

The official voice of Vermont sugar makers

VERMONT *Maple* SUGAR MAKERS' ASSOCIATION

Committed to the promotion and protection of the branding of Vermont maple products since 1893.

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SUGARING SEASON IS HERE

BY EMMA MARVIN, VMSMA CHAIR

As I write this, we're getting a bit of freezing drizzle -typical weather, maybe. It's hard to predict what the season ahead will hold for us all. It seems that no rule of thumb has been able to hold up to the last several seasons we've had. So, while we've all always known there's no great way to predict the outcome of the coming season, this holds true more than ever in a time of changing climate. Our collective ingenuity and willingness to adopt and adapt technologies mute some of the impacts. Our passion and persistence drive us to be vigilant and prepared. Our forward-looking nature guides research and learning that will continue to support our resilience as an industry and Vermont tradition. My best wishes to all for this season.

MEET OUR NEW QUALITY DIRECTOR

BY ALLISON HOPE, VMSMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

David Tremblay joined VMSMA as our new Quality Director in January and has been working on moving the sugarhouse certification program forward since that time. David is working closely with the Board, staff and sugar makers to update the certification checklist, create a sugarhouse certification manual and run some mock inspections.

Most recently, David worked for Vermont's Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets as a state apiarist and food safety specialist for several years. Prior to that he was a field agent for the Agency for about 27 years. Through this work he has in-depth experience in creating educational programs, managing inspection programs and updating checklists and associated program data, providing technical assistance to partners, performing sugarhouse inspections focused on food safety practices, and has worked closely with our friends at the Vermont Beekeepers Association. We're excited to have David as a part of the VMSMA team; he's a great fit for our emerging sugarhouse certification program and has already begun reaching out to sugarhouses to participate in mock inspections this spring.

If you would like to participate in a mock inspection this spring, please feel free to reach out to David at david@vermontmaple.org or 802-498-3993.



▲ Quality Director, David Tremblay





FORESTRY CLINICS WITH LAMOILLE COUNTY MAPLE SUGAR MAKERS ASSOCIATION

BY ARNIE PIPER, VICE CHAIR, VMSMA

The LCMSMA and Lamoille County Forester Rick Dyer developed a series of educational opportunities for sugarmakers and landowners in the form of hands-on clinics. The specific clinics are; Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) of a Maple Sugarbush, Identification and Destruction of Invasive Plants in Your Sugarbush, and Best Management Practices for Roads and Trails in Your Sugarbush. We hosted these classes during a series of Friday afternoons at a local sugarbush. This article discusses the TSI class given this fall.

The TSI class was attended by sugarmakers from Lamoille, Chittenden, and Caledonia counties. We were also very fortunate to have Mark Isselhardt from the Proctor Maple Research Center in attendance. The seminar started out at the sugarhouse with a quick introduction to the use of a prism for determining basal area. We then followed Rick to a section of the sugarbush adjacent to the sugarhouse that was not being tapped nor had it had any TSI done in the past. This gave the group a unique opportunity to see a section of northern hardwood forest that hadn't been cut in 60 – 70 years. As we strolled to the area Rick pointed out blue coash, nettles, ramps, a variety of ferns, and hobble bush, all plants which are indicators of a site rich for maple production and regeneration.

Rick then led us in a discussion of common problems we would likely to find in a sugarbush. He pointed out trees infected with *Eutypella* cankers (*Eutypella parasitica*) and sugar maple borer (*Glycobius speciosus*) wounds. He warned us that any tree with a *Eutypella* canker should be selected for any thinning due to its propensity to spread spores and infect other sugar maples in the area. Rick also thought any maple trees with sugar maple borer should be a candidate for cutting. The consensus among the sugarmakers was they'd all leave a sugar maple with borer damage knowing it might break off in a wind in the future but in the meantime would provide many gallons of maple sap.

We also discussed how to properly select for thinning other species which would enable the maple trees to properly develop crown and diameter. This was where Mark's expertise at the PMRC came in handy. He was able to relate different studies that demonstrate the relationship between maple crown and sap production as well as growth of the tree. This then led to a discussion on the relationship of placement of spouts when tapping, deadwood, and sap production. We also discussed crown shape, crown condition, and having a mix of trees that allow for a good diversity of trees in the sugarbush. We also discussed leaving basswood if it were present as it contributes valuable nutrients to the soil.

The site also has a large number of white ash trees in the 20-24" category. We discussed cutting the more valuable white ash trees considering the presence of the emerald ash borer (EAB) in the state. Rick did caution us to leave some of the white ash as it might survive the EAB and provide seed stock for future white ash trees. The key is to avoid a monoculture of maple. He encouraged varying not only the species of trees but also developing a sense of layers in our sugarbush, from ground cover to size of trees and canopy cover. All the sugarmakers agreed ground cover is difficult to maintain as we like to make things easy for us to walk lines and have access to trees for tapping.

Rick then demonstrated the proper use of the prism. It made much more sense in the wooded environment. Rick had each of us tally the basal area of trees in the test plot to ensure we understood how to use the tool. We then spread out over the roughly 5-acre site to determine which trees we'd recommend for cutting. Each site had a pretty good mix of sugar maple, ash, yellow birch, as well as a few basswood. Each group set up their prism spot and tallied the basal area in their site. Rick told us to shoot for 80-100 square feet of basal area for our plots. Most sugarmakers think in terms of taps per acre not in basal area so this took some getting used to. After determining the number of trees that should be cut in our notional TSI the team flagged trees to be cut.

When everyone finished flagging their trees the entire group got together to discuss why they selected specific trees for cutting. As we visited each team's plot they briefed Rick, Mark, and the rest of the group on the basal area of their plot as well as why they were going to cut specific trees. The conversation also led to the group discussing leaving lesser quality stems on the ground to add nutrients to the soil instead of taking them out for firewood and perhaps girdling some select trees as bird trees.

After we visited each team's plot we moved up the hill to an area that has undergone TSI and is being sugared. The section of the sugarbush we visited recently had significant damage from two years of defoliation from forest tent caterpillar (FTC). Many of the dominant and co-dominant trees had been killed from the combination of defoliation and dry summers. Much of the discussion was about how fragile the environment is and how important it is for us to protect our forests. Rick and Mark also discussed what they thought the site would look like in 20 years. Hopefully many of the young sugar maple saplings will grow to maturity and can be tapped in 40-50 years.

The tour through the sugarbush led us back to the trail close to where we started. We'd spent three plus hours talking about sugaring, forestry, and how to scientifically manage our sugarbush. Rick, Mark and I are working on a syllabus that hopefully will serve two purposes; give county foresters a guideline for conducting their own sugarbush TSI seminar with their respective county association and for state, county and consulting foresters to claim continuing education credit for future seminars. If you'd like more information on this seminar contact Arnie Piper at arnoldpiper@comcast.net or rick.dyer@vermont.gov.

MAPLE IN EVERY SCHOOL

BY ALLISON HOPE, VMSMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As VMSMA continues to coordinate with VT FEED, a collaboration of NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms, on the Maple in Every School Project, you'll find new resources online. They've developed easy to use educational materials for sugar makers when visiting schools and hosting school groups at your sugarhouse. The educational package contains videos, handouts, and short guidelines for interacting with students in the classroom and sugarhouse. In addition, they've created an informal food bid solicitation form. Vermont school nutrition personnel who want to bring in Vermont Maple can use these forms to more easily solicit bids from local sugar makers.

These resources are all available on the VT FEED website at <https://vtfeed.org/resources/maple-every-school>. For more information contact Helen Rortvedt at NOFA-VT: helen@nofavt.org.



2020 VERMONT MAPLE CONFERENCES

BY MARK ISSELHARDT, UVM EXTENSION MAPLE SPECIALIST

The 2020 Vermont Maple Conferences were a partnership between University of Vermont Extension and VMSMA. This year the two conferences took place on January 18th in Brattleboro and January 25th in Hyde Park. A new venue was required in Brattleboro (Brattleboro Union Middle School) after the School for International Training (SIT) stopped hosting outside events on weekends. Attendees commented that the new location worked well, they appreciated all the classrooms in one location and aside from a lack of microphone for the opening session and having to delay the start by one hour to accommodate the buildings availability, the day went off smoothly. The attendance in Brattleboro was down a bit from the long-term average but there were still plenty of people to attend the 16 classes being offered. From understanding FSMA to how to make maple cotton candy, there was something for everyone. There were suggestions to increase the number of practical or hands on workshops on subjects like tapping, tubing system installation and sugarhouse measurements. Others suggested that cooking demonstrations or classes designed around producing value added products would be appreciated. The lunch was provided by the same local caterer as last year and was mentioned on several evaluations as being very good.

A week later the second Vermont Maple Conference took place in Hyde Park at the Lamoille Union Middle School. A slightly different program was offered to those who attended given the difficulty of getting speakers to present at both locations. A total of 19 classes were given during four class periods. Speakers came from as far away as San Francisco and Quebec City. The lunch was provided by the Green Mountain

Technology and Career Center's (GMTCC) Culinary Arts students under the guidance of Chef Doug Becker. The meal was very well received and the students were recognized by a hearty round of applause from those in attendance for a job well done. Also helping make the day a success were the Forestry students from GMTCC under the direction of Megan Luther.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets provided staff to test hydrometers. Between Brattleboro and Hyde Park over 140 hydrometers were tested for accuracy. While not technically a hydrometer calibration, producers were told if their instruments were within specifications before the upcoming production season.

The evaluation asked about how long people drove to get to the conference and how far they would be willing to drive. In Brattleboro the most common answer to how long you drove was 30 minutes and 120 minutes was the most common answer for how far they would be willing to drive. This compares to attendees in Hyde Park responded with 45 minutes when asked how far they drove to attend the conference and 120 minutes with how far they would be willing to travel to attend.

For people unable to attend either the Brattleboro or Hyde Park conference or who found themselves having to make difficult decisions about which classes to attend, some recordings are available. A total of 16 full length presentations are able to be viewed at the University of Vermont Extension Maple website www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/maple_conference.



MEET A SUGAR MAKER

As part of a new series highlighting our members, we're starting short interviews with Vermont's sugar makers, large and small, near and far. Our first conversation was with Matt Wamsganz of Snow Hill Farm in Westford, Vermont.

ALLISON HOPE, VMSMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Q: I SEE ON YOUR WEBSITE THAT YOU LEARNED ABOUT SUGARING FROM YOUR DAD, VERNON, WHO STARTED SUGARING IN SARANAC LAKE, NEW YORK IN THE MID 1900'S. WHY DID YOU START YOUR OWN OPERATION?

MATT WAMSGANZ: Sugaring was in my blood from when I was a kid. As I grew up, I always had my sights set on finding land and starting up sugaring. I was one of nine kids and only two of us are doing any sugaring these days.

Matt has 1,000 taps on his land and also buys sap from a neighboring sugar maker who has about 5,500 taps. Snow Hill Farm made about 2,200 gallons of syrup last year – about 50% sold wholesale and 50% retail. Most of the retail sales are to local grocery stores and the rest is locally through the sugarhouse.

A: DID YOUR WIFE KARIN KNOW THAT THIS WAS PART OF THE PACKAGE WHEN SHE MET YOU?

M: Karin's a country girl at heart, having grown up in New Haven, and she knew one of my prerequisites was maples on a hill in the country.

A: DO YOUR KIDS HELP WITH THE OPERATION?

M: Not as much as you would think. Maybe don't write that... (said with a laugh). When we were a wood fired operation and the kids were younger, they helped in the sugarhouse. But they're teenagers now and they have lots of other things going on. Plus we've automated so much of the operation and gone to an oil fired arch so we don't need as much help.



Matt Wamsganz Pictured Right with Fellow Sugarmaker Ron Frey

A: WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT SUGARING?

M: Working in the woods, going tree to tree and seeing the growth.

A: WHAT DO YOU LIKE LEAST?

M: Cleanup. There was no hesitation in that answer! It's the part that nobody really sees. So they come into the sugarhouse and smell the sap boiling and it looks pretty easy. But emptying and cleaning everything takes time and you have to do it right.

A: WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

M: I built everything from the ground up. We milled the lumber for the sugarhouse from our land and I drew up and designed and constructed the sugarhouse myself.

A: WHAT HAS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

M: The price has dropped; that's been a bummer. We keep track of the weather – when we had our first boil and when we had our last boil. Even back fifteen years ago we had some early boils, so it's not uncommon, but it does seem to be getting more frequent.



THE FUTURE OF MAPLE SUGARING

BY DAVE FOLINO, VMSMA ADDISON COUNTY DIRECTOR

Tacked on the wall in our sugarhouse is a small chart that reveals a big trend. The chart shows the dates that Lake Champlain became completely frozen over. The chart begins in the early 1830s. The lake froze over nearly every year in the 1800s. You could reliably hitch your team to your sleigh and drive from Burlington to Plattsburgh in midwinter. It still froze over more than half the time around 1900. And, there were periods in this 1960s and 70s when the lake would freeze most years. During the past few decades however, if you harnessed your horses at Burlington harbor you probably wouldn't make it much past the breakwater before you'd need it to start swimming.

The lake is a huge heatsink. It drains the eastern Adirondacks and half of northern Vermont. It is over 100 miles long and over 300 feet deep in places. It captures and retains heat (or cold). For this reason, it is a reliable 200 year old measure of warming and cooling trends in our area. These trends point in one direction: up.

This warming trend is difficult to dispute or ignore, but within the sugar making community, climate change is, oddly, seldom discussed, even though our maple crop is entirely weather and temperature dependent. In addition, climate change is not just about temperature rise, it's about increased weather volatility; more powerful wind, rain and snow events. On average we're now twice as likely to set a high temperature record as a low temperature record, but quirky cold weather spells are now more likely in the southern U.S. And, the weather patterns are less zonal, more wobbly. The weather direction is less likely to be consistently from West to East. The jet stream now meanders like an old river, and every time it swings back and forth, we get whipsawed by wind or rain, heat or cold. Climate change is difficult to nail down and it's more than just warm weather. No single weather event is directly attributable to climate change, but every time we burn carbon, we tilt the odds in favor of more weird weather.

For the most part the causes of climate change are invisible. Carbon dioxide doesn't visibly belch out of your tailpipe or smokestack. You can't see it, but it becomes an invisible cloak wrapped around the earth that retains more heat and

more energy every year. It would be easier to understand and acknowledge if releasing carbon dioxide or methane produced a big brown cloud. But, it's invisible.

And, it's gradual. Just like rust on your truck it doesn't happen all at once. It's hard to notice because it's slowly advancing, year-by-year. The trends are undeniable. When most of the warmest years on earth are packed into the last decade, it's here.

Sadly, conversations regarding climate change have become political. There is a stark dividing line between opinions about whether climate change exists (at all) or whether it is attributable to human activity. It's an argument between the pure and the sinners--- where few are listening. In this regard I am a sinner. I am an addict. I am addicted to carbon---although I am constantly trying to reduce my addiction. I have installed solar panels, I boil with steam and consolidate trips. I Lean on my R.O.

Still, I haul my syrup with an F250, my evaporator is fueled by oil, I use plenty of tubing and mainline and plastic syrup containers; which are all generated from petrochemicals. It's so damn easy to be a user, and so hard to quit. It's also easy to feel powerless and overwhelmed by the scale of the situation.

As individuals, sugar makers are very innovative and adaptive. We are great at tactically dealing with change. We are really good at observing and tweaking to gain an advantage. We are very similar to really good NASCAR mechanics. We look under the hood, then tweak or "dial in" for more speed or productivity. We have very successfully tweaked spout and tubing technology, vacuum and tapping methods and the timing of tapping to maximize our yields and reduce risk in spite of warming and erratic weather. During the last few decades of increased warming we have managed to increase yields---acting individually.

We are extremely clever and resourceful---and quick to adapt, but how far in the future will we reach a point where small tactics (no matter how clever) are overwhelmed by the sheer disruptive force of climate change?



Meanwhile, the scientifically undeniable trend of climate change is ongoing. Every year the world's average temperature is increasing. Every year it seems the weather patterns are becoming less stable. Every year the Iditarod is becoming more challenging because the rivers are no longer freezing solid or there's no snow in Alaska. Houston experiences another 500-year flood. California burns and chunks of Antarctica float out to sea.

Just before the 2012 season my wife and I were trying to figure out if we should sell some surplus barrels of syrup. Our sugarbush is a high elevation, north facing woods in central Vermont. I argued that "As far as I can see there is virtually no risk that we will not have a good or average crop. We have so adopted many technologies or techniques that protect us from a bad year that I just can't see how we'd ever have a bad season". Two months later, one week into the season, on March 18th, the temperature hit 80F in northern Vermont and stayed there for three days. On March 22nd the frogs came out. No good flavored syrup was produced after the temperature hit 80. The trees were just as confused as the frogs. Thankfully, I listened to my wife.

In the more southern regions of the maple producing area this type of occurrence is already becoming more frequent. Commercial sugar making is becoming less reliable and less viable in parts of the southern range. This range will creep north just as certainly as coastal Florida will be submerged. The sweet spot for maple is migrating north.

But what can we do beyond small, individual risk management techniques to preserve our industry?



2020 VMSMA ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 6TH, RANDOLPH, VT

You're cordially invited to attend the 2020 VMSMA Annual Meeting. This year's meeting will be held in Randolph at the Langevin House on the Vermont Technical College campus on June 6th. This is a great opportunity for members to hear from VMSMA's Board of Directors about VMSMA's successes in the past year and where the association is heading in the future. More details to come.

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SAPLINE & SPOUT RECYCLING

BY RICHARD BACKER, NORTHWEST VERMONT SOLID WASTE DISTRICT

The Northwest Vermont Solid Waste District [“NWSWD” or “District”] operates a small Material Recovery Facility [MRF] located at its administrative office, adjacent to the Interstate 89 - Exit 18 interchange in Georgia, Vermont. The District is a municipally chartered organization fully serving 19 towns in Grand Isle and Franklin counties. Additionally, NWSWD may also offer more limited service and support to residents of other communities that are members of chartered Vermont solid waste districts or like organizations.

NWSWD offers a fee-based program for recovering and recycling of specific agricultural related plastics. This article will focus on the District’s maple sapline recycling program.

Much of today’s maple syrup producers utilize a high-density polyethylene [HDPE] plastic tubing and pipeline to collect maple sap. These collection networks of HDPE we see in Vermont forests are periodically removed from service and replaced with new lines. HDPE is a readily recyclable plastic; however, downstream processors of recyclable materials generally establish material specifications or quality specifications for materials that will be processed into resources or raw materials used in the manufacturing process of new manufactured products.

CONTAMINANT MATERIALS

The typical sugarbush HDPE tubing and mainline network is suspended in the sugarbush using tensile wire, wire ties and hose clamps. Currently, these metal items must be removed from the HDPE materials before delivery to the NWSWD MRF for recovery and recycling. Metal items do not meet the quality standards for the downstream processor.

PVC plastic pipe is a non-HDPE contaminant plastic utilized in the sugarbush sapline collection system. PVC is a contaminant plastic and must be removed from the HDPE materials prior to delivery to the NWSWD MRF.

Other non-HDPE contaminant plastics utilized in the sugarbush sapline collection system include spouts, tees and connectors. These items vary in material composition and may include polycarbonate spouts and nylon or other plastic connectors. In the imperfect world of recovery and recycling, these materials would be removed prior to delivery to the MRF for recycling. However, NWSWD recognizes this contaminant removal may be impractical for all producers and a pricing system exists to incentivize those who find it practical to clean the HDPE of all contaminant fittings. NWSWD partners with a downstream processor that accepts a modest percentage of contaminant plastic connectors and spouts attached to the HDPE lines. However, this reduced quality standard limits the annual tonnage the downstream processor will accept from NWSWD’s sapline recovery and recycling program. Lastly, duct and electrical tapes are contaminant plastics that lower the HDPE quality standard.

SAPLINE RECOVERY/RECYCLING FEES

The District has established fees for recovering and recycling HDPE sapline

**WITHOUT
CONTAMINANTS**

[spouts, tees, connections]

**\$5 / CUBIC
YARD**

**WITH
CONTAMINANTS**

[spouts, tees, connections]

**\$20 / CUBIC
YARD**

Method of Payment: cash, check or invoice for large loads

NO FEE CUBIC YARD BOX EXCHANGE

The District offers the producer [2] options when delivering sapline to the MRF. A producer may arrive and fill boxes at the time of delivery; a producer may receive boxes and pallets in advance at the Georgia MRF and then load boxes at the point of generation and then deliver full boxes MRF. The producer must store boxes in dry conditions until delivery and have ability to load the pallet/box onto a trailer or pickup truck for unloading at the MRF. For those producers at a greater distance to the MRF, the first delivery may include filling boxes at the MRF and then receiving empty, flat boxes as part of the exchange program.

PREPARING MATERIAL FOR THE CUBIC YARD BOX

Typical HDPE sapline may include “drops”, 5/16” line or mainline ranging from one-quarter inch to 4-inch diameter. The “drops” and 5/16” line pack very well in the cubic yard box. Producers many times will coil the 5/16” line into manageable bundles and pack a box; uncoiled 5/16” line does



not pack as well but will be accepted at the MRF.

The more rigid mainline materials must be cut into 30"- 36" lengths so the material will fit into the cubic yard boxes. The mainline should be cut to length prior to delivery to the MRF.

LARGE LOAD DELIVERY

By appointment, the District will receive large loads dumped directly to the receiving floor; these loads typically range from 20 to 30 cubic yards. At this time, large loads are received at the MRF only on Friday with an advance appointment. Large loads do require more effort to process than managing cubic yard boxes, but some of the larger producers do use this opportunity.

THE RECOVERY AND RECYCLING PROCESS

The District annually recovers and recycles approximately 30,000 pounds of sapline. The sapline materials are compacted and baled and stored until onsite until the required shipping weight is reached. Sapline is received both in small and large quantities. Small quantities are stored in boxes until enough material is available to compact and produce a bale; large quantities are tipped onto the receiving floor and baling begins immediately.

Currently, NWSWD ships sapline bales via intermodal transport: a box trailer moves from Georgia, Vermont via highway to Springfield, MA. At the Springfield rail terminal,



the trailer moves by train to Memphis, TN and from Memphis the load moves again over the road to Arkansas to the Delta Plastics manufacturing facility.

The Delta Plastics Stuttgart, AR facility processes the HDPE sapline into used plastic resins which are combined with virgin resins for the manufacture of agriculture dripline and other manufactured goods.

SPOUT RECYCLING UPDATE

NWSWD is actively researching with plastic recycling processors in the Midwest any opportunities that can be identified to recycle plastic spouts. Initially the focus will be on analyzing polycarbonate spouts. We will offer an update later in the spring of 2020. Every spout typically has attached a small piece of HDPE sapline; this becomes a contaminant plastic when trying to recover and recycle the spout parent material.

SUMMARY

NWSWD has an ongoing modest program to recover and recycle HDPE sapline. Small and large syrup producers and County Associations are encouraged to call NWSWD with inquiries or questions on recovery and recycling HDPE sapline. Please call NWSWD at 802.524.5986.

PLEASE REMEMBER: NO METAL; NO PVC; ONLY HDPE.

DO YOU HAVE A TICK PROTOCOL?

BY ALLISON HOPE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VMSMA

While working outdoors offers many benefits, especially in the beautiful state of Vermont, we would be wise to review and annually refresh our habits and protocols around ticks and tick bites. According to the Vermont Department of Health (VTDOH), 53% of the deer ticks (blacklegged ticks) tested in Vermont in 2018 carried *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the main bacteria that causes Lyme disease.

According to the VTDOH, deer tick peak activity in Vermont normally occurs in May and June when the nymphs are

looking for hosts. Then in October and November, tick activity increases again when adult female ticks are looking for a pre-winter host. However, it's important to note that you can encounter ticks any time of the year when the temperatures are above freezing.

When it comes to tick protocol while working outdoors, prevention is incredibly important. What does prevention look like? Here is one suggested list of prevention activities:



REGULAR AND THOROUGH TICK CHECKS According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ticks need to be attached for 36 to 48 hours before they can transmit Lyme disease bacteria. Most people are infected by bites from nymphs (immature ticks), which are very tiny and difficult to see. Adult ticks can also transmit Lyme disease bacteria; adults are much larger, easier to see and easier to remove from the skin. Ticks can attach to any part of the body but prefer hard-to-see areas like the groin, armpits, scalp and behind the knees. The CDC also recommends checking in and around the ears, around the waistline, and inside the belly button. A tick generally feeds for 3 to 5 days and then detaches.

SHOWER Shower as soon as possible after working outdoors. This is also a good time and place to do your tick check.

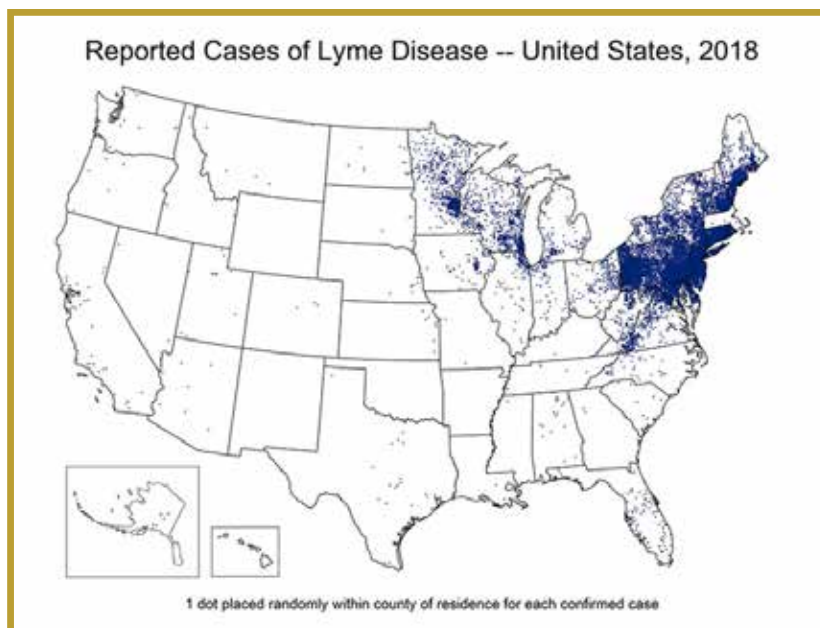
PUT YOUR CLOTHES IN THE DRYER Put your outdoor work clothes in the dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after coming inside. If your clothes are damp, dry them completely and then dry for 10 minutes on high heat.

TICK REPELLENT The CDC recommends using Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, or 2-undecanone and make sure to follow product instructions. You can also wear gear and clothing (shoes too) that have been treated with the pesticide permethrin, which kills ticks on contact. There are treatments you can purchase and apply to your gear at home, or you can send them away to be treated. Each type of treatment needs to be repeated at regular intervals to continue to be effective. The most effective protocol would include both insect repellent applied to exposed skin and permethrin-treated gear.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A TICK DURING A TICK CHECK?

- Grasp the tick (with tweezers or a tick-removal tool), as close to the skin as possible.
- Pull the tick's body away from the skin; the CDC says there's no cause for alarm if the tick's mouthparts remain in the skin.
- Clean the area around the tick bite with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
- Dispose of a live tick by putting it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag or container, wrapping it tightly in tape, or flushing it down the toilet. Do not crush the tick with your fingers.
- Try to identify the tick – is it a deer tick or another type?
- If it was a deer tick, watch for a bull's eye rash and/or fever, chills, sweats, fatigue, muscle or joint pain. These can develop up to 30 days after a tick bite. The CDC notes that not all rashes that occur at the site of a tick bite are due to Lyme disease. Some people have an allergic reaction to tick saliva which can cause a rash within a few hours of the bite and may disappear within a few days.
- You may want to save the tick in a container with a water-soaked cotton ball to send for testing. The CDC, in general, doesn't recommend tick testing for a variety of reasons, including:
 - » Positive results that the tick is carrying disease-causing organisms don't mean you've been infected,
 - » Negative results can offer false assurances as you may have been infected by an undetected tick bite.
 - » If you have been infected, you will probably develop symptoms before you get the results of the tick test back.

The VTDOH's 2017 Annual Report of the Vermont Tickborne Disease Program notes that 1,093 cases of Lyme disease were reported to them in 2017; this is the highest annual count ever recorded in Vermont. Counties in southern Vermont generally have the highest incidence of Lyme disease, including Bennington, Rutland, Windsor and Windham. There are other tickborne diseases present in Vermont as well, so ensuring that you have the appropriate habits in place to prevent and discover tick bites is as important as any of your other work habits and protocols. Be safe out there!



Additional resources and details are available online:

CDC:

www.cdc.gov/lyme

VTDOH:

www.healthvermont.gov/disease-control/tickborne-diseases

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES (NIAID):

www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/tickborne-diseases



MAPLE OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND 2020 IS APPROACHING

BY CORY AYOTTE, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, VMSMA

We are days away from Vermont's favorite statewide spring event, Maple Open House Weekend, March 21st and 22nd. Last year we had 140 participating sugarhouses and partnering businesses (restaurants, breweries, distilleries, hard cider makers, inns and b&b's). Each partner features maple either as a listed ingredient in a product they produce, a featured menu item, or provided as a gift included with an overnight stay package or event participation.

An estimated 35,000 people will be traveling throughout Vermont learning about, experiencing, tasting, enjoying, and purchasing Vermont maple syrup and maple products. This is an opportunity for sugar makers to educate the public on the process of making maple syrup and demonstrate why consumers should think of Vermont first when purchasing maple syrup.

Event weekend registration revenue is directly spent on advertising and promotion for the weekend. We strategically placed radio and digital ads in key markets encouraging traffic to the state as well as dedicated social media promotion highlighting individual locations. We also put out a press release that reached all local media outlets, which in turned created coverage leading up to the weekend with features on local broadcast networks and in local, regional and national print media.

Let's help spread the word, show off your hard work, and let's make this the sweetest weekend in Vermont.

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