

## Maple Syrup 2015

Gail has boiled down over 100 gallons of maple sap this spring. It takes more than forty gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup. She does most of the reduction on the big wood stove. That stove is also heating the house. Gail finishes the batch in the kitchen where she can control it closely. She does one batch a day, or perhaps I should say per 24 hour period. On the day I took this photo, she was just finishing a batch. The final step is passing the hot syrup through a cotton cloth to remove mineral chunks. She uses a thermometer during the crucial final minutes of the boil. In the photo are two jars of syrup from pervious batches. Note the difference in amber color. That happens. The taste of fresh maple syrup is incredible. Also, note two jars of beautiful white lard. She rendered the lard using the super easy oven method. The eggs are just fresh eggs. Gail keeps about ten laying hens. These are not high performance birds. She selects hens primarily for the color of their eggs.



This is a typical sap collection set-up. I use seamless plastic pails, spouts that I cut from low cost plastic pipe and nails. There are commercial spigots and bags for this process. I find those to be expensive and hard to use. When the “run” ends, I pull the plastic pipe and the nails from the tree. I also insert a wooden plug although experts tell us plugs are not necessary. I think I drive in the plug because I hate to leave that hole in the precious maple tree.



Granddaughter Adrienne helped collect maple sap. She was a skilled assistant. Her class did it in pre-school. She had just dumped this pail, which was 1/3 full, into the transfer container. I missed that photo. Note the white spigot on the tree near her elbow.

