

2021 VERMONT MAPLE CONFERENCE WEEK

Welcome to Vermont's Maple Conference Week
Wednesday, December 8 - Saturday, December 11

University of Vermont Extension and Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association are pleased to host the 2021 Vermont Maple Conference Week. We continue to design conference sessions for anyone who wants to learn about maple production, whether you are an existing sugar maker, looking to become one, a forester who works with maple producers or a forest landowner looking to lease to a producer.

Once again, you'll notice some changes this year (as you probably continue to experience in most areas of your life since March 2020). Last year, we moved the conference online for an entire week in December vs the traditional two in-person conferences in January. Attendees told us they liked the online portions, but we all acknowledge that in-person time is also very important. This year, we're offering three online conference days (Wednesday – Friday) and one in-person day (Saturday) at Vermont Technical College (VTC) in Randolph. This one-day event combines conferences held in Hyde Park and Brattleboro in one central location. In addition to the standard format of technical sessions, we are excited to partner with Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM) to offer free syrup hydrometer testing and a tour of the State metrology lab that tests thousands of sap and syrup hydrometers every year.

We'll make every effort to retain the in-person Saturday sessions, but there's also a chance that the state of things in Vermont may require us to cancel. We continue to think creatively about how to offer meaningful interaction and education and do so in a way that's safe for everyone.

You'll notice some similarities to last year's conference. We're offering three separate, interactive online sessions for the first three days of the conference (morning, noon and evening). We plan to offer our usual in-person welcome messages and the popular Industry Panel in-person on Saturday at VTC, along with our usual tradeshow. The online and in-person sessions will be recorded, so that after the conference you can watch them on your own time. Sessions will be focused around our usual tracks: Maple Business Management, Regulations and Maple, Sugarbush Health, Marketing and Media, and Maple Production and Innovation.

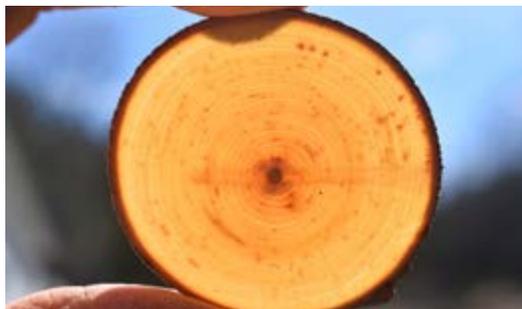
There are two fee levels for the conference this year – one that includes the entire conference (the online sessions, the in-person Saturday sessions and Saturday lunch), and one for just the online portions. We created these fees to be affordable for attendees, but also help us cover the cost of offering Maple Conference Week this year. We're excited for the upcoming sessions and the discussions they generate. We are also looking forward to feedback from participants about what they'd like to see more of and what could use improvement.

Registration is available online through the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association website www.vermontmaple.org/maple-conferences. If you need assistance along the way, please reach out to VMSMA staff. Remember to register for each session that you want to attend, including the Saturday in-person event. After you register for a session, we will send you reminder emails and specific instructions on how to log in so you can join us and actively participate in the discussions!

“See you” at the conferences, online and in-person!

Mark Isselhardt
Maple Specialist
University of Vermont Extension

Allison Hope
Executive Director
Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association



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HOW TO REGISTER

To register, please visit the conference registration link on the VMSMA website. Some of this conference will take place online, and some of it will be in-person. You can register for any of the online sessions (\$10) or for both the online sessions and the Saturday in-person event with lunch (\$25). You will receive a confirmation email with specific information on how to log on or dial into each online session (so if you register for 6 sessions, for example, you will receive 6 confirmation emails). Registration for each online session closes 24 hours before its scheduled date and time. Registration for our in-person Saturday event closes on Wednesday, December 8. *Questions?* Get in touch with Cory or Allison using their contact information below.

WHEN

ONLINE: Wednesday, December 8 - Friday, December 10

IN-PERSON: Saturday, December 11 at Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT

REGISTER HERE

www.vermontmaple.org/maple-conferences

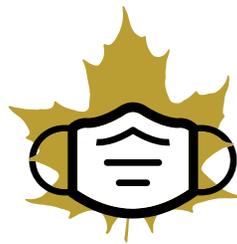
REGISTRATION DEADLINE

ONLINE: 24 hours before individual online session **COST:** \$10

IN-PERSON: Wednesday, 12/8 **COST:** \$25

NEED HELP?

Contact Cory Ayotte: cory@vermontmaple.org; 802-786-9437 or
Allison Hope: allison@vermontmaple.org; 802-777-2667



Some notes on an in-person conference in the midst of a continuing pandemic...

At the time of this brochure printing, we will be requiring all participants (except those presenting at any given time or during lunch) to wear masks while indoors, regardless of vaccination status. As with all gatherings, there is a chance that circumstances may require us, as the event hosts, or VTC to cancel the in-person events. Our goal is to leave room for this decision so we can move some of the sessions to an online format, rather than lose them altogether. We are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to pull off an in-person event, but these days it's hard to predict too far into the future. If we have to cancel (or move to online for some sessions), we will refund your registration for the in-person portion of the conference and for lunch.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

ONLINE

9:00-10:00am

Small Scale Maple Production: In the Sugarbush & Sap Collection

Mark Isselhardt, Maple Specialist, University of Vermont Extension

This presentation will cover issues from maple tree identification and health to various sap collection methods for small scale producers, those just getting into maple syrup production and those who enjoy small scale production.

12:00-1:00pm

Food Safety & Quality Issues in Maple

Jean Jones, Quality Assurance & Sanitation Manager, Butternut Mountain Farm

Pure maple syrup is generally considered a “low-risk” food in terms of food safety regulations and following good production practices can limit the risks even further. This presentation will cover food safety issues related to production, bottling and storage of pure maple syrup.

5:00-6:00pm

Maple Quality in the Marketplace Today

Mark Cannella, Extension Associate Professor, University of Vermont Extension

250 maple containers of pure maple syrup were purchased online in 2020 and tested for density, color grade and flavor. Learn how many samples met the grading standards, how different testing instruments compare, the most common grading problems and some best practices to ensure high quality syrup reaches your customers.



All photo credits: UVM Extension

9:00-10:00am

Welcoming Visitors in your Sugarhouse and Sugarbush

Lisa Chase, University of Vermont Extension & the Vermont Tourism Research Center

Alissa Matthews, Vermont Agency of Agriculture

Vera Simon-Nobes, Shelburne Farms & the Farm-Based Education Network

Do you sell your maple products or give tours at your sugarhouse? Is your sugarbush open for hiking? Thinking about it, but not sure? Join us for a discussion about marketing, safety, liability, and other considerations. We'll share information (and let you know how to get free signs) for Maple 100, Open Farm Week, and the new agritourism limited liability statute – and we'll make time for a round robin about what would be most helpful for your sugaring operation.

12:00-1:00pm

Sugarhouse Certification Program: The Basics

Arnie Piper, VMSMA Board Member & Education Committee Member

VMSMA launched the Sugarhouse Certification Program last spring. What has changed, what's new on the Checklist, what kinds of resources are available for sugar makers, and what does the future hold for Certification? Join Arnie and other VMSMA Education Committee members for a discussion of all things Certification. Bring your questions and feedback!

5:00-6:00pm

Are Sweet Trees Actually Sweet?

Adam Wild, Director of the Uihlein Maple Research Forest, Cornell University

The Cornell Maple Program in Lake Placid, NY has been managing groves of sugar maples selected and propagated for having genetically sweeter sap for close to 40 years. Are these trees actually sweeter and how much sap do they produce? Recent sampling looked back over the plantation to test the heritability of sap sweetness.

9:00-10:00am

Sugarhouse Certification Program: A Deeper Dive

Arnie Piper, VMSMA Board Member & Education Committee Member

VMSMA launched the Sugarhouse Certification Program last spring. Since then, we've been busy sharing information and resources with sugar makers to help them plan for a successful Certification. How have the Certifications been going, what have Certifiers noticed in sugar houses, and how are we working toward getting more sugar makers Certified? We'll talk about these topics and others as we share information and updated resources and answer any questions

12:00-1:00pm

Small Scale Maple Production: In the Sugarhouse and Quality Syrup Production

Mark Isselhardt, Maple Specialist, University of Vermont Extension

This presentation (with time for questions) is designed to cover topics from small RO units, evaporator types and operation and syrup grading for small scale producers, those just getting into maple syrup production and those who enjoy small scale production.

5:00-6:00pm

Ask Dr. Tim

Dr. Tim Perkins, Director University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center

With a long and distinguished career in maple research, Tim Perkins has been directly involved in many of the areas of study responsible for increases in yields over the past 25 years. As the session name suggests, bring your questions about any and all topics related to maple production. We look forward to a lively discussion!

Vendor Tradeshow

It's been almost two years since we've had a chance to see peers in person, so we're bringing back the tradeshow for this year's conference. There will be ample opportunity to visit with each of our tradeshow vendors throughout the day!

Industry Panel Discussion

It's back - an in-person industry panel! The ongoing COVID pandemic has had significant impacts to the maple industry - from reduced container availability, supply chain disruptions, competition for forestland and consumer demand for syrup reaching new highs, the maple industry has not been insulated from the global economy. Bring your questions for panelists and add to the discussion of where the maple industry is headed.

Research Update from the UVM Proctor Maple Research Center

Abby van den Berg, Ph.D., Research Associate Professor, UVM Proctor Maple Research Center

Back by popular demand! Abby van den Berg will share results and progress from various research projects on maximizing yields and sustainability at the UVM Proctor Maple Research Center.

Total Yields from Red Maple Trees

Abby van den Berg, Ph.D., Research Associate Professor, UVM Proctor Maple Research Center

Red maple trees are sometimes ignored as crop trees for maple production due to several persistent beliefs, including that they produce lower yields than sugar maple trees. This study quantified the total annual yields from red maple trees to examine this belief empirically.

Small Scale Maple Production

Mark Isselhardt, Maple Specialist, University of Vermont Extension

Kate Whelley McCabe, Owner, Vermont Evaporator Company

From people who tapped their first maple during the COVID pandemic to sugar makers who prefer to make syrup from a small number of trees, this discussion will touch on all aspects of syrup production from tree identification, tapping, sap collection, mini-RO, syrup production, filtering, grading and bottling. Bring your questions as well as creative hacks for making syrup on a small scale more enjoyable.

Sugar Maple Health & Climate Change

Alexandra Kosiba, Climate Forester, Vermont Department of Forest Parks and Recreation

There has been a lot of research over the years investigating the health and productivity of sugar maple in Vermont and the broader region. What do these findings tell us about how sugar maple might fair under a changing climate? Are there strategies that can be used to bolster the resilience of sugar maple?

Maple Inspection Highlights from 2021 and State Hydrometer Testing Program

Tucker Diego, Agricultural Products Manager, Consumer Protection Section, VAAFM
Marc Paquette, Weights & Measures Section Chief & Metrologist, VAAFM

Tucker Diego shares highlights from this year's maple product retail inspections, reviews common issues, and answers your burning questions about maple regulations. Marc Paquette will briefly share updates on the sap and syrup hydrometer testing program at the VAAFM State Metrology Lab.

Tour of State Hydrometer Testing Lab

Marc Paquette, Weights & Measures
Section Chief & Metrologist, VAAFM

We'll take advantage of the fact that our in-person sessions are being held at the same location as the state's hydrometer testing lab. Pre-register and join us as Marc offers a tour behind the scenes to share the lab and how he tests hydrometers for Vermont's sugar makers.

Sugarhouse Certification: Get Your Documents Ready

Jason Gagne, VMSMA Board Member
& Education Committee

Join us in this "hands on" session to get rolling with Certification documentation! Perhaps you have a perfectly neat binder with all your SOPs, safety data sheets, sugarbush maps, and logs ready for Certification. But what if you don't? Getting started might feel overwhelming. We're here to make it easier and we have sample written documentation for almost everything! We'll have printed copies of the Sugarhouse Certification Checklist and all associated templates to get you started. Bring your existing documentation (or just what's in your head) and we'll have experienced sugar makers on hand to help get you ready to add new items, update current items or start from scratch!

State of Maple Health in Vermont

Joshua Halman, Forest Health Specialist,
Vermont Department of Forests,
Parks & Recreation

From abnormally dry growing conditions, spotted lanternfly interception, emerald ash borer, gypsy moth defoliation and more, Vermont's forests are subject to many biotic and abiotic stresses. Forest health monitoring is an important part of keeping sugarbushes healthy and sugar makers, foresters and landowners informed. This session will provide an update on the health of maple in Vermont.

Hydrometer Testing

It's time to have your hydrometers tested! Bring your hydrometers to the in-person conference at Vermont Technical College. Drop them off in the morning and they'll be ready by the end of lunch.

	8:00-9:00	9:00-9:30	9:30-10:30	10:30-11:15	11:15-11:45	11:45-12:30	12:45-1:45	2:00-3:00	3:15-4:30
Entry & Other	Registration Hydrometer Testing								Tour of State Hydrometer Testing Lab
Judd Hall	Coffee & Tradeshow	Welcome & Updates	Industry Panel	Proctor Maple Research Center Updates	Tradeshow	Tradeshow Lunch	Tradeshow	Tradeshow	Tradeshow
Room 1							Small Scale Maple Production	Sugarhouse Certification Documentation	
Room 2							Maple Inspections & State Hydrometer Testing	Sugar Maple Health & Climate Change	
Room 3							Total Yields from Red Maple Trees	State of Maple Health in VT	



Vermont Maple Sugar
Makers' Association
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Westford, VT 05494



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UVM Extension helps individuals and communities put research-based knowledge to work. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Vermont Extension, Burlington, Vermont

University of Vermont Extension, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating, offer education and employment to everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

Individuals requesting a disability-related accommodation to participate in this program should contact Cory Ayotte at 802-786-9437 by November 30, 2021.