

2022 The Sap is Running.

We tapped 40 maple trees a couple weeks ago.

Then the weather got too warm for sap flow.

Then too cold.

Now the day to night temperature swings are just about right.

These photos show Gail's boiling set-up on the sunnier, wind-free side of the house.

It takes at least 40 gallons of sap to produce one gallon of syrup. Gail boils the sap down to about $\frac{1}{2}$ syrup and then finishes the job in the kitchen where she can watch it closely.

Boiling just a little past good syrup produces crystalline sugar. That is hard to use.

Her outside boiler is a simple barrel stove with cutouts for two chafing pans. The chafing pans are stainless steel. These are commonly available and around \$20 each.

We collect the sap in seamless (easily cleanable) 5-gallon pails. Then we strain it through a combination metal kitchen strainer and dish towels.

Gail uses the 10-gallon white pail on the garden wagon for storage. She dips from the 10-gallon container and adds to the boiling chafing dishes through the day. She finishes in the kitchen each evening.

The fourth photo is of last evening syrup. It is exceptionally light colored. The syrup will get darker as the season ends in 7 to 10 days.

Generally, the lighter syrup is considered higher quality, but it is all terrific to us. Notice the sediment in the bottom of the jars. That is called "sand" in the trade but it is not sand. It is mostly undissolved minerals. Commercial maple syrup producers work to filter that out. We do not. It is certainly not bad and is probably nutritious.

Tom





