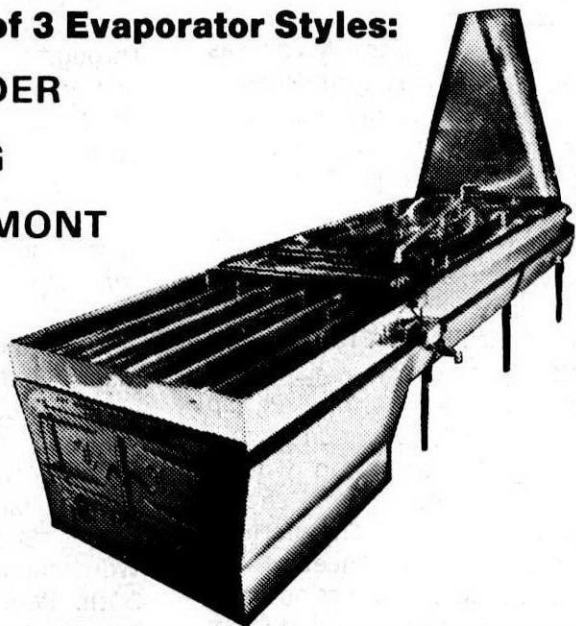
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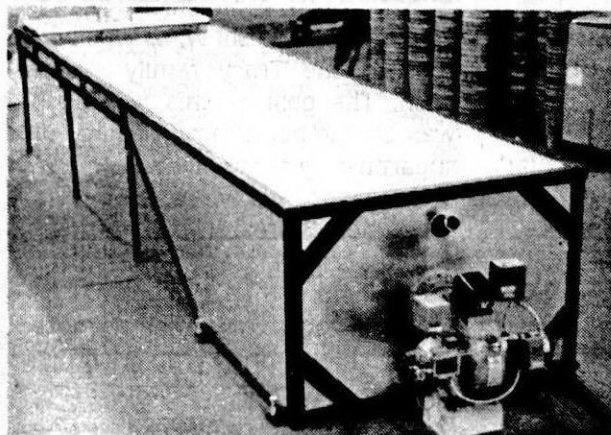
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MAINE NEWS

By Vicki Schmidt

The Spring of 1991 has been an interesting year for us here in Maine. Most of central Maine has reported a real good syrup season, while reports from the very southern and northern areas indicate the season wasn't as productive as most had hoped for.

We held our annual meeting on January 24th, at the Augusta Civic Center, in conjunction with the Maine Agricultural Trade Show. Our display for the three day show included Ted Greene's, (our VP), sap bucket and spile collection. Everyone enjoyed that, along with a taste of maple cream cheese spread and crackers! The morning session of our annual meeting was dominated with discussion concerning our bid to secure for Maine, a legal exemption from the USDA grading standards that will allow the sale of extra-dark amber syrup in retail containers. To date, our Legislature is still in the process examining the various options and drafting the wording of the bill. We hope to have the new grading standards in place for next season and further information will be going out to our membership as soon as it's available from the State House.

MMPA awards for "The Best Maple Syrup in Maine" went to L.A. Merrifield of South Paris. Second and third places went to Luce's Maple Syrup of Anson, and to the Tracy family, Maple Hill Farms, of Farmington.

The afternoon session of our annual meeting began with Bruce Martell, from the Vermont Depart-

ment of Agriculture, giving an informative talk on maintaining high quality control for maple syrup production. Following Bruce, Ted Greene entertained us all with a slide show of his maple escapades through the Proctor Research Lab and Vermont's 1990 Maplerama. Bob Smith, one of our largest syrup producers, finished up the afternoon with a video of his family sugaring operation; which they recently set up on leased paper company land in Northern Maine.

Promotional events for MMPA this year included our annual Maine Maple Sunday, held on March 24th, a rainy, slushy day. In spite of the weather, most sugarhouses reported a fair to heavy turnout of visitors. MMPA also sponsored its first "Sugarbush Management Workshop for Foresters" on March 30th. Pete Tracy, a professional forester with mapeling expertise, gave a super presentation to the 23 participants. The workshop included maple "munchies," handouts, and a slide show, as well as a tour of the Tracy family sugarbush. The goal of this workshop was to further the availability of sugarbush management throughout our state, as well as to inform professional foresters as to the viability of sugaring as an option for landowners.

MMPA hopes to further promote our producers and syrup with displays at a number of State Fairs. Plans are on for Windsor Fair and Fryeburg Fair and we're looking for other opportunities that might help enhance the marketing of our syrup.

PENNSYLVANIA'S 1991 MAPLE SWEETHEART AMY RUSSELL

Amy Russell is the daughter of Carl and Virginia Russell of LeRaysville, Pennsylvania. Amy gained her knowledge of the maple industry from her parents whose families have been producing maple products for generations. Vernalder Farm, where Amy's father is a partner, has 6,000 taps, and produces 1500 gallons of maple syrup during a good year.

Amy is a senior at Northeast Bradford High School. An active member of her school's History Club, she won the outstanding member award. Amy represented her school as Miss Northeast Bradford at the annual Flaming Foliage Festival held in Renova, Pennsylvania. She is also a summer missionary for Child Evangelism Fellowship. Recently, Amy received the D.A.R. (Daughters of American Revolution) Good Citizen Award for her school. She is a member of her church youth groups and does some substitute Sunday School teaching. Amy has a part-time job as a waitress at Sinbad's Family Restaurant. Miss Russell plans on attending Lock Haven University to major in Early Elementary Education, and she hopes to do her student teaching in Scotland.

As local Endless Mountains Maple Queen, Amy promoted the maple industry by attending the Troy Fair, many parades, and several other celebrations. Because of her interest in children, Amy plans to be involved with promoting maple products in the area elementary

schools. She is especially looking forward to stirring maple syrup in the kindergarten class where she helps as part of her child development class.

1991 NEW YORK MAPLE TOUR

The 1991 New York State Maple Tour will be held in western New York on Monday and Tuesday, July 22 and 23. The tour will be centered in Allegany County with lodging and banquet to be provided by the conference facilities of Houghton College.

Houghton College lies in the beautiful Genesee Valley of western New York and is approximately 65 miles southeast of Buffalo, 70 miles southwest of Rochester, and is located near scenic Letchworth State Park.

Pre-registration is essential for scheduling the 1991 New York Maple tour. A tour schedule and registration form will follow soon.

For more information please contact: Ms. Lynn O'Brien, Cooperative Extension Center, RD 1, Box 226, County Road 48, Belmont, NY 14813. Phone: 716-268-7644.

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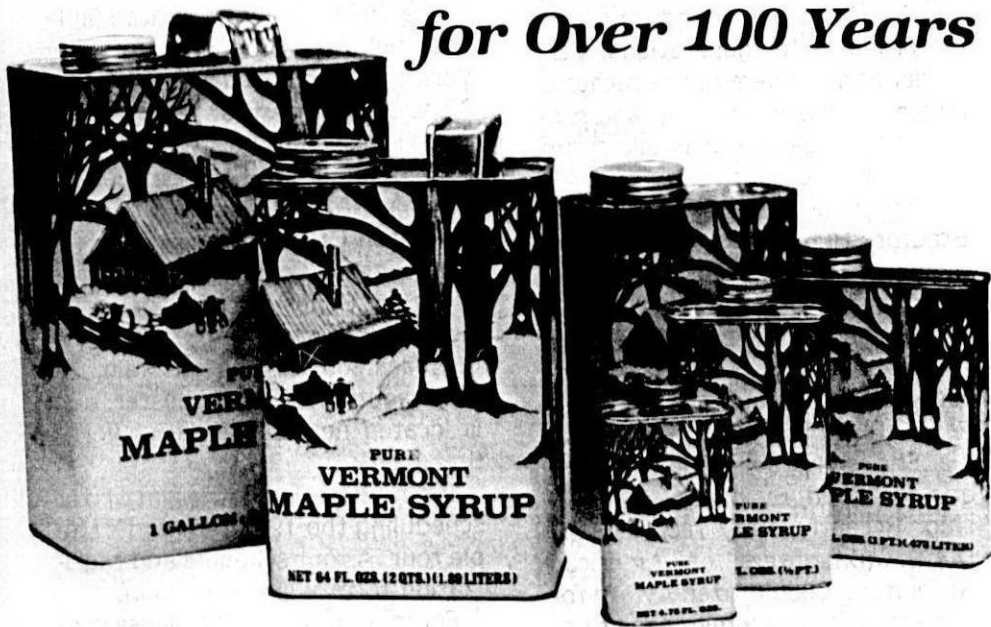
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WISCONSIN NEWS

By Roland Jorns

Well the 1991 maple season has come and gone. I expect there are maple producers that are very well satisfied, some satisfied and some not so satisfied with the 1991 harvest. From the people I have been in contact with it seems to be about an average to slightly less than average crop worldwide. Wisconsin doing about average in the east to somewhat less than average as you go west. Well anyway, with this much syrup added to the build up over the last two years we still have to do a good job of marketing to keep prices at a level where we can make a profit.

Most of my customers prefer light amber syrup, but I do have some that prefer dark syrup, and just last week I had a couple that asked me for birch syrup. (We ran an experiment on birch syrup about 10 years ago, tapped around 200 birch trees and found the sugar content to be less than a half percent and not practical to make.) The syrup was almost black in color, but a few people loved it, some claimed it made the best beans in the world. We've also had some customers that thought dark syrup was cooked longer and is thicker and more concentrated and end up taking darker syrup, thinking they are getting more for their money. When this happens I think we will all agree there should be a little more information available to the consumer. Many years ago I received a color chart showing three table grades in amber and a dark

grade for flavoring. If I remember correctly Ted Peterson or possibly Adin Reynolds gave this to me at one of our Institute meetings. This color chart was put out by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture. It is tacked to my shop entrance door, my customers are constantly looking and studying this chart as they make their syrup purchases. This color chart has been a very valuable tool to me and my customers. I thank the Ontario people for putting out such a valuable and educational piece of art.

I also believe in taste sampling. Any of our customers that request taste samples of the different colors are granted such sampling with an earnest interest on our part.

I believe there should be a lot more of these color charts posted in salesrooms, so customers can make better decisions on the syrup of their choice. After all a satisfied customer is what we want, to make sure he will be back again and again. Having a color chart around puts a little more pride in our product and helps producers stay on their toes too.

We are getting into vacation planning time, and I would like to remind all you maple folks to come to Wisconsin October 23rd through October 26th at the *Civic Center Inn*, at Eau Claire, Wisconsin for the *North American Maple Syrup Convention* and the *ISMI Convention 1991*. The planning committee is working very hard to make this a very enjoyable convention. And if you possibly can, please join us on October 24th which will be our *Annual Wisconsin Tour Day*.

Eau Claire is located in the western part of Wisconsin and was long

overdue for the convention in this area. I of course live in the extreme eastern part of the state. For those that are driving up and have a little time to vacation, I would be pleased to have you stop-by. As our State slogan says, "When you are in Wisconsin, you are among friends." See you all in Eau Claire, October 23rd through October 26, 1991.

MINNESOTA'S 1990 MAPLE CONTEST

Our first contest included 8 entrants, but the number was no indication of the quality! All entrants were in the Grade A range and only one was dark amber. Third place went to past president John Kroll. Second place went to Don Fairbanks, a relative unknown to the MMSP Assn., but well-known to Cass County and mapling with 25 years under his belt. Plaque holder and first place went to Wanda and Arnold Patzoldt of Grand Rapids. Activists for maple syrup producers, Wanda and Arnold Patzoldt probably would encourage even newcomers to send in a sample in 1991 and learn how to improve your product and container/label. It's only \$5.

Barrel-handling equipment: cradles to rock bbl over, for fast and efficient emptying (2 models \$75.00 ea.). **Bbl bung wrenches** \$15.50; **Bbl hand truck** \$115.00 (plus freight) Free Morse catalogue. **Steel bbl bungs w/plastic gaskets:** 2 in. \$6/dz. or 3/4 in. \$3/dz. plus UPS.

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF PEAR THRIPS

By Michael Brownbridge
and Jeannie Yuill

Entomology Research Laboratory
University of Vermont

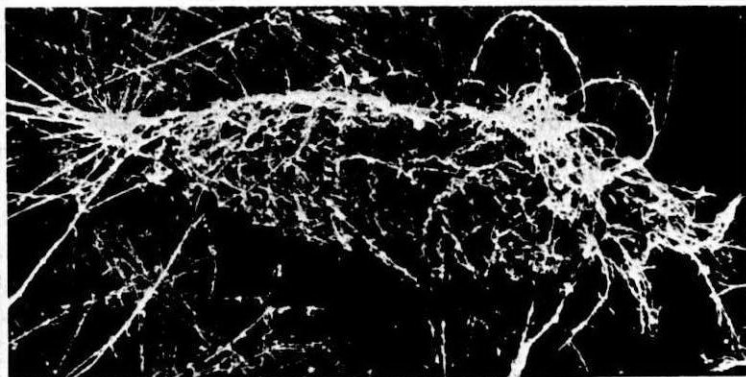
Pear thrips larvae infected with the fungus *Verticillium lecanii* were initially recovered from sugarbush soils sampled in VT during 1988 and 1989. With the undertaking of a Regional soil survey in 1990 to determine the distribution of pear thrips throughout maple producing areas in the north east, the incidence of pink infected larvae was shown to be much wider. Larvae infected with this fungus were found in soil samples taken at sugarbush sites in CT, MA, NH and PA. This widespread natural occurrence provides further incentive to fully evaluate the biocontrol potential of this fungus, and how transmission of the disease in the environment may be promoted.

To date, over 50 isolates are held in the Entomology Lab at UVM and have been maintained in various

ways to ensure full retention of their viability and potency. A series of experiments are underway to enable us to select the best isolates for possible use in the field, according to certain criteria. These include: 1. selection of the most toxic strains as those having the best chances of infecting and killing pear thrips; and 2. selection of 'cold-hardy' strains capable of infecting thrips in the cool sugarbush soils and surviving there over the winter months.

In preliminary lab experiments, we have managed to artificially infect pear thrips larvae with a number of the fungal isolates, the dead larvae developing the characteristic pink coloration observed in diseased specimens collected from the field. The pear thrips isolates also seem to be quite unique in their production of this pink pigment, which has not been evident in cultures of strains of the same species isolated from other insect hosts.

Much remains to be done, but we feel we are taking the first steps along the road to the development of an efficient, cost effective and environmentally sound alternative for the management of pear thrips.



Fungus infected
pear thrips
larva.

MARKETING PRESENTATION IS HIT OF MAPLE SCHOOLS

By James Briggs
Cooperative extension agent
Hamilton County

Lew Staats, the Cornell Maple Specialist, does a great job with annual Cornell Cooperative Extension maple schools. He presents the latest maple research, production trends and anything else he feels will help New York maple producers. One reason for his success is that Lew consistently comes up with new and innovative resources. This year he came up with a real winner in the person of David Kopp of Morris, New York, near Oneonta.

Kopp spoke on market expansion for maple products, an important area that producers sometimes tend to forget. Kopp is the kind of entrepreneur who is a natural for the maple industry and I think his last statement summed up the essence of his presentation. He said "we are in the middle of a recession and war and if you can have fun and get the romance back into the maple business everybody is going to feel better.

Kopp described how his maple business has grown from his first eleven gallons boiled on the kitchen stove to the point where he recently had a \$400 hour in sales, much of that with rented taps and syrup be bought from other producers. His gift in the maple business is promotion and he appears to really enjoy that aspect.



He started by selling wholesale but quickly decided that he needed to cover the retail markets if he really wanted to get ahead. He began taking his maple products to flea markets, farmer's markets, county fairs and any large public gathering he could find. And he consistently sold all the syrup and other maple products he brought. He described one flea market he attended in another state. The manager told him there was already another maple booth and he didn't think Kopp would do very well. He did let him in but put him in a remote location. Kopp said the other exhibitor was like many maple marketers, with three gallons and three quarts and sat behind the table. Kopp, on the other hand, had brought a van full of maple products and actively promoted his business by creating excitement and giving away free samples. He

graphically described the result by saying that "his pants were falling down because his pockets were so full of money."

At flea markets he posts his prices and tends to under-price his gallons (\$30) to get people's attention. "They rarely buy gallons anyway but will readily spend \$18 for a half gallon or \$6.50 for a pint." He tells people: "just look at these prices" or "you gotta taste this syrup" and if you can get them to taste it, 85% of them will buy. "After they taste it you say which do you want, syrup or cream?" he adds.

According to Kopp it is very important to look clean and sharp when you are dealing with retailers or if you are working flea markets. It is also imperative to have a top quality product and stand behind it. He takes back any syrup a retailer has had for six months to reduce the chance for a bad can. He puts his labels on the night before a flea market so they will look new and always puts his best stuff out front. He uses a simple display made from two syrup barrels and a wide plank but he loads it down with products. "The more they see, the more they buy," he says.

The next thing Kopp did was to parlay his flea market enterprise into a viable mail order business. He collected all the brochures he could find and distilled (with permission) the best parts into a brochure that works for him. He looked into using a bulk mailing permit and decided it was too expensive for a one and a half percent return. Instead he hands out the brochures at flea markets and malls and has been getting an 8%

response. He feels the secret is using the L.L. Bean approach. People don't want to have to figure how much the order will cost so he has it all worked out by shipping zone. He has a note that excess postage from multiple orders will be promptly refunded — and he makes sure that he does it. The next printing will be on recycled paper so he can use the recycled logo. He feels syrup buyers will relate to that. Since he buys sap and syrup, Kopp does not attempt to promote organic syrup. He does emphasize that his product is pure maple syrup, however.

Kopp now has an 800 phone number for taking orders (1-800-62MAPLE). He has approached his bank about getting a machine for credit card orders and they refused, saying that they don't take small ticket phone orders. He is now looking for a bank that will help him and when he finds one, that bank will get all of his business. Another producer who uses 800 numbers says he hasn't had a bad order in five years.

He also has suggestions for roadside marketing operations. He says a good location is where people go out for Sunday drives. He says to do more than just sell syrup. Hand out some brochures because they may want to order more syrup for gifts. He feels that if you can't be at the stand, have a locked box for the money. His experience is that people are reluctant to knock on the door and that the profit exceeds any loss you may incur.

Several business management tips were offered. Kopp says detailed and accurate records are very important. "When somebody

orders 100 gallons, you better know how much your cost is so you can make a profit."

He reports all of his sales to the IRS. "If you sell most of your product for cash out of the sap house door, when you go to the bank for a loan for expansion, you have no way to prove that you have a viable business," he says. "Besides if the State of New York is really interested in helping maple producers, we need figures to show how important we really are." He does keep abreast of tax loopholes, however. He has found that an obscure law exempts mushroom growers and maple producers from paying

Social Security tax on their profits. He even has farm plates on his two tank trucks. It costs a dollar a year and there is no insurance.

When asked why he was so willing to share his secrets, Kopp replied that the maple industry has so much potential that all producers can share in the excitement. But they should share information and they should promote as a body.

If New York is ever in the market for a maple marketing specialist, they can start with the proprietor of Patrick Hill Maple Farm. He can be reached at HC 69, Box 11A, Potato Farm Road, Morris, NY 13808.

NAMSC Annual Meeting, Eau Claire, Wisconsin October 24-26, 1991

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DAWN ZECKLIN MAPLE QUEEN

Miss Dawn Zecklin was chosen Michigan Maple Syrup Queen in Grayling, Michigan at the Holiday Inn on January 19, 1991.

I am the second daughter to get the crowning in my family. My sister had the crown in 1989.

I'm 17 years old. I'm a Sophomore at Fennville High School. I am involved in S.A.D.D., Basketball, Church softball, Color Guard, I play the flute in the high school band, and I also work at Cornerstone Cafe.

My parents are Kenneth and Frances Zecklin of Fennville. My grandparents are Russell and Barbara Thorne of Grand Junction Michigan. George and Wanda Zecklin of Fennville.

My family comes from a long line of syrup makers. My parents have only been in the syrup business since 1972, at this time we didn't have trees. We just helped my grandparents out. We didn't start tapping our own site of trees until 1978. I've been helping my dad and granddad, since I was four. My jobs around the syrup house are to help tap the trees, can the syrup, clean the pans, clean the syrup house, and making dinner for the group. I even watch the pans to make sure they don't burn or runover, also I help collect the sap for both my father, and grandfather.

Ever since I can remember I loved to go down to my grandparents and stay the night with them. In the morning I'd wake up to the just finished smell of the boiling. My grandfather would be getting



ready to go out for his first run, and I would be right behind him.

I will be crowned at the state capitol in Lansing on April 11, 1991 at 9:15 a.m.

I will be riding in alot of parades this year, including my home town Goose Festival, plus I will be hosting a number of events. One of the events is my own Russell Thrones open house on March 23, 1991 from 9:00 to 5:00.

My father Kenneth Zecklin was on the syrup board until this past year when his term was done.

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1991 VERMONT FESTIVAL HONORS CHARLES BRANON

By Raymond T. Foulds, Jr.

The Vermont Maple Festival, as part of its Annual Maple Awards Dinner on April 20, honored the late Charles Branon as the Franklin County Maple Producers Cooperative described accomplishments under his term as President for 25 years. Harold J. Howrigan of Fairfield, formerly Vice President and now President, told of the formation of the Cooperative in 1966, with the first officers being: Charles Branon, President; Harold J. Howrigan, Vice President; Marcel Benoit, Treasurer; Ruth Wright, Secretary; Reginald Tinker, Herbert Wilkins, Alan Mercury, Dayton Fleury, Alan Kittell, Eric Nye, Robert J. Branon.

The Cooperative was formed because of low prices being paid to farmers, and high equipment costs and taxes; also a demand for hardwood lumber that threatened sugar bushes. Successful finances were obtained from the Bank for

Cooperatives at Springfield, Mass.; and also from the Peoples Trust Company, St. Albans, Vermont. The funds were used to buy bulk syrup which otherwise would have been sold under hardship conditions (The bulk buyers would agree to a low price to be paid by all). When the FCMP bought syrup the price paid to producers for bulk syrup was guaranteed, and Directors personally signed a note with Peoples Trust Company guaranteeing this. Aid was given by the Extension Service, UVM; and by the Vermont Department of Agriculture, whose maple inspectors came at buying time and graded syrup. The first year 28 cents per pound was paid for Fancy syrup, with lower prices for other grades. In 1976 the price had increased to 80 cents per pound for Fancy grade syrup. In 1988 the price increased to \$2.65 per pound for Fancy.

In recent years the Cooperative has been able to borrow funds (\$60,000) from the Vermont Rehabilitation Corporation as well as the bank.

Charles Branon also served as President of Leader Evaporator Company and was in that office in 1976.

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MARKETING TIPS

By David Kopp

Using Samples To Increase Sales

Perhaps the biggest lever we can use in closing a sale of maple products is the sense of taste in our customers. Attractive displays, nice packaging and good presentation all play important roles — yet like a picture is worth a thousand words a small taste of maple cream or syrup can be the decisive factor in a sale.

The key in giving taste samples is of course getting the sample into the mouths of the customer. Expressions like "Do you want a taste?" or "Did you ever try?" will not get you the response you desire. Try "You've *got to* taste it to believe it." or "You *have to* try our maple cream." The approach of telling people to try it rather than asking them will get you many many more sales.

Perhaps they reply "I know what it tastes like" you can say, "Take this taste and tell us if this isn't the best you've ever had."

Offer taste samples, talk about production, don't sit behind your stand and wait for people to open up to you.

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- ★ **Don't mill this event**
- ★ **June 23rd rain date**

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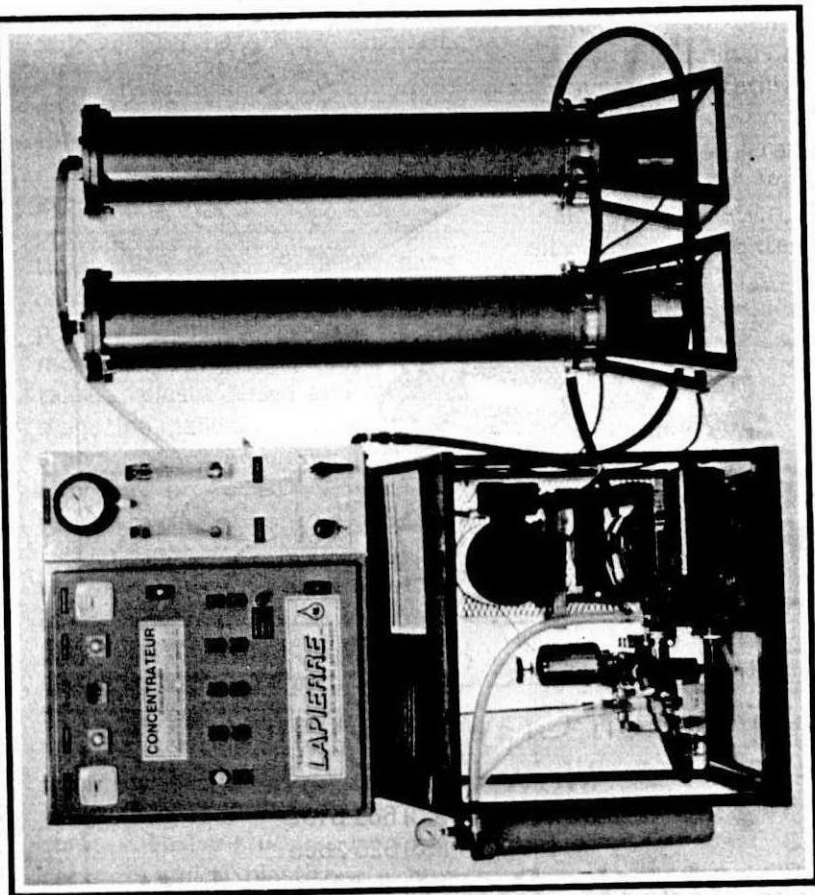
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Most so-called "biodegradable" plastics actually do not biodegrade, according to two Cornell University agricultural engineers who have developed what they term "the first highly reliable method to test biodegradability of plastics."

Their method tests whether bacteria that readily degrade common organic materials also degrade plastics. The scientists have also developed a simple screening test for biodegradability.

Their results mean that the majority of "biodegradable" plastic products now sold, including plastic garbage bags, shopping bags, compost and sandwich bags, disposable diapers, agricultural mulches, disposable food containers, plastic-based egg cartons, magazine mailers and six-pack beverage rings are *not* environmentally safe products, as the manufacturers claim.

"Our highly reliable bacterial system completely degrades known biodegradable materials like paper and wood chips," said William Jewell, a professor of agricultural and biological engineering in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell. "Using the system, we've conducted the most comprehensive study so far to determine which plastics are truly biodegradable. Unfortunately, none of the ones we tested, and we tested most of them, are."

VERMONT MAPLERAMA 1991

Caledonia County, Vermont is hosting Maplerama '91. The dates for this two day event are August 2 and 3. Most of the Maplerama activities will be centered from the Fenton Chester Ice Arena in Lyndonville, Vermont. This is a very spacious arena large enough to accommodate all the exhibitors and the evening banquet.

Tours will be: visiting old and new maple production facilities; Maple Grove manufacturing of St. Johnsbury; maple historical stops such as the original Cary maple saw-warehouse which is still in production; and other interesting visits.

Vermont Maplerama 1991 is sponsored by the Vermont Sugar-makers' Association, the University of Vermont Extension Service, the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, and the Vermont Department of Agriculture.

To make sure you are on the mailing list, write to: MAPLERAMA, 1991, Vermont Dept. of Forests and Parks, 184 Portland Street, St. Johnsbury, VT. 05819 or call 1-802-748-8787.

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1991 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



Ed Soubousta, left, and Sam and Iona Patterson, right, were inducted into the Geauga County Maple Syrup Hall of Fame at the 62nd Geauga County Maple Festival. They are pictured here with Geauga County Maple Queen Laura Simpson who attends Notre Dame High School.



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51ST NORTHEAST OHIO MAPLE INSTITUTE

By Tom Hoffman

The 51st Annual Northeast Ohio Maple Syrup Institute was held in Middlefield, Ohio on January 23rd and 24th. Approximately 80 people attended the evening session on Wednesday, which consisted of a trade show and informative talks geared to the novice producer.

150 people were on hand for Thursday's session which began with a report from Les Ober and Gordon Feindel of The Ohio Maple Producer's Association. The Association now has 200 members and encourages all producers in Ohio to join.

Bob Long of The School of Natural Resources, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center in Wooster, announced the start of a survey to determine the health of sugarbushes throughout Ohio. Cheryl Capek, also of O.A.R.D.C., explained the progress being made in developing a quick test for bud-burn that can be made in the woods without laboratory equipment. Volunteers were asked to help in actual use of the test in the upcoming season.

The latest, up-to-date information on proper packaging of maple syrup was presented by Barbara Drake, Geauga County Extension Agent, Home Economics. Recent information indicates that packing in bulk, for later reheating in consumer containers, is preferable to packing all the syrup crop in individual containers as it is made. The pros and cons of metal, plastic, and

glass containers were discussed. Storage of syrup at 46 degrees or less is recommended, regardless of the type of container used or even when hot-packed.

Randy James, Geauga County Extension Agent, Agriculture, and Barbara Drake spoke on Expanding Maple Markets. They presented the results of a survey on syrup prices across the Country and Canada. After contracting wholesale buyers and distributors they received a 67% reply rate. Their findings indicate the highest retail price to be in Vermont, where the average price for a gallon was \$38.38. The further west a state was located, the lower the price per gallon, with Wisconsin averaging \$26.70. It was also noted that higher prices were obtained in states with uniform grading laws. The need to educate the public on maple products and share market information with other producing areas was stressed.

Ture Johnson presented the results of last Fall's Meetings of the International Maple Syrup Institute and North American Maple Syrup Council. Topics included research



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proposals presented to the Council and the large Canadian surplus of syrup and its possible effect on prices.

Peter Purinton of Huntington, Vermont, gave an informative talk on how he produces high quality syrup from his 14,000 tap sugarbush. The key to his success comes from attention to the smallest details, from scrubbing all storage tanks between runs to personally drilling each taphole.

A group discussion on Maple Promotion and Marketing allowed the audience to ask questions of a panel consisting of Bill Brown, Dave Fruth, Les Ober and Peter Purinton.

Randy James handed out copies

of the Ohio revised code that covers the use of "Maple" and regulations for packaging and labeling. This answered questions that many people have had regarding how Ohio law pertains to maple syrup.

Basic Sugarbush Management was the topic covered by Dr. Randy Heiligmann, Extension Specialist, Forestry, of The Ohio State University. Topics covered included tree selection, thinning, pruning and general guidelines for improving the health and vigor of our maple trees. This was especially pertinent in light of the threats our trees face in the form of acid rain, pear thrips and gypsy moths.

Deadline for October issue is September 1, 1991

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	Nate Danforth—US Rte. 2, Box 284B, E. Montpelier, VT 05651	802-229-9536
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	Palmer Hunt—Box 304, Jeffersonville, VT 05464	802-644-5627
	Lamphere Enterprises Inc.—PO Box 37, McIndoe Falls, VT 05050	802-633-4495
	Raymond Kinney—HC Box 304, E. Berkshire, VT 05443	802-933-4627
	Gerald Masterson—RD 1, Box 1280, Bristol, VT 05443	802-453-2028
	William Moore—RR 1, Box 190, Morgan, VT 05853	802-895-2764
	Mountainside Orchards—Box 337, Hardwick, VT 05843	802-472-5973
	Peter Purington—RD 1, Box 190C, Richmond, VT 05477	802-434-4385
	Gary Rapanotti—PO Box 828, Springfield, VT 05156	802-885-3376
	Sky Haus View Farm—RD 2, N. Troy, VT 05859	802-744-2418
	Waterloo USA, Inc.—HCR 63, Box 35A, Barton, VT 05822	802-525-4103
NH	David Fuller—13 Water St., Lancaster, NH 03584	603-788-2719
	Bill Nichols—Nichols Hardware, Lyme, NH 03768	603-795-2214
	Richard Moore—Sunnyside Maples, RD 8, Concord, NH 03301	603-267-8217
	Merrimack Farm & Country Store—Main Street, Bradford, NH 03221	603-938-2211
	Frank Owen—35 Bridge St., Colebrook, NH 03576	603-237-4432
MA	Jeff Mason—Red Bucket Sugar Shack, Kinne Brook Rd., Worthington, MA 01098	413-238-7710
	Will Shattuck—Devon Lane Farm, Belchertown, MA 01007	413-323-6607
CT	Louis Berezic—41 Washington Rd., Woodbury, CT 06798	203-263-3996
	Lamothe's Sugar House—89 Stone Rd., Burlington, CT 06013	203-582-6135
ME	Smith's Maple Products—36 Middle St., Skowhegan, ME 04976	207-474-3380
	Raymond Titcomb—Maine Maple Products, Farmington, ME 04938	207-778-3803
NY	Warren Allen—RD Box 281, Castorland, NY 13620	315-346-6706
	Frank Brodie—County Rt. 34, Westford, NY 12147	607-264-3225
	The Davenport—57 Brink Rd., Van Etten, NY 14899	607-589-6626
	T.B. Hobbs & Son—Box 12, Ellenburg Center, NY 12934	518-594-3869
	Jeff Howe—RD 2, Ft. Ann, NY 12827	518-634-5317
	Randy Galusha—Zaltz Rd., Athol, NY 12810	518-623-2272
	Victor Putnam—RD 1, Cobleskill, NY 12043	518,234-4726, 234-4858
	Randy Sprague—51 Maple Ave., Portville, NY 14770	716-933-6637
	Todd's Sugarhouse—RD 1, Box 470, Norwood, NY 13668	315-353-2808
PA	Dale Jeffrey—W. Salisbury, PA 15565	814-662-2904
MI	Dodd's Sugarshack—1654 Dodd Rd., Niles, MI 49120	616-683-3283
	Elm River Sugarbush—Ted Johnson, Rt. 1 Box 104, Toivola, MI 49965	906-288-3434
OH	David Stump—New Washington, OH 44854	419-492-2731
WI	Jeff Nordby—Prairie Farm, WI 54762	715-455-1529
	Polak's Sugar Bush—Rt. 2, Merrill, WI 54425	715-536-4032
VA	Ivan Puffenbarger—Star Rt. B, Box 70, Blue Grass, VA 24413	703-474-2771

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REMINDER

Research Proposal Guidelines

Research projects may be submitted for consideration based on the following guidelines:

(1) Proposals must be received no later than July 1, 1991 for consideration in 1991. Proposals received after that date will be considered in 1992.

(2) Proposals shall be complete and detailed in content. However, proposals shall contain a short concise cover statement briefly explaining cost, scope, objective, procedure, and anticipated value to the maple industry.

(3) Proposals shall contain detailed estimated cost breakdown, within the detailed report.

(4) Proposals shall be submitted with a minimum of thirty-six (36) complete copies.

(5) Proposals must contain a complete reference section listing and explaining any similar or duplicating research previously accomplished. Proposals for duplication of previously completed research must contain detailed explanations of why such duplication is warranted.

(6) Results or progress of funded projects must be presented annually at the convention of the NAMSC and must be published in the Maple Syrup Digest as soon as possible after completion.

(7) Send proposals to: Lynn H. Reynolds, Research Committee, North American Maple Syrup Council, W10010 Givens Road, Hortonville, WI 54944.

Remember: July 1 Deadline.



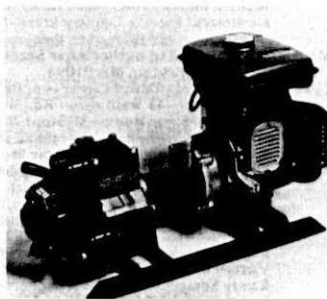
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COMING EVENTS PENNSYLVANIA

September 20 and 21 1991

Pennsylvania Maple Producers annual tour. Hosted this year by the Somerset County Maple Producers Association. For more information contact Gary Blocker, Rt. 1, Sallsbury, PA 15558. (814-662-4125) or Floyd Reese, Rt. 3, Somerset, PA 15501 (814-445-7074).

November 21 and 22, 1991

1991 Conference on Thrips, University Park, Pennsylvania. Hosted by: School of Forest Resources, Department of Entomology, The Pennsylvania State University.

ONTARIO

July 12-14, 1991

OMSPA Summer Tour hosted by Algonquin Local, Frost Centre, Dorset.

October 4 and 5, 1991

OMSPA Fall Tour and Annual Meeting hosted by Lanark Local, Perth, Ontario. Contact Don Dodds (613) 256-4045.

OHIO

November 1 and 2, 1991

Ohio Maple Producer's Association Annual Fall Tour, Wilmington, Ohio.

MINNESOTA

Second Annual Minnesota Maple Syrup Contest, in conjunction with Deer River Wild Rice Festival July 12-14 OR the White Oak Society's Voyageur Rendezvous August 2-4. Opportunity for taste-testing and selling your wares. Contact Lauri King 1-218-246-2480 mornings or evenings.

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Summer Meeting, July 20, 1991, Call 603-432-8427.

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MORE THOUGHTS ON CONTAINERS FOR MARKETING MAPLE SYRUP

By Edward Sherburne Doubleday

Bob Myers, in his Letter to the Editor of the Digest which appeared in the October 1990 issue in response to my article about marketing maple syrup in cans and plastic which appeared in the June 1990 issue, has good words to say about the qualities of glass containers for packaging pure maple syrup. I agree with everything he has to say about the features of glass containers and that marketing the world's luxury pancake topping calls for innovative presentation to consumers in a variety of containers, including glass, ceramicware, tin and plastic in a selection of sizes from 1/10 pint glass (single service) on up to whatever size the market demands.

Glass bottles are superior in many respects to alternative types

of containers for some of these reasons that come to mind:

1. They are best for protecting the flavor of the world's finest pancake topping because their chemically inert properties do not pick up off flavors;

2. They are user-friendly with respect to opening, closing and pouring;

3. They are attractive for table use, particularly if they have jug handles, and light filtering through the golden amber product is eye-appealing;

4. They are the containers of choice for sellers who want to solicit the high volume national supermarket business as a stroll through the pancake syrup aisle quickly confirms;

5. They are cost-competitive per unit of volume with alternative containers.

Unless the syrup packer has specialized filtering, filling, capping and labeling equipment, proceed with caution, for hand-packing is a slow and not so fool-proof process.

To prevent unsightly sediment deposits in the bottom of the bottles, syrup must be filtered using a



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press and a fine-grain filter powder (diatomaceous earth).

It is necessary to uniformly measure the correct amount of syrup that goes into the bottles, not only to comply with the label volume statement, but for uniform fill height appearance in the see-through containers. For the same reason, labels must be applied uniformly.

Since bottles must be filled with hot syrup to sterilize the containers, care must be taken to minimize breakage by preheating at least the larger bottles.

We haven't discussed ceramic containers, but they make attractive gifts and look nice on the dining table. Filling, corking and sealing them with wax requires time and patience and they are not really user-friendly with respect to opening and closing.

SHERB DOUBLEDAY, who lives in Newport, Vermont, is the Digest Field New England Editor, a member of the Vermont Maple Industry Council, an associate member of the North American Maple Syrup Council and a frequent contributor of articles for the Digest. He has over 40 years of experience as a processor, packager and marketer of maple syrup.

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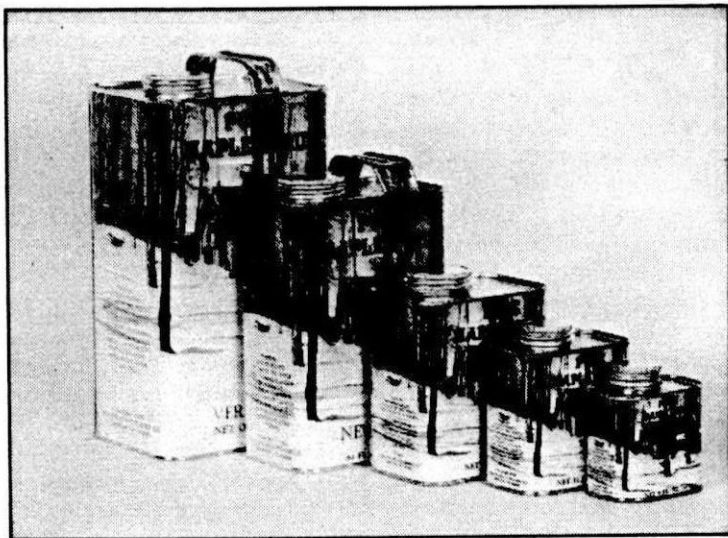
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THE OLD TIMER - ME?

By Ken Bascom

I wake in early morning — it isn't even four.
The lights across the valley betray the neighbor's farm
and I know he's getting up to start his daily chore.
It's such a life-long habit he needn't even set alarm.
My kitty hears me moving and scratches at the door.
"Well, Kitty, do come in, stop tearing at the house"
I say, and get her dish and set it on the floor.
"What'll it be this morning, Purina, milk or mouse?"
Alone in early morning in the quiet of my house
I sip my cup of coffee and anticipate my day
and sometimes talk with Kitty and sometimes with her play.
The place is much too quiet since the parting of my spouse.
Of course she did not mean to go. God knows I wish it were not so!
But was naught that I could do and now I must go on.
It's memories and restlessness that get me up at four, I guess,
but nonetheless it lets me see the hopefulness of dawn.
I step to the further window, with questioning eye look out.
A cloud of steam drifts slowly from the sugarhouse next door.
It's maple time and collecting tubes are winding all about
bringing sap to our maple plant, 30,000 taps and more.
Is it Bruce or is it Bill has taken early shift?
I think of other years and all the changes made
as I stand and watch the sap-steam's upward drift,
as tanks are slowly emptied making room for this day's truck parade.
Somewhat sadly I recall the sturdy horses, tanks and pails.
Knee-deep in snow in early March we'd tap
and drive the horses out to open up the woodland trails
and back and forth would go the teams bringing in the sap.
I've done it all. The tapping, then collecting, aching legs,
all well recalled. Cutting, hauling, stacking wood,
the firing, boiling, the packing of the crop in bottle, jug or kegs.
The "boys" now have it easier, the sweat removed, and that is good.
Gradually I'd made the changes. Wood to oil, high pressured steam,
collecting tubes in networks many acres wide,
reverse osmosis bought to cope with our ever growing stream,
automatic filters and mechanized canners, all we took in stride.
The little one-room house my sugarmaker father made
was enlarged five different times and now unrecognized.
The salesroom, the warehoused goods, now bring annual parade
of sugarmakers come to get their inventory of supplies.
My second cup of coffee down I put boots on and out I go
to check on how it's going, what needs attention, if so, how.
The "boys" will have it all in hand I know,
for, as you see, I am the "Old Timer" now.

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