

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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2021 SEASON ACROSS THE STATE

REPORTS FROM MAY 3RD BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

ADDISON COUNTY: Dave Folino reported that Addison county had low sugar content, although a lot of sap. Most producers made 50-75% of a normal crop. Most of the syrup was darker. High elevation operations did better than lower.

BENNINGTON COUNTY: Dave Mance reported that like other areas, roughly 60-70% of a normal crop was made. There was decent sugar content in the area. Smaller producers without a vacuum had a tough time. Quality overall was dark syrup with okay flavor.

CHITTENDEN COUNTY: Paul Palmer reported that there was little golden made, mostly dark, good flavor syrup made, but low sugar content. 50-75% of a crop was made for most.

FRANKLIN COUNTY: Jason Gagne reported low sugar content of 1.1 and 1.2% with producers collecting equal amounts of sap. Most ended up making 65% of their normal crop.

LAMOILLE COUNTY: Arnie Piper reported that most producers made 60-75% of their normal crop. Colder, higher elevation sugarbushes did well. Cold sugarbushes started at the same time as warm sugarbushes, with colder bushes having a longer season. Sap was 1 to 1.5% sugar content being the lowest across the county in years.

ORLEANS COUNTY: Donna Young reported that most made 75% of a normal crop. Like other counties, the sugar content was low and the syrup was mostly dark. Ted Young reported that his operation in southern Orleans County had no ropey syrup with a record amount of sap. He produced about 80% of his normal crop. Half the crop was very dark, which is something he typically never makes.

RUTLAND COUNTY: Jeff Disorda reported it was a tough tapping season with lots of snow and a tough crust on the snow at times to trudge through. Most producers make 50-75% of a crop. Operations in the mountains did better than valley locations. There was a big difference between gravity and vacuum operations too. Mostly amber and dark syrup made.

WASHINGTON COUNTY: James Buck reported that most with filter presses struggled with filtering due to ropey syrup. The crust on the top of snow was tough to work with. He made about 50% of a crop with others in the county making upwards of 65%. Not very good flavor, and frankly, not a lot of impressive quality syrup.

WINDHAM COUNTY: Windham County had results similar to other counties. Vacuums played an important part to the season, with those producers making 75% of a crop. Arnold Coombs added that it was not a good crop in the county. He heard one person report a normal crop, but most landed somewhere between 65-75%.

WINDSOR COUNTY: Reid Richardson reported that most producers made 50-75 % of their normal crop. A lot of amber and dark syrup made with excellent flavor.

PROCTOR MAPLE RESEARCH CENTER: Dr. Abby van den Berg reported that they had a low sugar content of 1.6%. They had a lot of ropey syrup and they made about 2/3rds of a normal crop.

UVM EXTENSION: Mark Isselhardt reported that the month of March got too warm at the end and the month of April didn't cool enough. He noted some losses due to ropey syrup at Extension.

BUTTERNUT MOUNTAIN: Emma Marvin reported that Butternut made about 60% from last year and a lot of the producers they work with were in the range of 50-75%.



GOVERNOR'S TREE TAPPING EVENT

BY CORY AYOTTE, VMSMA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

On March 11th, the Annual Governor's Tree Tapping Ceremony was held at The Templeton Farm in East Montpelier. Due to the pandemic, there was a limitation on visitors to the sugarhouse. The few in attendance were Agency of Agriculture Secretary, Anson Tebbetts, VMSMA Washington County Director, James Buck, a news crew from NBC 5, and of course, Governor Phil Scott. Under warm sunny skies, Governor Scott along with the youngest generation of sugar makers (the 9th generation at Templeton Farm) tapped several large sugar maples along the idyllic dirt road that passes the farm. The sap was boiling inside the sugarhouse and to end the visit, Governor Scott along with members of the farm did a celebratory shot of maple syrup to toast the beginning of the 2021 sugaring season.



NOTES FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



RESILIENCY IN MAPLE

BY EMMA MARVIN, VMSMA CHAIR

The 2021 sugaring season brought unforeseen challenges, much like what we've endured during the pandemic. Most producers throughout the state reported very low sugar content and yields of 50-75% of their normal crop. What is true now and has been for many years is that Vermont's sugar makers are resilient during tough times. We can't control the weather, which ultimately dictates what we produce, but we can continue to be a leading force in positioning Vermont maple globally and championing best management practices that contribute to the world's best maple products. Tough seasons come and go, but it's how we deal with them and adapt that ultimately makes the difference. I give kudos to sugar makers in every corner of our small, but mighty state. Thank you for continuing to help keep Vermont maple the top choice of sweetener in consumers' pantries.

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[@/maplesyrupvermont](https://www.instagram.com/maplesyrupvermont)

YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Emma Marvin | Butternut Mt.
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Peter Purinton | Huntington, VT

Kerry Sedutto | The Sugarman,
 Hardwick, VT



MEET A SUGAR MAKER

As part of our series highlighting Members, we're sharing short interviews with Vermont's sugar makers, large and small, near and far. On May 5, 2021. Cory had a conversation with Kate Whelley McCabe of Vermont Evaporator Company in Montpelier, Vermont.

CORY: What spurred the idea for the company?

KATE: The house I'm in sits on 10 acres on the outskirts of Montpelier. We moved here in 2013, and when we were walking the land before buying, we noticed that there was a stream that divided the property into one lot of build-able land and nine acres of forest due to it being too steep. The nine acres that we didn't build on had a lot of sugar maples. We actually found an old arch and sugar camp on the land. According to local lore, the land was once a woodlot. It was evident that at one point that most of the non-maple trees were cut and harvested.

Once we got settled in, my husband decided he wanted to make maple syrup. He's originally from South Dakota and was not familiar with maple; I grew up in New Hampshire next to a neighbor's sugarhouse. The first season we attempted to make syrup with a turkey fryer. We went through a lot of propane. We boiled for 36 hours and made 3/4 of a quart. The next year my husband wanted to figure out how to have more fun and be more fuel efficient. He looked for items for backyard hobbyists and couldn't find anything that was convenient and mess free. My husband is a chemical engineer by education and so decided to mess around with a common DIY barrel/fire box he had found on Craigslist. Eventually we made an evaporator out of a 55-gallon drum with a 20x30 baffled pan on top.

This design became our Sapling Evaporator, our flagship item. Because of the cost of items, Justin made a dozen at first. We sold them on Craigslist in ten days. People as far away as Connecticut came to buy them. We quickly learned that a lot of people in Vermont had been looking for a product like this, just as we were initially. That April we went to the "Made in Vermont" event to see what people would say about our product. There was a lot of interest! After that, we decided to start making more and shortly after that the company was started and a factory was found.

The first year we made 100 evaporators. Now, that number continues to creep up along with other items including filter kits, bottles, finishing temperatures gauges and more. In the



The Vermont Evaporator Family

offseason, the Sapling Evaporator can be used as a grill. This past year we came out with a home-scaled RO machine. It's not like other items on the market. It has a UV filter which really helps hobbyists store sap for when they can boil. People in Vermont have the ability to store sap in snowbanks. People in North Carolina and Pennsylvania can't always rely on snow storage. The UV filter takes out the bacteria to help with the shelf life. Every year we add more to our store. This past year we sold maple antiquies. We're always thinking of new ways to help new people into the hobby.

CORY: Are you seeing a lot of people moving towards backyard sugaring?

KATE: I thought it was growing before COVID. This past year we've seen triple the amount of activity. We sold out of our Sapling Line in January. That never happens. As of March, we have a wait list of 200 people. That 200 is more than a usual calendar year. I'm curious to see how the trend continues after COVID. I would think some percentage will stick around.

CORY: Where have you sold your evaporators?

KATE: Recently we tallied all of the states we've sold our materials to for a New York Times article. In total, we've sold our equipment in 38 different states. Three years ago, selling our product in North Carolina would have surprised me, but



now there is so much backyard sugaring across the United States. This year alone, we picked up Kansas and Georgia as new states. The geography for our equipment is bigger than most would think. Hobbyists use our equipment for all types of maples including big leaf, red maple and Manitoba maple in the Canadian plains. Also, people are tapping Norway maples and silver maples everywhere.

CORY: Do customers share samples with you?

KATE: We talk to people in new customer states, but we've never asked for samples of their finished products. Although, we've received samples from companies. People are using our equipment beyond maple trees in their backyards. We're selling our product to people in Alaska so they can make birch syrup. Closer to home, black walnut is pretty popular. I think black walnut syrup is the closest thing in complexity and deliciousness to maple syrup. We have some customers who are doing sorghum syrup and we have a new customer in Florida who is tapping palm trees.

CORY: You mentioned an RO machine earlier, I imagine customers are happy with it?

KATE: Yes, we're actually working on a 2nd edition RO that is more powerful. We're currently working with a firm to test and refine it. Our first edition, The Sugar Cube, takes sap and concentrates it so in the end you have half the water in your sap. So, if you're at 40 gallons of sap to 1 gallon of syrup, you'll be at 20 gallons to 1 gallon after using the RO.

CORY: What's the most amount of syrup a customer has made in one season?

KATE: We try to get customers to compare stats. One to ten gallons is pretty common. I heard from a couple of customers who have sold their Sapling Evaporators and are now building their own sugarhouses. We're doing that at my house, too. We're a distributor for D&G and we're testing out one of their smaller evaporators next year.



CORY: Do you have any unique stories from customers?

KATE: I wouldn't say we have any real unique stories, but I never expected that we'd sell our products to University Extension programs or Nature Centers. We have some people doing urban sugar making in Philadelphia, which is surprising. Actually, I do have one unique connection. We sold our Sapling Evaporator to a distillery in New York who makes black walnut syrup to use in their bourbon. Then we learned that a customer in New Hampshire that bought an evaporator is making black walnut syrup for that same distillery.

CORY: In Vermont, producers reported mostly dark syrup this season. Were there other regions reporting different grades?

KATE: It's funny, the hobbyist community cares a little less about the color of their syrup, so we don't often hear what grades people were making. When you use red maple in addition to sugar maple, you never get light syrup. At my house, we start out medium every year. Our syrup was lighter than usual this year though. One person in North Carolina made all grades. I have heard from folks in the Mid Atlantic/southern sugar country that they had a great season because they had snowpack when they usually don't.

CORY: Thanks for the great interview. Have a great summer!

KATE: Thanks!

Photos Credit: Jay Ericson

If you'd like to be featured in this section in a future newsletter, please email Allison at allison@vermontmaple.org or Cory at cory@vermontmaple.org.



2021 VERMONT MAPLE CAREER DEVELOPMENT EVENT

BY MARK ISSELHARDT, UVM EXTENSION MAPLE SPECIALIST

The 2021 Vermont Maple Career Development Event (CDE) took place between May 3rd and May 7th. According to the Future Farmers of America definition, a CDE is designed to “build on what is learned in agricultural classes and encourage members to put their knowledge into practice.” They are intended to test knowledge in real world situations. The first ever Vermont Maple CDE was held at Shelburne Farms in 2019. UVM graduate student (and Shelburne Farms Market Garden Assistant Manager) Lynn Wolfe focused her master’s work on developing teaching materials and testing resources that served as the foundation of the Maple CDE. At the center of that work was the publication, “Maple: A Sap to Syrup Guide A Manual for Career and Technical Centers of Vermont” available under the “Maple Career Development” section of the University of Extension maple program site (www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/maple). The manual incorporates the latest scientific understanding on maple sap and syrup production from sources such as the University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center.

Seven schools and fifty students competed in the program which included hands on syrup grading exercises, tapping skills, tool identification, general knowledge and a video challenge, team event. Due to social gathering restrictions associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the 2020 maple CDE was canceled. Previously to 2019, Vermont students involved with regional Career and Technology Centers Natural Resources/Agriculture programs would compete in a maple syrup grading exercise that consisted of grading ten samples of syrup for color, clarity, density and flavor at the winter Vermont FFA Forestry competition. In 2018, UVM Extension Maple Specialist Mark Isselhardt took over the maple portion of the winter forestry competition that had been administered for more than 25 years by staff from Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

The 2021 CDE was modified to allow schools to compete remotely. Thirty-eight high school students from four Career and Technology Centers took part in the event; North Country Career Center (NCCC) in Newport (Sam Nijensohn-Instructor), Green Mountain Technology and Career Center (GMTCC) in Hyde Park/Hardwick, (Meghan Luther-Instructor), Canaan Career and Technology Center in Canaan, (Chris Masson-Instructor) and Patricia A Hannaford Career Center (PATCC) in Middlebury, (Aaron Townsend-Instructor). Students received sixty-five questions in four categories related to maple production: Tools and Materials, Tapping Skills, Syrup Grading and General Knowledge. The general knowledge questions ranged from tree identification and plant physiology to evaporator operation and “maple math”. The syrup grading segment required students to accurately estimate syrup density with a hydrometer at a variety of syrup temperatures. Additionally, each school was sent a set of syrup samples to grade for flavor. Each school was also invited to develop, simple short videos (2-3 min max) explaining some aspect of maple production

The top three individual student scores were; Sam Coe (NCCC), Keith Greaves (GMTCC) and Tucker Baker (GMTCC). The top three team scores were GMTCC, NCCC and Canaan. The winning team video challenge was Sam Coe and Dustin Beloin (NCCC) with their video on starting a wood fired evaporator. Medals will be sent to the teams from the Vermont FFA and prizes have been generously donated by VMSMA. Organizers, students and instructors are already anticipating the 2022 Maple CDE and a return to in-person competition.



	School	Student	Total points (out of 85 possible points)	Average	
1st Place	NCCC	Sam Coe	81	95%	
2nd Place	GMTCC	Keith Greaves	78	92%	
3rd Place	GMTCC	Tucker Baker	77	91%	
1st Place	GMTCC	Keith Greaves	78	92%	
		Tucker Baker	77	91%	
		Zachary Rhodes	76	89%	
		Gavin Grant	74	87%	90%
2nd Place	NCCC	Sam Coe	81	95%	
		Dustin Beloin	73	86%	
		Gabe Baraw	73	86%	
		Tim Smith	71	84%	88%
3rd Place	Canaan	Caleb Masson	69	81%	
		Jacy Aldrich	67	79%	
		Carter Prehemo	64	75%	
		Skyler Brady	61	72%	77%
Honorable	PAHCC	Adin Girard			
		Max Beazley			
		Braden Reynolds			
		Chris Therrien			
	Team Video	Team	Topic		
	NCCC	Sam Coe & Dustin Beloin	Firestarting and firing evaporator		



URBAN SUGAR MAKING

BY CORY AYOTTE, VMSMA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Maeve Poleman and a group of socially distanced friends gathered around a bonfire in December of 2020. Most of the evening's conversation revolved around how the pandemic had reshaped everyone's lives. The bonfire gathering created a small sense of regularity for the group and they began to wonder what can be done to create small moments of normalcy during a virus outbreak. One of the bonfire members, Will, has his own sugaring operation in Westford and talked about how shareable the boiling process is. Immediately, the group landed on the idea of a Burlington sugar making project.

Shortly after that bonfire, Maeve and friends began gathering equipment to make a backyard evaporator. The project was dubbed Tap O.N.E, with O.N.E. referencing Burlington's Old North End. However, this community project quickly grew outside of the neighborhood boundaries and into other spots of Burlington. Once word got out about the project, community members began tapping trees in their backyards. Once the sap began to run, the backyard sugar makers would bring their sap to a communal boil. Maeve and crew were immediately surprised at the traction this got. Due to Burlington's urban landscape, some community members didn't have a tree in their backyard, which created a barrier for participating. Tap O.N.E. worked with the City of Burlington to tap eight large sugar maples in Lake View Cemetery. 12 families in total took part in tapping their backyards, with many more people coming to the communal boils just to see how maple syrup is made. People with roots in Vermont and beyond came to see the action. Maeve said one lifetime Vermonter told her "my family sugared in the woods of Vermont when I was a kid. I never thought I would see sugaring in Burlington. This is amazing!" In all, a total of four gallons of maple syrup was made over the course of five communal boils (each lasting about eight hours) with the end result all going back to the families that participated.



Maeve is looking to build on the success in the coming years. She is looking into getting more supplies and looking for ways to get the community involved in the off-season, like maple ice cream making events. She wants to reach more people and more groups (including schools). She also wants to begin working with ecologists and Parks Departments to make sure the group is supporting tree health. Other plans include getting a bigger backyard setup that's more sustainable. Maeve noted that getting an RO machine is towards the top of her list. Another goal one day is to use some of the maple syrup made and use it as part of a fundraiser for local Burlington community centers and businesses. Due to its overwhelming popularity the first year, Maeve can't wait for what the years ahead bring to Tap O.N.E.



MEET VERMONT'S NEWEST MAPLE AMBASSADORS



ABIGAIL GAGNE – HIGHGATE, VT

Abigail grew up on a 350-acre sugarbush with 22,000 taps. She's been involved in maple her whole life. In her infancy, she watched her Grandfather boil sap and now today she cleans filter presses, moves barrels, cleans tanks and checks lines daily after school. She has been a volunteer at the Vermont Maple Festival since she was 12. She's been interviewed and featured in The Washington Post and Forbes Magazine. In June of 2019, she represented young females in the maple industry at The Fancy Food Show in New York City. In 2020, her family's sugarhouse held the annual Governor's Tree Tapping Ceremony, which she helped organize.



DUSTIN BELOIN – JAY, VT

Dustin lives in Jay and is an integral part of his family's 3,700 tap operation. He also helps out at his Grandfather, Jacques Couture's sugarbush as well as his neighbor's. His maple skill set ranges from setting up lines, tapping, cutting firewood, and building anything to make sugaring more efficient. Dustin currently attends North Country High School and Career Center and has been involved with Vermont FFA, holding the rank of Officer for two years, he recently just accepted the role of President for his Senior year. In his time with FFA, Dustin has helped with some of their best fundraisers, which have included making value added maple products including maple lollipops, maple sugar and coated nuts. After high school, Dustin plans to pursue a degree in Natural Resources in college.





RECIPES

MAPLE LONG BEACH

WOODS MAPLE
RANDOLPH, VERMONT

- ½ oz Vodka
- ½ oz Dark Rum
- ½ oz Sauza Tequila
- ½ oz triple sec
- ¼ oz Wood's Rum Barrel Aged Maple
- 2 oz unsweetened cranberry juice
- 1 wedge of lime for juice
- 1 wedge of lime for garnish

1. Fill your Shaker ½ with ice,
2. Add all ingredients except lime
3. Shake for 30 seconds
4. Strain into an ice filled glass of choice, add a wedge of lime for garnish and squeeze the juice of 1 lime wedge in glass, stir and sip away!



MAPLE CRISP

EVANS MAPLE FARM
DUMMERSTON, VERMONT

- 4 cored apples
- 1 Cup apple juice
- 4 Tbsp maple syrup
- Cinnamon
- Granola

1. Slice 4 cored apples into a small greased casserole dish. (You do not need to peel the apples, unless you so choose.)
2. Mix 4 tablespoons maple syrup into 1 cup of apple juice.
3. Sprinkle the apples with cinnamon. Pour the juice mixture over the apples. Sprinkle granola over the apples.
4. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until the apples are cooked to your desire. (Some people like them fully cooked and some people like them crunchy.)

We're always looking for maple recipes! We love sharing maple recipes from members in these newsletters, on social media, and online. If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send them along with photos to cory@vermontmaple.org.



Vermont Maple Sugar
Makers' Association
PO Box 83
Westford, VT 05494

SAVE THE DATES

VMSMA ANNUAL MEETING

JULY 13TH: 6-8PM

Again for 2021, we'll be hosting this meeting virtually. Topics for this year's meeting include a VMSMA Year in Review, Financial Report, Proctor Maple Update with Dr. Tim Perkins and/or Dr. Abby van den Berg, and upcoming events among other items.

TUBING & SPOUT

RECYCLING COLLECTION

S. WOODSTOCK FIREHOUSE
NOVEMBER 6TH: 9AM-12PM

The Windsor County Maple Producers Association with assistance from the Northwest, Greater Upper Valley, and So. Windsor/Windham Counties Solid Waste Districts are hosting a tubing and spout recycling event.

*Register with Mary McQuaig
802-353-3035 (cell)
802-457-3779 (landline) or
marymaple13@gmail.com*

2021 MAPLE 100

SEPTEMBER 15TH - OCTOBER 15TH

Pre-register (<https://vermontworkinglands.wufoo.com/forms/2021-maple-100-preregistration/>) and showcase your business with tastings, sugarhouse tours, or any other maple focused activity/event.



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