

Maple Syrup Digest



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COVER: Warren Wells, Dick Haas &
Gary Gaudette, 2000 Inductees into
the Maple Museum Hall of Fame.

GREETINGS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT



I hope when you read this your plans are complete to attend the annual meeting in Vermont. It sounds like an interesting meeting.

And now to a perplexing problem. I talked to the Research Fund Committee recently and heard some disturbing news. They had requests for funding of research projects totaling a little over \$70,000.00 and only some \$23,000.00 were available for distribution this year. The Fund does not fund any one project 100% so additional funds have to be requested from other sources. These other funds are getting harder to find. It would be a sad day that a much needed project was not done due to lack of funding. It makes the job of the Research Committee very difficult to decide who will get funding and how much. There are many worthwhile research projects on the table now and there will be many more coming up due to the advances in technology in the maple industry.

The Research Fund is supported by the penny per container collected when suppliers sell you containers. Last year we distributed a little over \$32,000.000 to research projects. I feel that the retail sales have been better this year than last year so we should have had more money for the needed research projects, but not so. What with the advances in plastic and glass containers we should have generated more money for the Research Fund.

All research projects must be published in the Maple Digest so that we (who fund the projects) can all benefit from the research.

See you all in Vermont in October.
Thanks.

Hank Peterson, President
North American Maple Syrup Council

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NEWS FROM THE IMSI AND MORE

Getting ready for the annual meeting of the IMSI and NAMSC is a big job, as any of the previous planning committees will tell you. The Vermont committee has been working for more than three years to make sure that your "Vermont Experience" is as pleasant and educational as possible.

Literally dozens of volunteers have been involved and many are still preparing. The maple tours are being prepared, cleaning, painting, cutting weeds, I'm sure all that is taking place out in the back country. The time it takes to do a good job will pay off dividends for these sugarmakers, they'll be proud of their operations and we'll learn from them. Rick Marsh and his sub-committee along with all his tour guides will be ready to host.

Pauline Couture and Joyce Gaudette have the companion programs all planned and ready to go. Those who attend these portions will see some of the best Vermont scenery with tours into the mountains and visits to such places as Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream and Stowe, the "Ski Capital of the East." Saturday's companion tour will allow participants as much time as they want at Vermont largest craft show, just a few miles from the hotel — with shuttle busses running regularly.

Dr. Tim Perkins of the Proctor Maple Research Center, Extension Maple Specialist George Cook, Vermont Dept. of Agriculture's Henry Marckres and several others worked very hard to get a diverse program of educational activities. They'll have scientific poster sessions throughout the event, educa-

tional displays and a full Saturday of technical presentations in both French and English.

Gary Gaudette and his Trade Show committee report that the show is sold out and will be the largest Maple Trade Show ever held at these international meetings. The 12,000 square foot trade show area will host the breakfast and lunch on Saturday too! If it has anything to do with maple, it will be in the IMSI/NAMSC Trade Show on Friday night and all day Saturday.

Attendees at the 2000 joint conference will get some surprises too. International sponsors are making it possible for the 2000 committee to do some very special things that will enhance the convention.

The following are sponsors of the 2000 NAMSC/IMSI Joint International meetings at Burlington, VT, October 25-28. Thank you very much for your very generous help to make these sessions successful.

Vermont Maple Festival, Vermont Agricultural Enterprises, Yankee Farm Credit, Vermont Farm Bureau, University of Vermont College of Agriculture, Waterloo-Small, USA, Vermont Maple Sugarmakers Assoc., International Maple Syrup Institute, (Citadelle) Plessisville Maple Producers Cooperative, Hillside Plastics, Inc., Algier USA, Inc., Bascom Maple Farms, Chittenden County Maple Sugarmakers, Maple Grove Farms of Vermont, New England Dairy Promotion, Regroupement of Quebec, Dominion & Grimm USA, Classic Stitching of Vergennes, VT, Leader Evaporator Co., Orange County Maple Producers, New England Container, Inc., St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Inc., Highland Sugarworks, Dakin

Farm, Vermont Department of Agriculture, McLure Honey and Maple, Butternut Mountain Farm, Mayotte's Maple Supplies, Federation of Quebec Maple Producers, Windsor County Maple Producers, Lamoille County Maple Sugarmakers, Addison County Maple Sugarmakers, and Telemark, Inc.

International Maple Syrup Contest for Packers

The third annual international maple syrup contest for wholesalers and retailers that pack maple syrup will be held in Burlington, VT at the Maple Syrup International 2000 annual meeting of the IMSI. Winners receive a special gold medal plaque and publicity throughout the maple industry.

The winner of the International Category in 1999 was the Citadelle

Maple Syrup Cooperative in Plessisville, Quebec. The Gift and Speciality Category was won by the Dakin Farm of Ferrisburgh, Vermont. Entrants submit their entry form and fee to the IMSI, the syrup is then purchased off the shelf by IMSI representatives and an international team of judges, select the category winners. Entries must be received by October 10, 2000 for the 2000 contest. The International Category entry fee is \$400, the Gift and Speciality Category entry fee is \$200.

For complete details on the contest, contact the IMSI Executive Secretary Larry Myott at (802) 656-5433, or email: Larry.Myott@uvm.edu

Larry Myott
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| 35 gal. Small Brothers stainless filter tank w/rack | \$235 |



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WHY WE NEED LOCAL FARMS

By Gordon Lewis

For those of your reading this article who are handy with hammer and nails, I've included plans for an ark at the end of this column.

Now, I'm not insinuating that this has been a wet, damp summer but I have noticed recently that the mushrooms growing on my lawn have wet mold on them.

Pity the weather people who must go on television every day and smile while prognosticating all that will turn out to be pathetically wrong.

We all should be so lucky to have a job that perpetuates our bank account, while we are mistaken in our assigned task on a daily basis.

Can you imagine what it must be like to be a farmer in this summer of raindrops and cloudy skies?

If there is any occupation so critically tied to the vagaries of mother earth and her whimsical weather behavior, it is farming — an endeavor we all rely on for our very existence.

Yet how many of us really take the time to understand and appreciate those among us that have chosen to follow the plow, while the rest of us go about our daily lives unencumbered by the worry of how we'll obtain food for sustenance.

I, as well as a small handful of others, worry about the survival of the local farms and the importance of what they provide to us.

The impact of having local farms goes far beyond fresh corn on the cob or crisp macoun apples on the table—

the hand that tills touches us in far greater ways than than.

While our link to the earth gets thinner every day, the knowledge of true survival and the ability to provide for our daily needs is fast becoming a lost art among the general population.

The knowledge, skill and wisdom required in getting a seed to bring forth nutritious food fades dimmer with every farm that succumbs to poor returns, high taxes and the temptation to turn the land over to high-paying developers.

I doubt if there are nay ideal seasons for farmers here in New England. Too hot, too cold, too dry, too rainy — there always seems to be something to mess up the equation.

The vast majority of us get upset when we lose a weekend at the beach due to poor weather; can you imagine losing a full yield of young crops to a torrential thunderstorm? I suspect we'd find in intolerable at best and move on to an easier way of making a living.

Farmers must pack stubborn under their fingernails as they glean their fields of New England nuggets (rocks and stones); how else could they continue to stare down adversity each year? Farming is a hard way of life, tough vocation for a populace that seems to be content with letting the folks at the local monolithic chain decide how and what they eat.

We need our local farms to sustain our traditional existence and ensure our survival so that we can continue to enjoy the lifestyle and comforts that we've come to take for granted.

An apple orchard turned into a housing development will never again yield the succulence of a snappy crisp

macintosh, and a pasture paved over for a parking lot has seen the end of its days of providing fodder.

The significance of local farming spells the difference between stand-alone independence and captive dependence upon foreign suppliers of our essential food-stuff.

And if you don't believe that this can happen, look no further than your corner gas station for proof.

Look around and see the problems local farmers are having preserving a way of life that goes back into our formative years, and you'll understand why we need to address the problems facing the food producers of the 21st century.

Stand by the efforts to save local farms. Be active in voicing your support by buying fresh produce and products from these diehard independents.

These farmers steadfastly hold onto a way of life so necessary to all of us now and in the near future.

Reprinted from The Derry News,
August 18, 2000.



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The NAMSC-Research Fund is a non-profit, volunteer managed committee
of the North American Maple Syrup Council, Inc.

MAINE MAPLING

By Dawn Bolduc

The cool, rainy summer has apparently made people think more of good things to eat. The whole industry is working hard to reduce the large crop — prices have held well — and packers have maintained good accounts throughout the east coast and into the midwest.

Maine Maple Producers Assoc. has been active in several promotional affairs. First, La Kermesse, Franco-American fair, with Bob Moore's large sugarhouse on wheels (Thank you, Bob). This building created a venue that sold more product the first day, than all previous years sales collectively. JC Pare and his wife Sylvie, Golden Rd. Somerset County producer, traveled down from St. Zacherie, Canada to work along with Marc Bryant, Gorham; Eric Ellis, Maine Maple Products, Inc.; Al Bolduc, Sugarloaf Maple Equipment; and Bob Moore, Dover-Foxcroft serving super premium ice cream donated by the Oakhurst Dairy and TIRE (sugar-on-snow), a french tradition and candies from Bob Smith, Skowhegan and Hall Farms Maple Products, Dixfield kept the sugarhouse a lively attraction.

Maine Farm Days afforded educational exhibit space that was staffed by Jeremy Steeves, Strawberry Hill Farms and Al Bolduc, Sugarloaf Maple Equipment. Another educational exhibit space was made through the efforts of our state Maple Specialist, Kathy Hopkins at the Skowhegan State Fair. Jeremy Steeves and Al Bolduc put up a fine display for maple in Somerset County at the Somerset County Economic Development Corporation's

Legislative breakfast. All the business representatives and legislators received large maple leaf candies and bottles of maple syrup courtesy of Bob Smith and Maple Products, Inc. both Somerset County maple producers. Many thanks to the Madison American Legion for putting on a sumptuous breakfast.

Our newest undertaking is a large maple presence at THE BIG E, the Eastern States Exposition. We have worked closely with Jane Aiudi, state coordinator for the Department of Agriculture, assisted by Deanne Herman, director of Sales and Marketing for the Department of Agriculture. More on this next issue — it will be over by then and we'll certainly know more at that time than we do now.

MMPA is now reaching international position — by developing a website of several pages. It is professionally handled by Jon Laitin at Evergreen Communications in Waterville. We want to put our products in your hands. Maine has an escalating number of large producers ready to fill your needs in all grades, from barrels to retail packs. Until our www is available call the Maine editor.

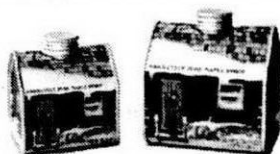
Kathy Hopkins, our Maine Maple Specialist, has planned maple field trips in southern and central Maine when the leaves are gone in early October. Information will be going out soon, or call the Maple Line at 1-800-287-1495.

Maine Maple Products, Inc., in Madison, provides a large amount of unseen effort and time to our organization. We are greatly appreciative of their sustaining interest. (You might consider: The rising tide lifts all boats.) But the fun is in the doing — get in the swim!

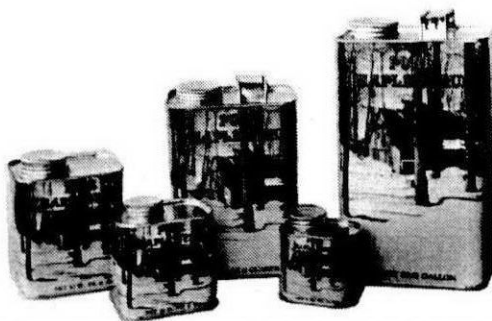
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NEWS FROM THE AMERICAN MAPLE MUSEUM

By Eleanor Allen

This has been a banner year for the American Maple Museum which has now been granted an absolute charter by the New York State Museum Chartering Program of the New York State Board of Regents. Until now, the Museum, founded by a group of dedicated maple syrup producers on a blustery evening in February of 1977, has been operating under a provisional charter, which was periodically extended.

In his six page recommendation for granting the Absolute Charter, David Palmquist, Head of the Museum Chartering Program, wrote that the:

American Maple Museum has achieved its central purpose of documenting the maple syrup industry. It has worked closely with industry groups, assembled a picture of maple sugar production and the uses of maple syrup. It has acquired a large and suitable facility, accessioned and cataloged all of its collection, and presented programs and services for the benefit of visitors and the larger community. Attendance is strong, volunteer interest is high, financial support is good and the organization's basic operations are well managed. The Museum has reached maturity as an organization.

The Museum thanks all the volunteers, syrup producers and others who have supported it both financially and with donations of artifacts, and especially our former President, Kermit Lyndaker, who undertook responsibility for all the paperwork necessary to obtain the Absolute Charter.

At the re-opening ceremonies in May, Gary Gaudette, Richard Haas, and Warren Wells were inducted into the Maple Museum Hall of Fame. The Museum lawn was crowded with demonstrations and displays by manufacturers of maple equipment. The pancake breakfast and chicken barbecue left people with full bellies and happy memories. Once again the Museum hosted the New York State Maple Queen contest, which this year was judged by Charity Folk of Simsbury Connecticut, and Barbara and Richard Kinnan of Middlebury Center, Pennsylvania. Laurie Jean Fanfarillo of Herkimer County was crowned New York State Maple Queen, and Beth Yancey of Lewis County was once again crowned New York State Maple Queen Alternate. Both young women have been busy promoting New York State maple syrup this summer.

Once again, the Pratt-Northam Foundation provided the Museum with summer interns. Beth McElhern ran the Museum while our Curator, Renee Moser was on maternity leave. Sarajoy Bushey has been continuing work on our oral history project, conducting interviews on tape with older maple producers, transcribing the interviews, and helping to organize them into a booklet which will be on display in the Museum.

The Museum has been given a display space at Maple 2000 in Burlington later

in October and we look forward to bringing a taste of the Museum to members of the NAMSC who live too far to visit us in person. Of course, a small display cannot possibly give more than a sampling of all that is available in the three-floor museum building where we have a whole room devoted to the history of maple syrup in North America. In other rooms a visitor to the Museum can see a model of an old time sugar shanty, a model of an old lumber camp, the Maple Hall of Fame, and other exhibits that are well worth visiting.

By the time you read this, the Museum will have formally closed for the winter. But, as usual it will open for groups and individuals if arrangements are made in advance. It will also be open to the public for a pancake breakfast in February. For further information, or to arrange a tour, do not hesitate to call 315-346-1107, or write to the Museum at P.O. Box 81, Croghan, New York 13327.



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NEWS FROM ONTARIO

The Ontario Maple Syrup Award was made at the annual banquet of OMSPA to Don and Jean Giffin of Blenheim, Ontario (Southwestern local). In making the presentation, President Ron Westlake referred to the Giffins' tireless work with the Simply Maple! cookbook, their World Championship at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in 1998, and other contributions to the industry. Jean has been Maple Superintendent at the Royal and Don has spent many hours setting up and working at the OMSPA demonstration area at the Royal. He chaired the Summer Tour committee when the tour was held in Ridgetown in 1993.

For their assistance, commitment and support to the industry, OMSPA sincerely supports the nomination of Don and Jean Giffin for this prestigious award.

Summer Tour '00

Lanark local hosted a very successful tour on July 20-23. The tour highlights were many with a variety of producers visited. The various tour hosts were Charles Temple, Vernon Wheeler, Ray Fortune, Don Dodds, Ray Thompson and George Deugo. Entertainment at the annual banquet was Gayle Gavin, Louis Shryer and friends. A birthday party held at Fulton's Pancake House on Saturday night featured several local musicians as well. The Maple Craft show on Sunday featured a good selection of maple crafts and baking. Attendees at that event also have the privilege of attending a Celtic festival which was being held in the park adjacent to the Maple Craft show. It was a full week-end of learning about maple and enjoying the hospitality of the members of Lanark and District.

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A SURVEY OF SUGAR MAPLE NUTRITION IN VERMONT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FERTILIZATION OF SUGAR MAPLE STANDS

By Timothy Wilmot

This study was partially funded by a grant from the North American Maple Syrup Council

Can fertilization of sugar maple stands lead to increased diameter growth, better crown conditions, and/or added sugar production? We have wrestled questions like these for over a decade at research sites in northwest Vermont. Recently we have begun to expand our understanding of maple nutrition by examining stands in a wider geographic area.

The effectiveness of fertilization depends in large part on soil nutrition. Where nutrients are limiting, and tree vigor is not otherwise affected by conditions such as poor drainage or shallow soils, careful fertilization has, in some cases, improved crown health and radial (diameter) growth. In the early 90's, we compared several sugarbushes in our area with contrasting health, and found that poor stands, those that showed significant crown dieback, had much lower soil and foliar calcium. Three years after addition of lime (about 1.5 tons/acre) and smaller amounts of potassium and magnesium to the deficient sugarbushes, mature trees in these stands had improved crown health and radial growth rates had doubled compared to untreated controls (Wilmot et

al., 1996). We have yet to demonstrate improved sugar production with fertilization, although some of our data suggested that sap volume was positively correlated with crown health (Wilmot et al. 1995). The influence of fertilization on the sugar production of mature trees is the subject of a current study at the Proctor Center.

We undertook the current survey to characterize soil conditions in Vermont maple stands, to determine to what extent calcium or other nutrients might be limiting. Sampling was carried out during the summers of 1998 and 1999. We collected soils, foliage, and wood cores from 29 stands, both sugarbushes and non-sugarbushes. Because these stands were monitored by the North American Maple Project (NAMP) we also obtained detailed information about the health of these stands over the past decade. At each site we took ten increment cores from trees <11" dbh, five composite foliar samples, each made by pooling leaves from several sun-exposed mid-canopy branches, and five soil samples from each of two depths. NAMP stands are not randomly located, therefore, although this survey covered most of the state, we were not attempting to generalize about the health of sugar maple across Vermont, but rather to characterize tree condition on these various soils.

Location of high calcium bedrock in Vermont (black), see figure 1. Vermont, like many states that lie within the range of sugar maple, is an area of diverse geologic resources. The Champlain Valley, Taconic Mountains, and parts of the Eastern

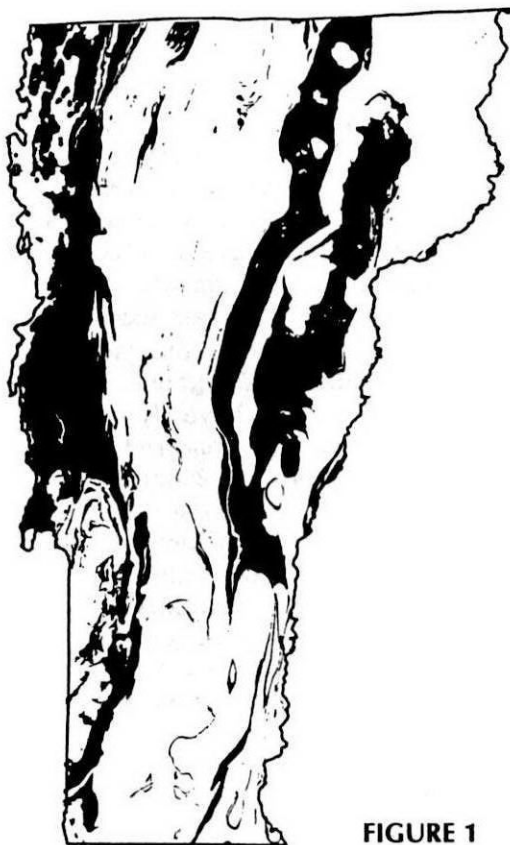


FIGURE 1

Piedmont are underlain by dolomite and limestone, which are high in calcium, while the main belt of the Green Mountains is underlain by schist that is low in calcium. Although soils do not have an exact correspondence to the bedrock over which they are formed, they have the same general characteristics as the bedrock. This is particularly true where soils are thin and outcrops are plentiful. Where glacial till is deep and the soil surface is far above bedrock there can be much local variability in soil nutrients.

Growth rates, height of mature trees, and crown health varied considerably according to location.

Growth rates were determined by analyzing cores over the past 25 years. Average diameter growth per tree was 17 cm²/year for all stands and ranged from a low of 6 cm²/year to over 35 cm²/year among the 29 stands. In most cases, growth rates of each individual stand relative to the others was consistent for the past 25 years; i.e.; stands were not changing from fast to slow growing as tree density increased over time, but some sites simply were much better than others for sugar maple growth. The huge differences in growth rate were often accompanied by large differences in levels of crown dieback and foliar density. Fast and slow-growing stands were not randomly located throughout the state, but tended to be grouped. Slow growing stands were often located in the heart of the Green Mountains, where bedrock is low in calcium. When we sampled foliar nutrients, we found a strong association between growth rate and calcium, and a somewhat lesser association between growth and nitrogen. Differences in other foliar nutrients, such as P, K, and micro-nutrients, were not associated with differences in tree growth or health.

In most stands there was little change in the average growth rate over the study period, although most NAMP stands have not been cut since the late 80's, or earlier, and some slowing of growth due to increased stand density should be expected. Pear Thrips, and to a lesser extent Forest Tent Caterpillar, defoliated trees and caused notable declines in tree growth during their infestations, but stands recovered from these outbreaks. Growing season rainfall var-

ied greatly from year to year, particularly in the 1990's, but most of these Vermont stands have not been significantly impacted by drought. NAMP surveys have indicated that there is little if any difference in crown health between sugarbushes and stands with untapped trees (Allen et al. 1992); we saw no significant difference between these two groups.

Differences in soil pH and soil calcium, as well as other soil nutrients, were not as well associated with tree condition as were foliar nutrients. Soil surface horizons averaged pH 4.75; at a depth of 6" they averaged pH 5.2. There was a striking relationship between soil calcium, particularly at the 6" depth, and the presence or absence of maple regeneration. Many stands had regeneration that was mostly beech and striped maple despite a canopy of sugar maple; soil calcium at these stands was always low. Where sugar maple regeneration was abundant, soil calcium in the deeper horizons was usually much higher.

Landowners often ask whether soil or foliar samples are more useful for determining possible deficiencies in stands of mature sugar maples. Soils are notoriously variable, and samples taken a few feet from each other may vary widely in nutrient content; for this reason many samples are needed to accurately portray stand nutrition. Paradoxically, foliar nutrient sampling can be an accurate way to characterize soil nutrition; although samples are more difficult to obtain, results are less variable and show nutrients obtained by the tree's wide rooting zone. Another substitute for soil sampling is observation of key indicator plants. Certain herbs and

ferns, such as maidenhair fern, wild ginger and leeks, Herb Robert, and trees such as basswood, hickory and white cedar are much more prevalent in areas with higher soil pH and soil calcium. As the graph below demonstrates, stands where these indicators are present often have ideal conditions for sugar maple growth.

Growth of trees differed according to plant indicators for the calcium content of the soil. The graph (Figure 2), shows average yearly wood growth between 1973 and 1997 for 3 groups of stands on 3 soil types. Instead of soil tests, here we used the presence or absence of key indicator plants, such as maidenhair fern, to reveal soil calcium levels. Note the sharp drop in the average growth rate at all sites in 1988. This was the year that Pear Thrips defoliated trees in much of the state.

Implications of this study: Because there is so much variation in the availability of soil nutrients in Vermont, and in other regions where sugar maple grows, it is not possible to make blanket recommendations about diagnosing and treating nutrient deficiencies. Calcium is a key nutrient in this region, although deficiencies of other nutrients are believed to be responsible for poor sugar maple vigor in other areas of North America. We have seen short term benefits from liming stands of mature trees growing on nutrient poor soils. Where calcium containing bedrock is present, liming of maple stands is not likely to be cost effective, because calcium, and probably other nutrients are not limiting. We have yet to determine the long-term effects of fertiliza-

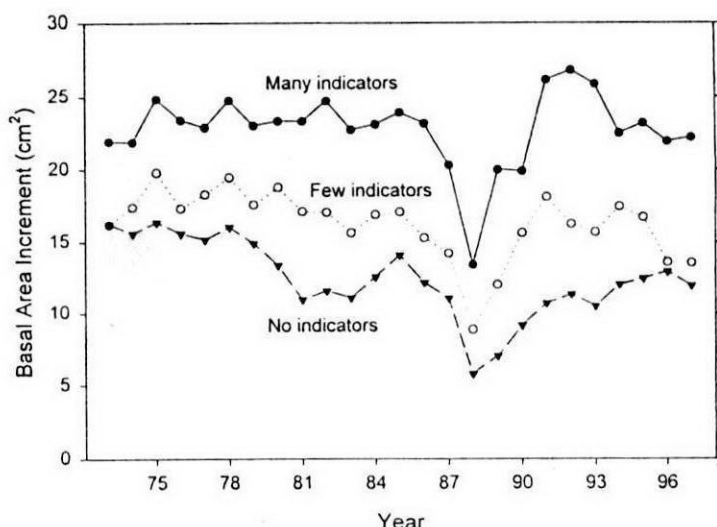


FIGURE 2

tion, such as the length of the period of improved growth, which is an important factor in a cost-benefit equation.

The association of poor or absent sugar maple regeneration with soils that are low in calcium suggests that these soils may have become nutrient depleted since the canopy was formed. It is not clear yet whether calcium additions to these soils can stimulate regeneration. It is notable that the level of calcium from deeper soil horizons was important to the amount of sugar maple regeneration. This may imply that for liming to be effective it needs to penetrate well below the soil surface, suggesting a heavy or repeated dose of finely ground limestone that can make its way through the soil before it is leached away.

The author is interested in hearing from people who have fertilized maple stands in the past. Please contact him at Proctor Maple Research Center, Box 233, Underhill Center,

VT 05490. Phone: 802-899-9926.
E-mail: trwilmot@zoo.uvm.edu.

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NEW YORK AND VERMONT TOURS ARE A HIT!

By Larry Myott

New York Maple Tour Very Successful

The annual New York maple tour was held in the eastern part of the state in July with more than 300 sugarmakers participating. Held as a joint venture in both Essex and Clinton counties, the scenery went from the high peaks of the Adirondacks at Lake Placid to the flat fields of the Champlain valley.

The planning committee headed by Earl Parker, President of the Northeastern New York Maple Producers Association was assisted by Lewis Staats, New York Extension Maple Specialist and Dr. Beth Spaugh, Clinton County Extension Agent with Cornell Cooperative Extension. The committee did an outstanding job of pulling together a very educational tour for the sugarmakers from ten different states and Canadian provinces in attendance.

While in the Lake Placid area of Essex County the tour highlight was a visit to Cornell's Uihlein Sugar Maple Field Station and several of the research projects at the facility. Visitors were presented a program on their sweet tree research by station director Lew Staats. Other programs presented were a demonstration plot on growing ginseng in the sugarbush, ice storm damage recovery, and a visit to their research sugarhouse.

Tony Corwin, also a committee member, was able to show off this

three year old state of the art maple production facility in Lake Placid. His efficient production unit consists of a 4' x 14' evaporator with steam-away and reverse osmosis. In 2000 he averaged 1/3 gallon per tap making 30 gallons an hour. His oil consumption is at 1/2 gallon of oil per gallon of syrup. A unique feature of his new sugarhouse is the sales room with its serve yourself honor system. Customers enter the salesroom, pick out their needs and leave the money in a basket.

At the nearby Paul Smith's College of Arts and Science visitors were able to see this college run program that has trained many of today's sugarmakers. They currently have 1,200 taps, an oil fired evaporator and reverse osmosis.

Rivermead Farm market is just outside Lake Placid, where all the tourists drive by. Their greenhouse was converted into a demonstration of using vacuum and dumping stations for bringing sap up hill to the sugarhouse, as well as a display of maple boiling. They market all their syrup retail.

Of course no visit to the Lake Placid area would be complete without a trip to the top of the Olympic ski jumps. We were able to tour the facility and enjoy the clear ski views for a hundred miles. The headquarters of the New York Tour was the Lake Placid Horse Show Grounds that have hosted several Olympic events. The trade show and meals were held in the Clubhouse.

At the evening banquet dignitaries from New York State government unveiled a new travel and tourism sign to direct tourists to maple sugar businesses in rural New York. This sign is available from the New York Highway department for an annual fee. It is patterned after the signs that were devel-

oped for the western New York wine industry. The New York Maple Sugarmakers Association should be very proud of this accomplishment in marketing New York syrup.

The Clinton County tour stops all centered around recovery of the maple trees from the tremendous ice storm damage of January 1998. The Parker Family Maple Farm of West Chazy was nearly destroyed by that storm and they were not able to sugar that season. The Parker sugarbush is making an amazing recovery, although it has a long way to go, and some of the trees will be lost. They have sugared on that location since 1889. Earl Parker and Dr. Betty Wong of the US Forest Service in Burlington, VT presented a program on the ice storm and the trees recovery.

Within sight of Lake Champlain the tour included a stop at the Homestead Maple of Chazy. The small (225 taps), was a very pleasing stop to visitors. Spotless and well organized, they market from their roadside sugarhouse and

enjoy lots of visitors. They experienced severe ice storm damage and have received assistance from the Farm Service Agency for cleanup.

In West Chazy, the tour stopped at Brow's Sugarhouse to visit their three year old sugarhouse and see another perspective of ice storm recovery in the sugarwoods. Nearby Sanger's Sugarhouse is a traditional sugarhouse, marketing value added products such as maple cream and granulated sugar. They host a pancake weekend each year and last year served nearly 1,800 guests.

Vermont Maplerama Hosted in Orleans County, Back to Back with New York Tour

In Vermont, just two days later, the Orleans County host committee kicked off the 34th annual Vermont Maplerama. This session also provides some very useful and practical maple education to beginners and experts alike. Francis Whitcomb chaired the



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hard working committee of 18 to provide a successful event for nearly 300 sugarmakers from 11 states and provinces.

The last time Vermont Maplerama was held in Orleans County was 1989, two of the stops were repeated on this tour. Dan and Cedar Backus in Westfield were able to host the tour again at their "Kingdom Mountain Maple" farm. This well managed business has 2,350 taps with pre-heater and filter press. They are located in one of the most scenic spots of Orleans County.

Jacques and Pauline Couture in Westfield have continued to expand and improve their maple business since the 1989 tour. They have added mail order and a very successful internet marketing system. The Couture family hosted the tour in their "Couture's Maple Shop" for instruction on candy making and coating maple candy for shelf life. At the sugarhouse we saw their totally stainless production facility, with steam-away, for boil-

ing the sap from their 4,000 taps. The Couture's have made a commitment to provide the best possible image of Vermont maple to visitors and customers. The sugarhouse is insulated and paneled on the inside, providing a warm and dry environment for the many hours of boiling at their 5' x 16' evaporator.

Shaye and Jennifer Collins in Newport Center are on a 7th generation farm and they were named the "Ray Foulds Outstanding Young Sugarmakers" for 2000 at the Maplerama banquet. Their maple business consists of a new state of the art sugarhouse for their 1,300 taps. They also proudly showed off their fish hatchery business.

The Bob Kelley family sugarhouse in Derby Line is unique, that they boil with propane gas, since it was built in 1972. This roadside sugarhouse is great for marketing their annual production of nearly 800 gallons.

Another tour stop in Derby was the "Derby Pond Maple Company" owned

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and operated by the Merle Wheeler family. This business has 2,200 taps, with a new evaporator and reverse osmosis. This beautiful facility has all the bells and whistles to make it a real joy to visit and learn from. At the Desmarais Family sugarhouse in Orleans, Rene and Kathy have a three year old sugarhouse that is very efficient and well managed for production of Vermont's famous product. Their new stainless equipment shines as they tell the story of their maple business development. "Black Sheep Sugarhouse" is high tech making an average of 2,000 gallons of syrup each year. They have a finishing evaporator added to their system, with reverse osmosis. All of their sap is trucked from several miles away.

At the other end of the spectrum was a fun and productive stop in Albany to visit Ma and Pa's Maples, owned and operated by Marcel and Pauline Locke, better known to most Vermont farmers for his Farm Bureau supply company (Safemark) business in Barton. Their sense of humor and commitment to people immediately takes over the visitors as they arrive at the sugarhouse. Their annual production is about 375 gallons.

Jack and Anne Lazor in Westfield were able to show off their organic dairy farm that does not make maple syrup, but does use more than 50 barrels of Grade B each year in the production of their Butterworks Farm maple yogurt products. They make 5,000 quarts of yogurt each week, using maple syrup as the sweetener.

Charles Waterhouse in Craftsbury built his new sugarhouse in 1979 and maintains the traditional equipment and look. However, the woods opera-

tion is not traditional, he uses wire on every vacuum line, including laterals. That system, in combination with his well managed vacuum system allows him to get a production of nearly 1/2 gallon per tap each year. Waterman is the inventor and manufacturer of the "sap puller" vacuum pump that is marketed by Leader Evaporator Company.

The Poirier Family, Denis and Paul and all the children and in-laws were very proud to show off their new sugarhouse in Barton. This 3650 tap business is a true family operation with a wood fired 5' x 16' Leader Evaporator.

Finale

It was an absolute pleasure for this writer to take in these two maple events in late July. Both tours were very well managed and provided excellent opportunities for sugarmaker advancement in the field, the best place to learn. Congratulations to all the committee members, you did a great job, and believe me, I know what it takes to do that job. I would highly recommend that all sugarmakers attend a maple tour to find out what is happening in the maple world, keep up technology and continue to make the world's best sweetener.

The 2001 Vermont Maplerama will be held in Rutland County the last weekend of July.

(This article was originally prepared for the September issue of "Farming" magazine by Larry Myott, the University of Vermont Extension Maple Specialist. Most sugarmakers are eligible for a free subscription, write to Farming at: P.O. Box 449, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819. Email to Farming at: Farming@together.net)

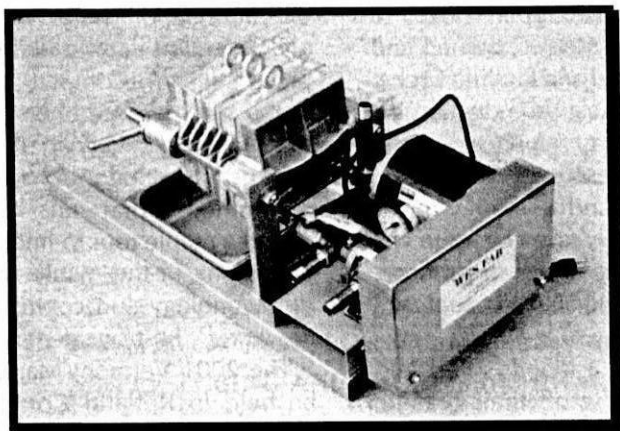
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Joan Lukes, Merrill, WI

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup maple syrup
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup bran flakes
- 1/3 cup raisins

TOPPING:

- 3 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon margarine, cold

Combine sour cream, maple syrup and eggs. Sift flour and baking soda. Add bran flakes, raisins and nuts. Stir in liquid ingredients. Spoon into greased muffin tins. Bake 400 degrees for 20 minutes.

MAPLE PUMPKIN BREAD

Ginnie Behm, Merrill, WI

- 4 cups all purpose flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon ground all spice
- 4 beaten eggs
- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- 2 cups canned pumpkin
- 1 cup maple syrup
- 2/3 cups cooking oil
- 1/2 cup chopped pecan

GLAZE:

- Combine 1/2 cup powder sugar
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- Add milk till drizzling consistency

Stir together dry ingredients, set aside.

Combine eggs, brown sugar, pumpkin, maple syrup and oil. Mix well. Add all at once to dry mixture. Stir just till moistened (should be lumpy). Fold in pecans. Pour batter into greased loaf pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 60 to 65 minutes or till a wooden toothpick comes out clean. Cool. Drizzle with glaze.

MAPLE OATMEAL SWIRL BREAD

Gretchen Grape, Holcombe, WI

- 1 package dry yeast
- 1 1/4 cup and 1 tablespoon very warm water. Dissolve both of these ingredients together.
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup quick cooking oatmeal
- 3 cups bread flour

Mix well in above order and knead. Let rise until double the size, punch down and divide into two loaves. Pat out like you would cinnamon rolls and spread with melted butter, sprinkle with maple granulated sugar and cinnamon. Roll back into a roll and put in a greased bread pan. Let rise until double. Bake at preheated 350 degrees oven for 40 minutes. Slice and spread with maple butter. I also roll my bread dough in granulated sugar before I let it rise. I then sprinkle top with granulated maple sugar before baking.

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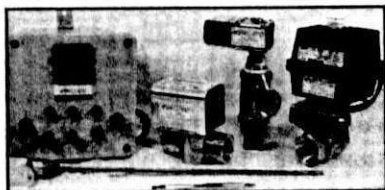
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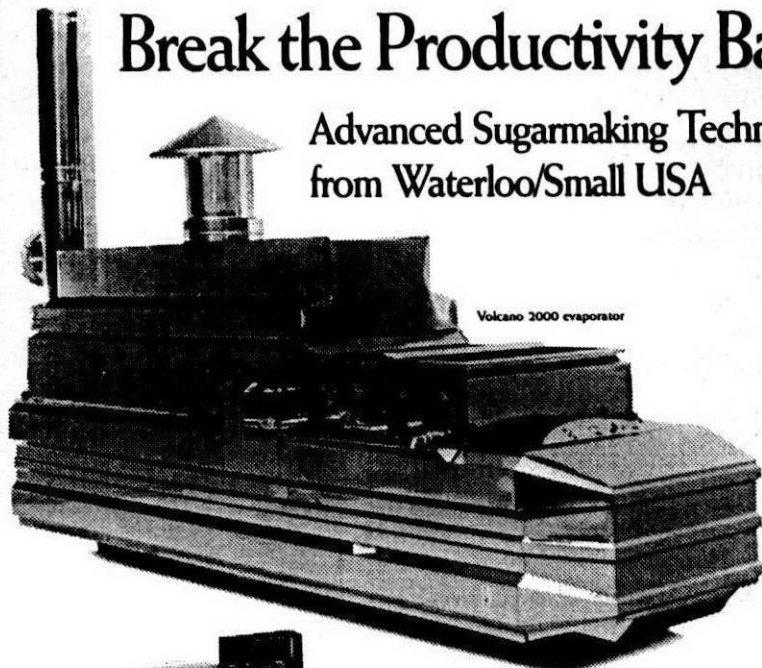
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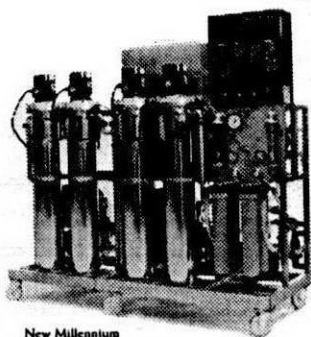
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