

Maple Syrup Digest



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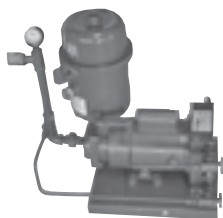
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GREETINGS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT



Fall is in the air with cool nights and warm days. Every once in awhile I see a bright red or yellow leaf and think it can't be fall already—I still haven't finished all my summer projects. I guess it means it is time to start the fall projects, such as cutting wood for next season, and not worry about the remaining summer projects.

Just sent in my registration for the meeting in Green Bay, WI and hope you have as well. I am looking forward to seeing old friends, making new friends and learning lots. I think my favorite part of these meetings is the chance to see how others do things in their sugar bush. Previous tours have given me several ideas to try and implement in my bush. The rest of the program looks just as interesting, especially since I haven't been to Green Bay since my older sister was attending UW-GB.

Syrup orders for the Christmas shopping season have started to arrive in the mail and by fax. Remember as you fill those containers, keep a good count and send in your penny per container to the Research Fund. Without your pennies, much of the current research related to maple would not happen.

Looking forward to seeing each of you in Green Bay

Beth

FROM THE EDITOR

We are back from our trip safe and sound. I would like to apologize for the goof-up in the June issue. We re-ran Larry Myott's IMSI article from the February issue. One of the pitfalls of the electronic age.

In our travels I was always on the lookout for pure Maple Syrup. I was able to find it every where I went, (even in Cordova, Alaska, where we took a ferry to get there as one cannot drive there.) Showing that the industry is doing a good job of marketing.

See you in Green Bay.

Roy

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IMSI NEWS

*By Larry Myott
Executive Secretary*

The June, 2006 issue of the Digest reprinted my column from the previous issue. Here are some of the items that should have been in the June issue, with updates/additions.

GETTING READY FOR 2007 ALREADY

The 2006 edition of the International Maple Syrup Grading School, sponsored by the International Maple Syrup Institute, has been announced for December 6 - 8, in Lancaster, NH. This school is for maple producers, bulk buyers, judges of maple products at fairs and other contests and sugar-makers too. This will be the third year that this school has been held in New Hampshire, it may the last time for several years, as the grading school will be taken to other areas of the maple world in future years.

No matter how long you have been grading syrup, or what system you use, this school will help you refine your skills. I had the pleasure of attending the 2005 school and highly recommend it to anyone interested. The school covers all aspects of grading and judging, from tasting to color and all the fine points.

The registration fee is \$125 US and includes lunches, reference materials and a take home grading kit. The school is sponsored by the IMSI and produced by the University of New Hampshire and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, and The Vermont Agency of Agriculture.

Contact Sumner Dole at UNH Extension for more information,

603.527.5475 or by email,
sumner.dole@unh.edu.

IMSI DUES ARE DUE

Members of the IMSI were sent dues notices for 2006 back in January. All dues are due not later than March 1. Members are asked to fill out the form that comes with the notice and mail it back with their check to Treasurer Gary Gaudette, 919 Bronson Road, St. Albans, VT 05478 USA.

Questions about the IMSI and its dues structure? Contact Executive Secretary Larry Myott, see below for contact information.

CANADIAN SYRUP MISSING

In Quebec, it is reported that more than 600,000 pounds of surplus maple syrup from the 1999 crop is missing from an RCPQ (Regroupement) warehouse. During an audit of the assets of the RCPQ, auditing firm Price-Waterhouse-Coopers discovered that approximately 1000 drums are missing from one of the warehouses. Provincial police are investigating. Charles Felix Ross of the Federation of Quebec Agricultural Producers said that the missing syrup is valued at about CN1.3 million dollars. The RCPQ owns about 3.98 million pounds of surplus maple syrup, Ross said the remainder of the RCPQ syrup has been moved to more secure warehouses owned and operated by the Federation.

(For information on the IMSI, call or write Larry Myott, IMSI Executive Secretary, 5014 Route Seven, Ferrisburgh, VT 05456. Email: Larry.Myott@uvm.edu, visit the IMSI at: www.internationalmaplesyrupinstitute.com

ROBERT COOMBS, JR. INDUCTED

By Larry Myott

Robert G. Coombs, Jr. of Jacksonville, VT was inducted into the Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame on August 30, during the annual Champlain Valley Fair. Coombs was one of five Vermont agriculturalists so honored for 2006. The Hall of Fame was founded four years ago. More than 200 attended the event, including Governor Jim Douglas who is shown here presenting the special award signifying the honor. Champlain Valley Exposition General Manager David Grimm read a brief biography of Bob Coombs before the official presentation. Grimm cited his

outstanding work in the world of maple, not only in Vermont, but throughout the world of maple. He is currently known for his outstanding collections of maple antiques and his willingness to share any and all information of the maple business. His efforts in the world of maple began in 1946 when he joined the family business, Coombs Maple Products. He retired in 1991 but continues to be seen at all maple events, always willing to share his knowledge and skills. Bob Coombs has an outstanding record of public service in his community, his state, his nation, and internationally as well. He was inducted in the International Maple Hall of Fame in 1989 and received the Eastern States Agricultural Adventurers Award in 2006. (Larry Myott Photo)



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NEWS FROM NOVA SCOTIA

By Brian Allaway

As in most parts of the maple world the production of syrup in Nova Scotia this year was only marginal. Some producers reported that they had a better year than 2005 however that year was one of the poorest on record. Vacuum pumps saved the day for many producers. The markets for the home grown product remain strong and there is little syrup remaining in storage.

The Maple Producers Association of Nova Scotia has been very active within the last few years. It has hired a part time executive director, introduced a newsletter, (e-mail brian-william@acadianmaple.com, if you would like to receive a copy), developed a short and long term plan, has introduced educational sessions and workshops to its meetings and tried to inform its members of current and upcoming regulation changes that will affect the maple industry. On last years fall tour Glen Goodrich spoke to the membership on tubing installation. This year's fall tour will include visits to sugar camps as well as a session on the new regulations covering Nutritional Fact Tables.

Many of the readership will be familiar with the names, Avar and Jean Bentley. A short time ago Avar and Jean's maple sugar camp burnt to the ground. Few details are known at this time but the smoldering remains were discovered shortly after a night of intense lightening storms. Although this is a serious blow we are sure that Avar and Jean will recover from this tragedy.

A strong demand for our local product, a large number of untapped trees and a number of entrepreneurial souls will keep the maple industry flourishing here in Nova Scotia.

JULY, 26, 27, 28, 2007

Vermont Maple Technology Expo, a new maple event will take place at the Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Jct., Vermont. Produced by the Chittenden County Maple Sugar Maker's Association, this first time event will be a two plus day event to provide the best of maple technology to producers, packers, and equipment people. In the planning stages now, the event promises to be one of the largest maple education events of the year. Thursday, July 26 will be a large trade show, and some educational activities. Friday, July 27 will be a full day of seminars, there will be as many as 20 or more concurrent programs that are being developed. Saturday, July 28 will bring several, in the field, sessions. These will take place on site at various locations around the county, mostly in the woods.

The Thursday and Friday sessions will be hosted at the fairgrounds in their new air conditioned conference facilities. Watch for details in all the maple publications.

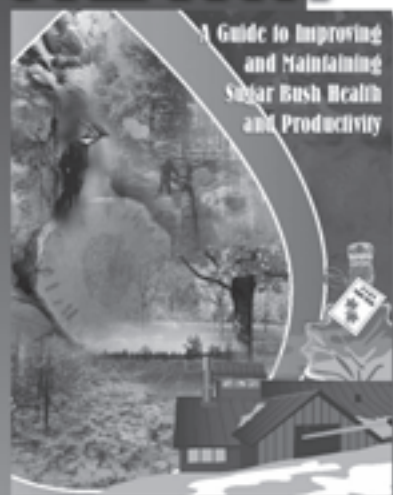
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NEW...

Two new maple publications have been developed to bring maple producers the latest information on Sugar Bush Management and modern sap collection systems. These publications will also be a valuable reference for forestry professionals and teachers responsible for delivering educational programs. These publications were developed under the leadership of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs with support provided by the Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association and other Partners.



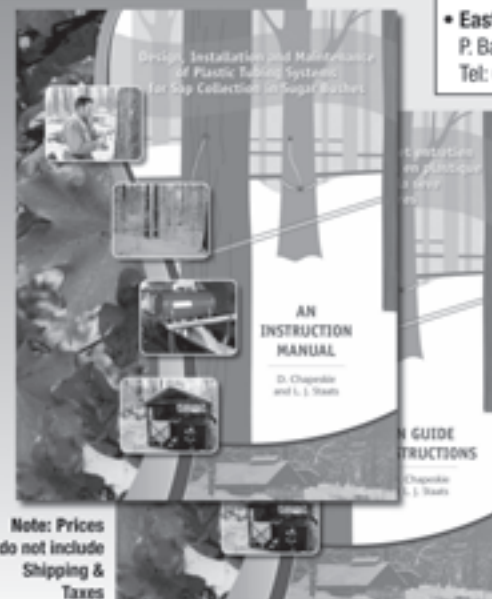
A Guide to Improving and Maintaining Sugar Bush Health and Productivity

This beautiful, full colour publication provides guidelines which will help maple producers improve and maintain the health and productivity of their sugar bushes. It includes information on the characteristics of productive maple sites and stands, sugar bush and maple orchard management techniques and problems which can affect the sugar bush. This publication replaces the Ontario publication *Sugar Bush Management for Maple Producers* which was published by Clarence Coons in 1975.

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Design, Installation and Maintenance of Plastic Tubing Systems for Sap Collection in Sugar Bushes

This definitive manual includes comprehensive information on the design, installation and maintenance of modern sap collection systems. It also includes operational profiles for several commercial maple operations. Dave Chapeskie, Agroforestry Specialist, OMAFRA and Lew Staats, former Maple Researcher and Extension Specialist, New York State, co-authored this publication.

Available in English and French. \$15.00

Net proceeds from sales will be used to support Maple Research and/or Maple Information Packaging and Transfer Initiatives

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12TH ANNUAL NEW YORK STATE MAPLE PRODUCERS WINTER CONFERENCE PLANS IN PROGRESS!

JANUARY 5TH AND 6TH, 2007

A grower-focused 2007 NYS Maple Conference will provide practical and hands-on information for maple producers to build into existing and expanding operations.

Plans are underway for the 2007 New York State Maple Producers Winter Conference. The Maple Conference will be held in the same great location, the Vernon-Verona-Sherrill High School in Verona, New York on Friday evening January 5th and all day Saturday, January 6th. This recently renovated central location provides plenty of meeting space as well as room for a large trade show with over 25 exhibitors displaying plenty of specialized equipment for meeting maple producer needs. Session topics include the latest in research and grower experiences regarding maple production, promotion, forest management and the making and marketing of a variety of maple products. This day-and-a-half event has something for every level of maple producer. A maple conference you will not want to miss.

The conference kicks off Friday evening with a featured speaker and industry trade show highlighting maple equipment, manufacturers, and vendors scheduled from 6:00 PM until 9:00 PM. More than 25 exhibitors are anticipated to display a complete

line of maple equipment including evaporators, vacuum pumps, tubing supplies, and value-added processing equipment and supplies.

Saturday's program features 40 of the industry's leading maple experts from throughout North America and Canada presenting some 45 different workshops. These focus on several major areas of emphasis: beginning sugarmakers, new and advanced technologies, marketing, promotion, value-added products, maple tapping and tubing, forest management and a special emphasis again this year on controlling the forest tent caterpillar and other forest pests. During each of five time slots, there will be ten individual workshops presented concurrently throughout the day.

The conference is open to the general public, as well as maple producers, and is geared toward all levels of sugar makers. Saturday's trade show opens at 8:00 AM with workshops starting at 9:00AM. Held at the Vernon-Verona-Sherrill (V.V.S.) High School, Verona, New York, the conference is sponsored by the V.V.S. FFA in conjunction with the New York State Maple Producers Association and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

The V.V.S. High School is located between Utica and Syracuse, New York on State Route 31 just two minutes from NYS Thruway Exit 33. Overnight accommodations are within five minutes of conference site. More information on conference topics and presenters, contact V.V.S. FFA advisor Keith Schiebel at (315) 829-2520 ext. 262, email at kschiebel@vvs-csd-high.moric.org, or visit the school's website at: www.vvscentralschools.org.

SHOULD LATERAL LINES BE VENTED?

B. Stowe, T.D. Perkins, and T.R. Wilmot
The University of Vermont
Proctor Maple Research Center
Underhill Ctr., VT 05490

Maple producers with gravity tubing installations are sometimes concerned that their 5/16" lateral lines are full of sap that doesn't appear to be moving, or appears to be moving very slowly. This phenomenon is often observed in areas without appreciable slope, but can also be found on installations on sloping ground. When a spout is pulled out of a tree near the end of such a line, the sap in the lateral line suddenly begins to rapidly flow towards the mainline as though it were locked up and then suddenly released. This appears at first glance to be a strong argument for venting sap lines on gravity tubing systems. While early on in maple tubing research and application, the use of venting was sometimes thought to be advantageous, a substantial amount of prior research has demonstrated that closed systems almost always yield more sap (Blum 1967, 1968, Morrow 1972), with the consequence that the long-standing recommendation is to NOT vent lateral lines. A great deal has changed since the 1960s and 1970s in terms of maple production and recommended practices, especially given the introduction of the new polyethylene tubing formulations and new types of spouts. Consequently, we are occasionally asked whether lateral lines in gravity tubing installations should be vented. As a result of these questions, we compared sap yield from standard non vented (closed) 5/16" lateral lines alongside a vented 5/16" installation under gravity conditions.

Two treatments were installed in the sugarbush at The University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center in Underhill Center, Vermont, in the spring of 1999. The trees used in this study were of similar diameter and the site was relatively homogenous. All treatments utilized 5/16" rigid polyethylene line (Leader 30P) with 12 drop lines of equal length. The first treatment was a standard, non-vented (closed) tubing installation. The second installation was identical except for the addition of a vent tube extending up from the last spout at the upper end of the 5/16" line. All spouts used in this study standard non-vented lines produced 47.0% and 7.8% more sap respectively than did vented lines (Figure 1). Over the two seasons, un-vented lines produced an average of 27.4% more sap than vented lines. While it is possible that in some years the difference in yield between an unvented system and a vented system might be due to taphole drying at the end of the season, we did not observe this, as all sets of tapholes were still running (although slowly) until the seasons ended due to buddy sap. In our experiments, there was a slight difference in sap volume production on each collection day (Figure 2), indicating that the important factor (for at least the two seasons during which the study occurred) was a difference between the two treatments which occurred on a daily basis. This difference was most likely the result of vacuum created in the closed system.

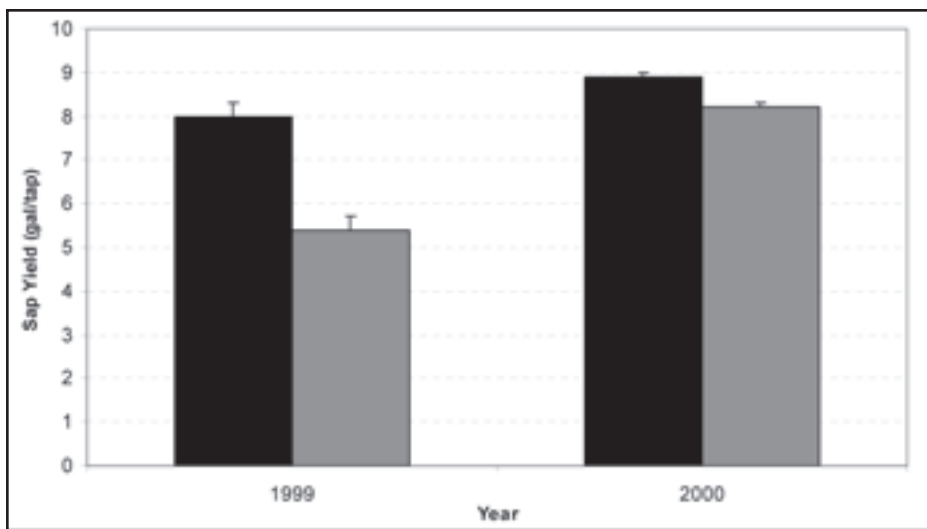


Figure 1. Total seasonal sap yield (average gallons of sap produced per tap) from closed/unvented (black bars) and vented/open (gray bars) lateral tubing systems during the 1999 and 2000 sugaring seasons in Underhill Ctr., Vermont.

When sap is flowing, the weight of the sap in the lateral line creates a suction (vacuum) on the tapholes in that line. This vacuum can be considerable when flow is rapid. For example, 12 feet of sap in the line can create a suction up to 10.5" of Hg. According to Morrow (1972) sap production in a closed system can occasionally be twice that of vented system.

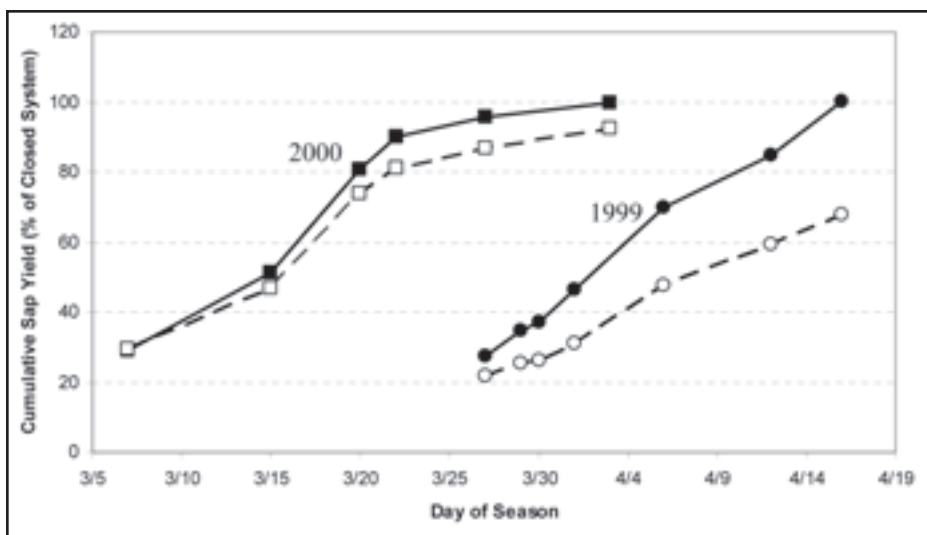


Figure 2. Cumulative sap yield (% of control "closed" system) for the 1999 and 2000 sugaring seasons in Underhill Ctr., Vermont. Solid (filled) symbols represent closed systems. Open symbols represent vented systems.

Venting of tubing systems was originally devised as a way to overcome air locks created when lateral lines were laid on the ground. Because these ground lines invariably had places where the sap needed to run uphill for a short distance, venting kept the sap from stalling on these humps. Modern tubing practice (since the early 1960's) dictates that lateral lines should be tight, straight, and consistently downhill (and suspended in the air, not laid on the ground). This is especially important in gravity systems where vacuum cannot overcome an occasional uphill grade. If the whole system can drain itself, then it is pitched correctly. While sugarmakers may be concerned about the seeming visual lack of movement of sap through a non-vented system, sap is in fact moving through the lines, although it is not readily apparent.

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NYFVI PROJECT SWEETENS PRODUCTS, MARKETS FOR NEW YORK'S MAPLE PRODUCERS

By Kara Lynn Dunn

Funding from the New York Farm Viability Institute (NYFVI) plus the agricultural and marketing expertise made available through the Institute's NY Ag Innovation Center will be making New York State Maple Producers Association President Dwayne Hill's dream come true.

"A significant amount of New York syrup leaves the state in bulk barrels. I would like to see that syrup made into higher value products that can be sold right here in New York," Hill says, noting that millions of New Yorkers living in urban and suburban areas do not have access to syrup made and marketed mainly in New York's rural areas.

"I would like to see a series of activities leading up to the goal of having a group of maple producers working together to supply a large grocery chain with a line of high quality value-added maple products - maple cream, sugar, candy, suckers, etc. No one producer is large enough to do this alone. But first, we need value-added workshops coupled with product research and a handbook outlining better quality standards for our producers."

Cornell University Maple Specialist Steve Childs, Cornell Maple Program Director Brian Chabot, and Peter Smallidge, director of Arnot Research

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Forest, will team with Michael Farrell, director of the Uihlein Maple Research Station at Lake Placid; Olga Padilla-Zakour, director of the Food Venture Center at the New York State Agricultural Research Station at Geneva; Steve Richards, director of NY FarmNet/NYFarmLink; and Brian Henehan and Judith Barry of the Cornell University Business Structure Assistance Program, and at least 11 representatives of the New York State Maple Producers statewide for this project.

The team is 1. Conducting research to determine the most marketable value-added maple products, 2. Will evaluate tools that producers can use for quality testing of their products, and 3. Will draft, test, and publish Maple Value-Added Product Guidelines. Those efforts together add up to profits for the maple producers who implement the new resources.

"Selling syrup in retail packaging improves producer income by forty to one-hundred percent," Childs says. "Converting syrup to confections can improve income four to five-fold."

To meet producers' need for hands-on training, the NYFVI project will develop a Maple Confections and Value-Added Workshop to be held at seven sites across the state starting in September 2006. The workshops will provide producers with the opportunity to make value-added products and to test their products against a quality standard.

"Through the workshops, producers will learn about new products and techniques; and how to improve product uniformity and quality and evaluate the economics of making,

pricing and selling their products," Chabot says.

Selected producers will conduct production and marketing costs evaluations to assist the development of pricing and profit training for other producers to be offered in a second round of workshops in 2007. At the same time, five Cornell Cooperative Extension agents will be training to better assist maple producers with value-added product development.

A longer-range project goal is to develop a cooperative marketing group of maple producers to sell value-added products to urban and suburban retailers.

"New Yorkers consume significantly more maple products than are produced within the state. New York annually sells forty percent of its maple crop bulk in barrels, much of it going out of state. We have significant opportunities to improve producer income through value-added products and improved marketing," Smallidge says.

"We believe producers can increase their incomes by ten to thirty percent in two to three years' time. The funding of this project by the New York Farm Viability Institute and the enthusiasm of New York's maple producers put that goal easily within reach," Smallidge adds.

The New York Farm Viability Institute, Inc. is a farmer-led, non-profit organization connecting agricultural and green industry producers, farm organizations, educators and researchers statewide. Through its NY Ag Innovation Center, the Institute makes available to farmers and green producers a diverse network of farm advisors to increase the

sales of NY agricultural products and the profitability of the businesses that produce them. The Institute's projects reduce the barriers and maximize the opportunities for growing NY's agricultural and green sectors with direct, measurable benefits at the producer-level.

For more information on the Maple Confections and Value-Added Workshops series, contact New York Farm Viability Institute, Inc., 159 Dwight Park Circle, Suite 104, Syracuse, NY 13209, 315-453-3823, www.nyfarmviability.org.

2004 New York Maple Survey Facts

In 2004, The Cornell Maple Program Advisory Committee rated developing value-added products and developing new marketing channels as two of its highest priorities. A 2004 survey of 267 New York maple producers indicated:

- ... 30 percent made the most common value-added maple products: maple cream and molded maple sugar

- ... 14 percent were making and marketing maple sugar

- ... less than 10 percent were making maple coatings, suckers or other confections

- ... 57% of Maple Weekend participants promoted the fact that maple value-added products would be available at their sugarhouses that weekend

- ... 30 percent sell to grocery or specialty stores

- ... 22 percent sell at trade shows, farmers markets and fairs

- ... only 8.8 percent of their gross maple income comes from value-added products

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GBM is now owned and operated by Henry's youngest son, Corey Grape. Corey has grown up with the maple syrup industry and has worked with his father in the shop throughout his youth. Corey has also shared some ideas and has helped his father develop new equipment throughout GBM's continued growth. Corey maintains the philosophy that his father, Henry set forth for

GBM to make quality equipment at an affordable cost for the small producers or hobbyists. Maple syrup is an important part of the Grape family and has been for over a century, so the Grape family knows from experience the cost and dedication that it takes to make syrup.

GBM is continually looking to grow in the maple syrup equipment industry and would like to put its products in the hands of many hobbyists and small producers. GBM creates affordable equipment in which you could start that hobby or continue your syrup business at a reasonable cost. It is also a goal to get young people into the syrup making industry so that this long tradition can continue. You can look for our advertisement in this issue of the Maple Digest or look for us online at www.gbmlc.com. If you would like to see our products in person and talk with Corey about our company, GBM will be at the National Convention in Green Bay, Wisconsin at the Regency Suites Hotel and KI Convention Center this October 19 through the 21st.

The Grape family would like to extend a thank you to all GBM's dealers and customers and also would like to welcome any new dealers or customers in the future.



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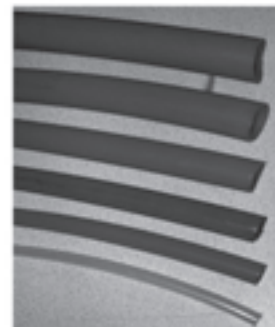


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MAPLE RESEARCH

needs everyone's support!

This year the NAMSC Research Fund again received project funding requests in excess of the funds available to distribute. The research projects address common issues that affect all of us, regardless of size, and thus we all benefit.

The NAMSC Research Fund depends solely on contributions to fund maple research – most of it coming from the "penny per container filled" program. "Thank you" to those who already participate in this program, or who contribute directly. To those who are not current contributors, it's time to join in and support these research projects.

Unless contributions to the Fund increase, we will not be able to support some important research projects. The research results are available to all members, so doesn't it seem fair that we all help to fund the research projects?

NOTE: The Committee wants to thank Richard Norman for his years of service as Chairman, as we welcome his successor, Jeremy Steeves.

For more information regarding the Research Fund contact:

Jeremy Steeves, Chairman, PO Box 471, Skowhegan, ME 04976
Phone 207-634-3521, Email: jsteeves@puremaple.com

Kay Carroll, Treasurer, 79 East Chestnut Hill Road, Litchfield, CT 06759
Phone 860 567-3890, Email: kaycarroll@aol.com

The NAMSC-Research Fund is a non-profit, volunteer managed committee of the North American Maple Syrup Council, Inc. (10-016)

NEWS FROM MAINE

By Alfred Bolduc

Greetings from the State of Maine. Production this year was up and down: spotty in the southern part of the state, but good north of Route 2 into Aroostook County. The number of freezing and thawing runs were well above average. Somerset County had an excellent season! So good, several producers purchased portable swimming pools to accommodate the overflow. The yield was tremendous. It didn't have a high sugar content so the R.O.'s had to work around the clock day after day to keep up. The result was a very sweet high quality syrup. Producers were pleased; buyers were pleased. The demand was high and, as of this writing, it is sold out.

Many Somerset bushes are changing: sold to new producers, next generation taking over, expanding onto new ridges, revamping equipment. A major development is the acquisition of the famous Patti Page Sugar Bush at Norris Brook (just off the Golden Road across from Dole Pond Sugar Camps owned by the Pare family) by Strawberry Fields Maple of Skowhegan. Welcome Jack and Jeremy Steeves to the north country where the trees grow straight and tall and the maple women are all good looking.

Homeland security issues are still a major thorn in our collective sides. The border policies are ever-changing and require diligent interpretation and attention. Working with US immigration officials necessitates GREAT PATIENCE. Another issue is

the \$.247 per gallon federal tax on fuel oil for evaporators. (Rationale: the boiling process is considered "manufacturing" as opposed to "production". Damn narrow view, in my opinion.) This is still in the discussion stage.

On September 9, 2006 when the Maine Somerset County Sugar-makers Association holds its annual meeting in Jackman, Rep. Michael Michaud and/or his personal representative Tim Trafford will speak on the issue. I'll have more to tell you next time.

On Maine Maple Sunday last May, my wife and I travelled up to Aroostook County to visit the Brennan family in Smyrna Mills. Kristi and Keven had just finished a huge new sugar house and a major renovation of the sugar bush main lines - several thousand additional taps with more to be installed for the 2007 season. Along with the many maple products, they have a thriving honey business. We then drove north to visit the Bradbury family sugar bush and other producers which made for a long day.

Maine Maple Producers are feverishly building a new sugar house on the Franklin County Fair grounds in Farmington. The word last week was that the rafters are going up and they will be ready for the Fair on the third week in September.

Southern Maine producers are rebuilding and moving their sugar house on the Cumberland County Fair Grounds to make it more business friendly and convenient. It, too, will be ready for the fall fair.

Work for the International Meeting in 2009 which will be held in Maine is well under way.



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NEW YORK CALENDAR OF UPCOMING SCHOOLS AND WORKSHOPS

October 6-7 — Making Quality Maple Confections and Value Added Workshop South Central NY at the Arnot Forest,

Friday: 6:30 p.m. -9:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Location: Arnot Forest, 611 County Route 13, Van Etten, NY 14889

This workshop is part of the Quality Improvement and Market Expansion for New York Maple Value Added Products Project sponsored by the New York State Farm Viability Institute and Cornell University Maple Program. The workshop will feature training and hands-on experience in making maple confections and is the first in a series of two confections workshops for the participants. Class size is limited and participation will be based on first come, first served. This workshop will be suitable for very experienced as well as novice confection makers. Each participating maple farm will receive a New York State Maple Confections notebook, appropriate tools for measuring the quality of the maple syrup to be made into confections, as well as tools to measure the important characteristics of finished confections. These tools alone are valued well above the registration fee. Each participant will need to bring one quart of syrup to be used in the program. **Registration Fee:** \$50 per Farm/Business includes syrup testing tools, materials, lunch, and confections notebook,

a second attendee from a registered farm may attend for a \$10 registration fee.

Contact: Jim Ochterski, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County, 208 Broadway, Montour Falls, NY 14865, (607) 535-7161.

October 27-28 — Making Quality Maple Confections and Value Added Workshop, Western NY,

Friday: 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Location: Wyomoco 4-H Camp, 2780 Buffalo Road in Varysburg, New York 14167.

This workshop is part of the Quality Improvement and Market Expansion for New York Maple Value Added Products Project sponsored by the New York State Farm Viability Institute and Cornell University Maple Program. The workshop will feature training and hands-on experience in making maple confections and is the first in a series of two confections workshops for the participants. Class size is limited and participation will be based on first come, first served. This workshop will be suitable for very experienced as well as novice confection makers. Each participating maple farm will receive a New York State Maple Confections notebook, appropriate tools for measuring the quality of the maple syrup to be made into confections, as well as tools to measure the important characteristics of finished confections. These tools alone are valued well above the registration fee. Each participant will need to bring one quart of syrup to be used in the program. **Registration Fee:** \$75 per Farm/Business includes syrup testing tools, materi-

als, lunch, and confections notebook, a second attendee from a registered farm may attend for a \$10 registration fee.

Contact: Lutie Batt, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County, 401 North Main Street, Warsaw NY 14569, Phone: 585-786-2251.

October 12 — Maple Grading Workshop, Delaware County NY. 6:30 to 9 PM. **For information contact:** Steve Childs, 110 Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853, Phone: 607-255-165.

November 3-4 — Making Quality Maple Confections and Value Added Workshop, Catskills Area, Shaver-Hill Farm. **Contact:** Stephen Childs, 110 Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853, Phone: 607-255-1658.

November 17-18 — Making Quality Maple Confections and Value Added Workshop, Hosted by Lewis County CCE. **Contact:** Michele Ledoux, Cornell Cooperative Extension Lewis County, 5274 Outer Stowe Street, P.O. Box 72, Lowville, New York 13367, Phone: 315-376-5270.

January 5-6, 2007 — 2007 New York State Maple Conference, Verona NY **Contact:** Keith Schiebel KSCHIEBEL@vvs-csd-high.moric.org

January 13 — Lewis County Maple School, **Contact:** Michele Ledoux, Cornell Cooperative Extension Lewis County, 5274 Outer Stowe Street, P.O. Box 72, Lowville,

New York 13367, Phone: 315-376-5270.

January 20 — Western NY Maple School, Letchworth Central School, **Contact:** Lutie Batt, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County, 401 North Main Street, Warsaw NY 14569, Phone: 585-786-2251.

January 27 — St. Lawrence Maple Expo, Potsdam Central School, **Contact:** Steve VanderMark, 1894 State Highway 68, Canton, NY 13617-1477, sfv1@cornell.edu, Phone: 315-379-9192.

February 3 — Sullivan County Beginner Maple School, **Contact:** Peter Carey (845) 292-6180 x111.

February 10 — Warren-Washington County Maple School, **Contact:** Laurel R. Gailor, Natural Resource Educator, lrg6@cornell.edu, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Warren County, 377 Schroom River Road, Warrensburg, NY 12885, Phone: 518-623-3291, 518-668-4881.

February 17 — Schoharie County Maple School, **Contact:** JJ Schell, jjs69@cornell.edu, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County, 173 South Grand Street, Cobleskill NY 12839, Phone: 518-234-4303.

March 3 — Beginner Maple School at Hamley's Maple **Contact:** Jim Ochterski, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County, 208 Broadway, Montour Falls, NY 14865, (607) 535-7161.



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DOES SAP FLOW BETTER DURING HOLY WEEK?

by

Stephen G. Saupe, PhD

Biology Department, College of St. Benedict/St. John's University
Collegeville, MN 56321

ssaupe@csbsju.edu; 320-3363-2782

Introduction — The Catholic, Benedictine monks of St. John's Abbey and University (Collegeville, MN) have been making maple syrup for more than 60 years. Approximately every other year since 1942 the Benedictines and their friends have installed an average of 1400 taps, collected about 10,000 gallons of sap and cooked it down to make an average of 257 gallons of pure maple syrup. Maple-syruping has been an important part of the Benedictine tradition at St. John's that involves community, worship, and work. Each season, as many as 40 members of the monastic community gather to participate in this springtime ritual.

In recent years, lay members of the St. John's community have been recruited to serve as syrup-makers. In 2000 I was introduced to syrup-making "St John's Style." During this season I served as an apprentice and am now one



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of the chief sugar "bosses." Since becoming involved with sugaring at St. John's, I have heard on several occasions that the sap flows best during Holy Week. This idea may have originated as early as May 1943. At the end of only the second season of syrup-making, an anonymous entry in the St. John's Scriptorium, an internal publication written during the 1940's through 1960's by monks training to be priests, stated that "On the better days, during Holy Week, over twenty-five gallons of maple syrup were finished."

Holy Week, which runs from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, is one of the most important periods in the Christian calendar. Considering the religious background of the St. John's community, the notion that sap flows best during Holy Week is certainly appealing. It makes sense to think that a community that has dedicated its life to God might receive a little divine help with syruping. But, do the data support this idea? In this article I test the hypothesis that sap flows best during Holy Week.

Study Site —

St. John's Abbey and University are located in Collegeville, Minnesota (Stearns County). We are approximately 80 miles northwest of Minneapolis/St. Paul and slightly south of the geographic heart of Minnesota. On average, our sap collection season runs from 19 March to 11 April and lasts 22 days. The earliest that we've ever collected sap is 26 February and the latest is 22 April.

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Methods — Since syruping began at St. John's, the monks and their helpers meticulously recorded every date on which sap was collected and the amount of sap that was gathered. I obtained 16 seasons of sap collection data from 1972 to 2005. Unfortunately the St. John's records prior to 1972 were destroyed in a suspicious fire that burned down the original sugar house in 1970. It is possible that there may have been sap flow before the date recorded but it was not significant enough to collect. Similarly, some sap flow may have occurred after the date listed but the syrup-makers had judged the bulk of the flow had ended for that season and were no longer collecting sap. Using these data I calculated for Holy Week and for the remainder of the maple season the average sap flow (gallons per day) and the percentage of days on which sap was collected. The dates of Holy Week were obtained from the web sites of the US Naval Observatory (2005) or the Astronomical Society of South Australia (2005). The data were statistically analyzed with a Student's t-test.

Results— Ecclesiastical rules that date back to about 325 AD set Easter as the first Sunday after the first full moon that falls on or after the vernal equinox (US Naval Observatory, 2004). As a result, the date for Easter varies but can never occur before March 22 or after April 25. Depending on the year, Holy Week may or may not occur during the prime time for making syrup. In half (50%) of the syruping seasons analyzed in this study, Holy Week occurred completely within the sap flow season (Table 1). In 3 of 16 seasons (1992, 2000, 2003) Holy Week didn't begin until after the syruping season had ended. In 5 seasons, Holy Week partially overlapped the sap flow season. In these cases Holy Week

Table 1. Dates of Holy Week and the sap flow season at St. John's, Collegeville, Stearns County, Minnesota.

Year	Holy Week (Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday)	Sap Flow Dates (first - last day of collecting)
1972	26 Mar -2 Apr	23 Mar - 20 Apr
1974	7 Apr - 14 Apr	3 Apr - 19 Apr
1978	19 Mar - 26 Mar	22 Mar - 15 Apr
1982	4 Apr - 11 Apr	2 Apr - 22 Apr
1985	31 Mar - 7 Apr 16	Mar - 11 Apr
1988	27 Mar - 3 Apr 23	Mar - 6 Apr
1990	8 Apr - 15 Apr 22	Mar - 10 Apr
1992	12 Apr - 19 Apr 19	Mar - 4 Apr
1994	27 Mar - 3 Apr 16	Mar - 4 Apr
1996	31 Mar - 7 Apr 21	Mar - 22 Apr
1999	28 Mar - 4 Apr 26	Feb - 8 Apr
2000	16 Apr - 23 Apr 6	Mar - 30 Mar
2002	24 Mar - 31 Mar 28	Mar - 13 Apr
2003	13 Apr - 20 Apr 17	Mar - 9 Apr
2004	4 Apr - 11 Apr 18	Mar - 5 Apr
2005	20 Mar - 27 Mar 24	Mar - 10 Apr

either started just a few days before sap flow began or Holy Week ended a few days after sap flow stopped. In no season did Holy Week occur completely before the sap flow season. This is not surprising since Easter can never occur before March 22 and our average first day of sap collection is March 19.

In three years (1985, 1988, 1994) the sap flow (gal/day) was greater during Holy Week than any other time (Table 2). However, during the vast majority (13 of 16 or 81.3%) of seasons that we made syrup at St. John's the sap flow was lower during Holy Week than it was during non-Holy Week periods (Table 2). In fact, the sap flow during Holy Week for all seasons averaged 331.8 gal/day compared to 541.0 gal/day for non-Holy week periods (Table 2). Although there is a distinct trend toward greater sap flow during non-Holy Week days, this difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.08$).

Similarly, the syrup makers at St. John's collected sap more often during non-Holy Week periods than during Holy Week. On average, sap was collected on 38.3% of the days during Holy Week as compared to 57.7% of the days during the remainder of the season (Table 2). This difference was statistically significant ($p=0.02$).

Discussion — The purpose of this study was to evaluate the timing of maple sap flow in relation to Holy Week. Our data disprove the hypothesis that sap

Table 2. Maple sap flow and percent of days on which sap was collected during Holy Week and the remainder of the sugaring season at St. John's, Collegeville, Stearns County, Minnesota.

Year	Sap flow (gal/day)		% days during period on which sap was collected	
	Holy Week	Other	Holy Week	Other
1972	148	763.3	37.5	57.1
1974	695	1228	50.0	88.9
1978	328	634.2	37.5	50.0
1982	164	703.9	25.0	84.6
1985	1041	713.8	75.0	57.9
1988	1092	685.5	87.5	71.4
1990	328	547.5	37.5	47.1
1992	0	905.1	0	88.2
1994	733	612.5	75.0	66.7
1996	317	337.3	62.5	48.0
1999	113	190.1	50.0	44.1
2000	0	420.5	0	40.0
2002	131	181.8	37.5	30.8
2003	0	283.4	0	45.8
2004	131	289.8	12.5	52.9
2005	87.5	159.3	25.0	50.0
Mean	331.8	541.0	38.3	57.7

flows best during Holy Week but support the alternative hypothesis that sap flow is greater during non-Holy Week periods.

There is no doubt that during some years the sap did flow best during Holy Week. For example, during Holy Week in 1988 and 1994 we collected 68.0% and 46.5%, respectively, of the total sap that was produced during those seasons. In these years the syrup-makers clearly would have been very busy trying to balance their maple-syrup duties with their religious obligations. Consequently these seasons would certainly have been memorable ones and would serve to perpetuate the idea that sap flows best during Holy Week.

This situation is analogous to the contention that the moon affects human behavior. Many doctors and nurses continue to believe that admissions to the emergency room, especially psychological cases, are much greater during the full moon even though study after study has conclusively disproved this idea (Carroll, 2005).

When many individuals in a group believe in a myth it reinforces or strengthens the idea (Carroll, 2005). It then becomes more difficult for an individual to reject the claim because to do so would mean weakening his/her bond with the other members of the group. In addition, individuals tend to selectively remember incidents which support a myth, such as overcrowded waiting rooms on the night of a full moon or Holy Weeks with overflowing sap, but ignore any contradictory evidence. This type of unconscious bias can plague any scientific investigation.

It is appealing to believe that the moon affects our health and that sap flows best during Holy Week. Unfortunately, the data don't support these ideas. Despite this, Holy Week will always be a significant and special time of the year for me and the other syrup-makers at St. John's, whether the sap flows better or not.

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Mallen, Ronald. 2002. Easter dating method. Astronomical Society of South Australia website: <http://www.assa.org.au/edm.html>. Date accessed: December 27, 2005.

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IN MEMORIAM

CHARLES WALDO BACON, JR.

Charles Waldo Bacon, Jr. died peacefully in his sleep May 7, 2006, from the effects of Alzheimer's Disease. He had been residing and receiving care at Pine Rock Manor in Warner since April 2004.

He was born in Jaffrey Center, NH April 4, 1923, graduated from Cushing Academy in MA and lived his entire life in Jaffrey at the property known as 'The Ark' on Dublin Road. He married Irene Virginia Hunt, also of Jaffrey. Together they raised a family, ran a family maple syrup business and developed a successful polyethylene container business for the maple industry from the house in which Charles had been born.

He had been active in the Jaffrey Lions' Club and served as town Civil Defense Director. He was a volunteer for 25 years with the Jaffrey Fire department and was a member of the Half Way House Association. He served on the Old Burial Ground Committee. He was inducted into the American Maple Hall of Fame in Croghan, NY for his activity and contributions to that industry over his lifetime.

He was preceded in death by his grandson James in 1990 and his wife Virginia in 1993. Survivors include Charles III of Running Springs, CA; David of Escondido, CA and Patricia Brideau of Warren, MA.

Donations in Mr. Bacon's name may be made to either the Jaffrey-Rindge Memorial Ambulance Service, Box 107, Jaffrey, NH 03452-0107 or to the Monadnock Bible Conference, PO Box 70, Jaffrey, NH 03452.

Charlie Bacon was a pioneer of the maple industry who made good the effort to make a plastic container for the marketing of pure maple syrup. The hot-fill containers were made by Hillside Plastics and eventually by Hussey Molding.

Charlie still remained active in the company "Bacon". On August 30, 1988 Hussey Plastics of Tyngsboro, MA sold the copyright for the Bacon maple syrup jug along with the manufacturing molds and associated silk-screen decorating equipment to a new corporation, the Bacon Jug Co., Inc. of St Johnsbury, VT. The corporation is owned by Roger Ames of New Port, VT. and David McLure of Littleton, NH. A network of 50 existing dealers will handle the sales. - *by Russ Davenport*

IN MEMORIUM

KENNETH E. BASCOM

Kenneth E. Bascom, 80, who had resided on Sugar House Road in Acworth, died on August 18, 2006 at the Cheshire Medical Center in Keene following a period of failing health.

He was born in Bangor, Maine, September 12, 1925, the son of the Reverend Eric W. and the Reverend Elida G. (Frost) Bascom Sr., and had resided in Canterbury prior to moving to Acworth in 1939.

Mr. Bascom graduated from the Vilas High School, class of 1943 and from the Thompson School at the University of New Hampshire class of 1949.

He was a veteran having served in the US Army during World War II. He was the former owner and proprietor of the Bascom Maple Farms, Inc. where he had worked all of his life.

Mr. Bascom was a member of the Third Congregational Church in Alstead and had served as church moderator and trustee. He served as an Acworth selectman. He was a past Master of the Warren Pond Grange, past president of the Sullivan County Farm Bureau, past president of the New Hampshire Maple Producers Association, past chairman of the North American Maple Syrup Council and a member of the International Syrup Institute. He was a recipient of the NH Farm Bureau Profile Award in 2004 and inducted into the Maple Hall of Fame in 1994.

Survivors include: his wife Laura Paige Bascom of Bedford, two step-daughters: Janice Chow of Commack, NY and Susan Hannigen of Manchester, NH; two sons: Bruce E. Bascom of Acworth and Bradford W. Bascom of Acworth; two daughters: Judy E. Snow of Alton and Nancy J. Fowler of Charlestown; three brothers: Rev. Eric W. Bascom Jr. of Springfield, MA., J. Rodney Bascom of Nottingham and Paul F. Bascom of Rensselaer NY; one sister Shirley B. Powers of Laconia; three grandchildren: Cynthia Bascom of Acworth, Keith Bascom of Concord and Darcy Bates of Winston-Salem, NC, on great grandson: Riley Bascom of Concord, several nieces, nephews and cousins.

He is predeceased in 1990 by his first wife Ruth M. (Baker) Bascom.

It has been requested that gifts be made in memory of Mr. Bascom to the Bascom Christian Education Fund, c/o Third Congregational Church, PO Box 164, Alstead, NH 03602

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