

Maple Syrup Month

On average, maple syrup season starts in March.

This year, started taping trees in late February. Earlier than average but it was unusually warm.

For good sap run, the temperature must be below freezing at night and then rapidly warm to 40 or 50 degrees in the day.

Sunshine heating the bark seems to be a big boost.

There were a few good sap days in the first week of March.

Then the temperature was wrong for ten days.

Some tappers thought the season was over.

I got an emessage from the manager at Gale Woods who thought the season was over and it was a poor year.

Then we got a long string of nearly ideal days.

Overall, it was a good year for maple syrup.

At least it was in our woods.

I pulled all of my taps today.

The sap had slowed but there was still a small run.

In a bad year, I would have left the taps out but a whole month of collecting sap and boiling it into syrup is enough.

This has been the longest run I have seen.

Gail just brought a teaspoon of the batch she is finishing right now.

The flavor and sweetness has been consistently terrific this year.

I have attached several photos.

My favorite photo is of granddaughters Hazel and Ella collecting sap.



I collect the sap every day when it is running.

After collecting the sap, I strain it through a dish towel to remove wood chips and the occasional bug.

Our trees are Silver and Red Maple.

True sugar maples have the thickest sap. Thicker sap produces more syrup.

It takes around 40 parts of Sugar Maple sap to make one part of syrup.

Our maples have a thinner sap. About 50 gallons of our sap is required to make one gallon of syrup.

Some people tap box-elder trees. Box-elders are in the maple family.

We have plenty of silver and red maples but I intend to tap some box-elders next year as an experiment.

The syrup is said to be somewhat different in color and taste but delicious just the same.

The second photo shows two pots on the wood stove.



The stove provides our main heat for the house.

During maple syrup season, Gail also uses the stove to evaporate most of the water out of the sap.

Doing it that way saves substantially on energy.

It also adds needed moisture to the house.

Most of all, it makes the air in the house smell delightfully sweet.

Gail does the evaporating, final boiling, straining, and syrup storage.

She normally reduces five gallons of sap a day.

The third photo shows her finishing set-up in the kitchen.



The final step is boiling the sap to 219 degrees.

At that point, the boiling bubbles quickly become smaller and sticky.

The process must be closely watched.

If the syrup is heated too long it becomes hard maple sugar.

Maple syruping time is over.

Spring is here.

Today I prepared hog pastures for planting. Tom