

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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THE MAPLE 100: A FALL CELEBRATION

BY ALLISON HOPE, VMSMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This fall, VMSMA, along with The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM) and Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing are partnering to celebrate the maple industry, specialty products, and maple inspired activities all across the state in a campaign that will run starting in mid-September and continue throughout October. We've been sharing updates with you for the past several months about this upcoming fall maple celebration which is being created as part of a VAAFAM federal grant. We're ready to open registration for this new fall event; registration will be free for this first year!

VAAFAM has decided to name this new celebration "The Maple 100". Since we hadn't planned to have our first year during a pandemic, we're building in some in-person and virtual events and creating a foundation for many successful years of The Maple 100. It's meant to be a fall celebration of all things maple in Vermont; it's a chance for visitors and locals alike to discover hundreds of maple activities, adventures, and maple-inspired products across the state. The Maple 100 encourages consumers to explore a new and wonderfully unexpected side of maple.

We're looking for sugar makers to participate in The Maple 100 at any time from September 18th through October 31st. Participation could be as simple as promoting a maple-inspired product to hosting an on-farm event or offering hiking and biking on trails in your sugarbush. It's free to participate this year, in whatever way feels comfortable to you, with marketing partnership provided by VAAFAM and the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing.

There's still time to sign up!

Follow this link to answer a few questions and register:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H6FNF8T>





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 July 29, 2020, Allison had a conversation with Ed Smith of Smith Family Maple in Cambridgeport, Vermont. Ed recently joined the VMSMA Board as a representative for Windham County.

ED: I texted you some pictures just now, ahead of our conversation, so you could see what I was talking about when I mention my collection of syrup pitchers. I have over 250 syrup pourers in my sugarhouse, so it's a topic of conversation when we have visitors.

ALLISON: That is a lot of syrup pitchers! I've been using mason jars to keep my opened syrup in the fridge, but I might have to invest in a pitcher myself. The mason jars are hard to open when syrup gets on the rim...and they're a little messy.

ED: The other pictures are from a photo shoot for Vermont Country Store in Weston about four or five years ago. They wanted pictures for their catalogue and their website. I wasn't supposed to be in the pictures, but I ended up in the photo shoot for firing gloves and some sugarhouse shots.

ALLISON: So you're a sugar maker and a hand model?

ED: I guess so! If you look closely at the pictures you can see that they used cotton batting for snow in front of the sugar house. They also used cornstarch to resemble snowflakes.

I'm semi-retired and work part-time for Vermont Country Store doing carpentry projects. So the pandemic has me installing new doors and old windows (instead of the plexi-glass that many retailers are using) as sneeze guards near the registers for social distancing. I also sell my syrup to their café and they use it in their creemees at Mildred's Dairy Bar as well. I don't make enough syrup to sell through their catalogue.



A small portion of Ed's collection of over 250 syrup pitchers

ALLISON: How much syrup do you make in an average year?

ED: I make about 200 gallons of syrup a year. I tap on my own five acres and also tap on about 120 acres leased from the Vermont Land Trust and on 150-200 acres of ag land. Twenty years ago, this was farmland that was home to 20 head of cattle and 200 sheep.

I have about 800 taps now; down from 1,000, when I also used to have about 200 buckets. As the kids got older, I decided to give up the buckets. About two thirds of the taps are on vacuum, and the others are gravity fed. I'm planning to increase to 1,500-2,000 taps on additional land from the Vermont Land Trust. But I'll be 64 next July...

ALLISON: Which is still quite young!

ED: ...and I'm semi-retired, so I probably won't grow beyond that. I retired last December after 15 years with the Townshend Highway Department. *Sidenote: This comment started a whole side conversation about small towns, gravel roads and highway departments for Ed and Allison, since we both have that in common!*

ALLISON: How (and when) did you start sugaring?

ED: In grade school, probably 5th or 6th grade, we went on a field trip to a sugarhouse. After that, I started to tap a few trees in our yard, using a #10 can from the kitchen. I boiled in our kitchen at home, but ended up peeling the wallpaper, which didn't really make my mom happy, so she kicked me outside where I used a flat pan on cement blocks. I made some pretty dark syrup as a kid!

Since then, I've always worked on farms that also sugared and would make and sell syrup, and sell firewood...just like many Vermonters, whatever you need to do to make a living.



About 12 or 13 years ago, I built a new sugarhouse on my property. The sugarhouse I had used previously was on the farm I worked at. It was basically a woodshed with a roof and no sides. Since boiling season is about the same time as lambing season, it allowed me to check on the sheep nearby regularly.

Most everything I make is sold out of the sugarhouse or our home; I usually sell everything I make. I also sell to Grace Cottage Hospital where the chef is into the localvore movement and buys a lot of food locally. When Vermonters are sick and in the hospital, they want real Vermont maple syrup. I have a friend who owns an ice cream stand in Oregon; she's still writing her business plan, but hopes to buy syrup from me as well. And I also sell to an Amish woman who owns a farm stand in Pennsylvania.

ALLISON: How did you set up that relationship?

ED: My wife and I visit Pennsylvania every year around the first of August for the Threshermen's Reunion, for about the past 15 years. We got into the habit of stopping at a local farm stand in town and got to talking to the owner who sells vegetables, baked goods and crafts. We'd have iced tea with her on the porch and we got to talking about maple syrup. So she sells our syrup and she and my wife write letters throughout the year.

ALLISON: Is someone in your family going to continue sugaring after you're fully retired?

ED: I hope one of my daughters will keep it going. My youngest is a buyer at Vermont Country Store; she likes to help with boiling and with visitors during Maple Open House Weekend. My oldest daughter and her boyfriend like to spend time in the woods, walking the lines and checking for leaks. They'll come over after work and use headlamps to find their way through the woods. And we now have four generations in the sugarhouse between my father and my grandkids.

For open houses, we give syrup samples and corn fritters to visitors.

ALLISON: Corn fritters?

ED: Corn fritters. Every open house since I opened the sugarhouse. My mom used to make them. We use whole kernel corn and fritter batter and deep fry it and of course put maple syrup on it. Some people like fried dough, but we've always done corn fritters.

Wow! Thank you for sharing some of your stories and your pictures; I really look forward to sharing these with our members and will keep an eye out in the next Vermont Country Store catalogue for your picture (or your hands)!



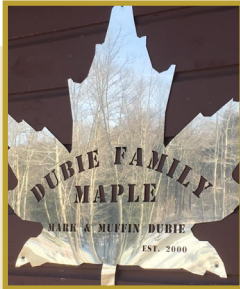
If you'd like to be featured in this section in a future newsletter, please email Allison at allison@vermontmaple.org or Cory at cory@vermontmaple.org.



VMSMA MAPLE AWARDS

BY CORY AYOTTE, VMSMA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

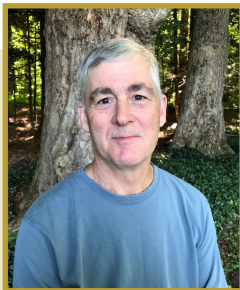
The Board of Directors of the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association (VMSMA) selects members each year for its Annual Maple Awards: Outstanding Sugar Maker, Vermont Maple Person of the Year, and the Sumner Williams Lifetime Achievement Award. The 2020 Awards were presented by Sam Cutting IV at the Association's Annual Meeting held on Zoom on July 22, 2020.



OUTSTANDING SUGARMAKER AWARD:

DUBIE FAMILY MAPLE

The VMSMA Board selects a Vermont sugar maker, individual, or family who sets a good example for other sugar makers to follow in cleanliness, food safety and production practices. In addition, nominees for this award help the maple industry by participating in county and state-wide fairs to promote and educate future sugar makers and the general public on the benefits of pure Vermont maple syrup. This year, the Award was presented to Dubie Family Maple (Mark, Marianne and Nate), who have built an impressive sugaring operation in Fairfield, Vermont with hard work and pride since the year 2000. Their operation has grown over the years and the next generation has become intricately involved. Their certified organic maple syrup has even been served at the White House!



VERMONT MAPLE PERSON AWARD:

ARNIE PIPER

As the current Vice Chair of the VMSMA Board, Arnie has not only stepped up this year, but for many years, devoting countless hours of his time. He has been involved in sharing knowledge, assisting with VMSMA's annual maple schools, supporting VMSMA's sugarhouse certification program, and helping with the transition in VMSMA's Executive Director position among other things. Arnie sugars in Hyde Park as Umbrella Hill Maple.



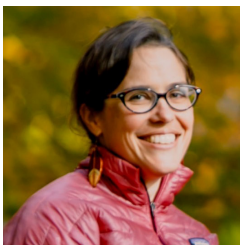
SUMNER WILLIAMS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:

DR. ABBY VAN DEN BERG

This award is presented in memory of Sumner Williams, the Assistant Director of the UVM Proctor Maple Research Center. In honor of him, the VMSMA Board recognizes outstanding service and dedication to the Vermont maple industry. This year's recipient is Dr. Abby van den Berg, a research associate professor with UVM's Proctor Maple Research Center. She has dedicated her career to exploring the many facets of maple; she's unsurpassed in scientific integrity and the quality of her work; and her interests have spanned every area, from the ecophysiology of the maple tree to quantifying the unquantifiable. She is completely approachable to anyone in every maple conversation. She always lends significant credibility and knowledge, whether it is with traditional maple practices or moving the industry forward with state-of-the-art techniques. While the Board generally presents this award to someone who might be nearing the end of their career, the Board wanted to recognize Dr. van den Berg's important accomplishments to date and note that they look forward to working with her for many years to come!



NOTE FROM CHAIR OF BOARD



ADAPTING TO COVID-19 AND LOOKING AHEAD

BY EMMA MARVIN, VMSMA CHAIR

I've been thinking a lot about how we, VMSMA, best serve our membership during COVID-19. What should we be doing that we aren't? What are we doing that we should keep doing? And, what are we doing that simply doesn't make sense to do anymore?

When the Board responded to the above questions what they shared was thoughtful and wise: adapt our interactions, be responsive and communicative, and be willing to go virtual.

We're doing just that. We're finding new ways to work. We're focusing on what is core to VMSMA. We're continuing to fulfill our mission, and support the interests of Vermont Maple Sugar Makers. We're continuing to pursue the development of programs critical to the continued success of the industry. The Sugarhouse Certification Program development continues with the checklist being used to do mock inspections at a handful of operations. Planning for a Fall Open House continues with the goal of keeping maple front and center of people's minds this fall whether they have a chance to visit Vermont or not. The Maple Schools will happen this winter and we're working with our partners to figure out how to develop and deliver meaningful content. All this in addition to continuing to improve our communication and increase the visibility of Vermont Maple through social media and other channels.

There's a dedicated staff and board that continue to engage in the challenges we face today, while keeping an eye towards ensuring a bright and fruitful future for Vermont Maple. Please reach out if you have thoughts about what we're doing, not doing or should be doing. Your voice is important and we appreciate your insights and input.

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YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Peter Purinton | Huntington, VT

Kerry Sedutto | The Sugarman, Hardwick, VT





UVM PMRC UPDATE — 2020 PANDEMIC EDITION

BY DR. TIM PERKINS, PROCTOR MAPLE RESEARCH CENTER

To say it's been a strange year so far is an understatement, but I suppose everybody is feeling that way.

Early in 2020 Wade Bosley was promoted to "Maple Operations Manager" and Steve "Jed" Abair was hired as a "Maintenance Specialist", which encompasses several functions involving the PMRC facilities and assisting in the sugaring operation. After the "Stay-at-Home" order was announced, Wade, Jed, and Brendan Haynes (Research Technician) were deemed "essential agricultural employees" and allowed to continue to work onsite. Mark Isselhardt, Dr. Abby van den Berg, and I were asked to work from home. Fortunately, the majority of the research projects were continuations from previous years, so the protocols were well established and there were no big surprises. The crew that remained onsite worked together to pull off a very successful research and production season, making 7.5 lbs/tap (slightly above our average) from PMRC's 5,150 tap operation. While a lot of syrup came in, not much went out the door since all the students had left campus.

Since the season ended the crew has been doing a lot of thinning in preparation for a 1,000 tap expansion. This new addition is both a production and research project. The tubing will be split into two parts, one collecting red maple sap and the other collecting sugar maple sap (about 500 taps each). In 2021, Abby will measure sap yield and sugar content from the two systems (red vs sugar), the date at which sap turns buddy, and make maple syrup from the two different sap sources in the Maple Processing Research Facility using a new CDL supplied RO and two identical evaporators. Expect to be asked in the future to help us with some blind taste-testing. She's also conducting a study with chambers on individual trees to quantify yields and sap flow timing in red maple.

Along with the new collection system, we are also setting up a new collection station and will pump sap from our lower bush directly to the Sumner Williams Sugarhouse...eliminating the need to truck sap. Full implementation of that plan will take a few years, but we're well on the way towards making it happen.

Besides that, Abby and I are keeping busy preparing grants, analyzing data, writing articles and reports, and editing chapters for the upcoming 3rd Edition of the North American Maple Producers Manual, with an expected release in late 2021. There is currently a travel ban for UVM employees, so we're not sure yet what's going to happen for the 2021 maple conferences (in Vermont or elsewhere), but it'll all work out one way or another. In the meantime, we'll be giving presentations online and continuing to publish results of our latest work. Check www.uvm.edu/pmrc, www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/maple, www.maplemanager.org, and equipment manufacturer websites for upcoming events, and www.mapleresearch.org and the PMRC YouTube channel www.youtube.com/c/UVMProctorMapleResearchCenter/ playlists for our latest articles, videos, and recorded presentations.

At the University of Vermont Extension, work to support Vermont maple producers continued despite the many closures and cancellations related to COVID-19. A review of questions from producers, maple industry groups, state and federal agencies and private citizens illustrates the many facets of maple. For example: "How much loss is anticipated from raw to finished syrup?" (Estimates are between ~5% in operations using RO). "What is the market rate for leasing taps?" (It depends on many factors but generally, the more competition from other producers the higher the cost. Most common price is \$1/tap but the range is generally \$0.50-2.00 with Franklin County representing the high end). "Ask the Team" is available to help answer maple management questions, keep them coming: www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/maple/bizmodules/node/7321

Two surveys were successfully completed as part of the USDA Acer Access grant awarded to Mark Cannella and Mark Isselhardt. One survey was focused on maple producers and sought to better understand the current state of production and forestry practices, economic sustainability and needs for educational materials. The data from over 300 responses are currently being analyzed and will result in new publications and online tools. The second survey was focused on understanding how professional



foresters approach sugarbush management. The responses represented management on over 180,000 acres of sugarbush in the northeast U.S. When summarized, the data will help sugar makers, landowners and foresters better understand, plan and execute management activities related to maple production. In addition to the forester survey, a team comprised of Dr. Abby van den Berg and Dr. Tony D'Amato (UVM Forestry) and myself are developing a tool which will take commonly collected forest inventory data and provide estimates of potential sap production.

An updated and annotated UVM Extension guide to developing a sugarbush lease is now available. This educational resource is designed for maple syrup producers, maple sap producers, foresters and forest land owners to consider, discuss and formalize lease agreements. This resource is not intended to replace the guidance of a legal professional. The situation for each person and party is different and professional legal assistance is recommended to ensure your business agreements are accurate, appropriate and complete. The guide can be found in the "Maple Resource Library" at www.maplemanager.org

The Vermont Maple Minute is a project that produces short audio recordings meant to highlight the broad range of issues related to maple production from tree to bottle. After airing on local radio, each of the more than fifty recordings are available on the UVM Extension Maple website: www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/vermont-maple-minute

Best,
 Dr. Tim Perkins, Director
 Dr. Abby van den Berg, Assistant Director
 UVM Proctor Maple Res Ctr
 Mark Isselhardt
 UVM Extension Maple Specialist



Left to Right -- Brendan Haynes, "Jed" Abair, and Wade Bosley, University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center 2020.



VMSMA BOARD FORMS AN AUDIT COMMITTEE

BY ALLISON HOPE, VMSMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The VMSMA Board formed an Audit Committee to review the FY2019 financials, receive additional documentation from the Executive Director, and make recommendations about areas for improvement. This new Audit Committee met (via Zoom) on August 5 and August 20 and includes VMSMA member Bill LaPorte and VMSMA Board members Donna Young, Arnie Piper, Mark Bigelow, and Dave Folino. The Committee received a packet of information prior to the August 5 meeting including: draft committee process, the VMSMA chart of accounts, December 2019 bank statements, FY19 detailed revenue and expense transactions by account code and date, and the 2018 audit report.

Within the two meetings, the Committee reviewed specific revenue and expense transactions and then quickly honed in on “risk management” topics. One major topic of discussion was cash handling throughout the year – what are the processes and how can we ensure that we build in the appropriate checks and balances. For the majority of events VMSMA staff attends or hosts, there is limited cash handling; however, the cash managed by volunteers and staff at the Big E is significant in terms of the Association’s overall revenue budget. As we won’t be attending the Big E until 2021, we’ll be drafting these policies and procedures sometime in the next several months for committee and then Board review.

The other risk management conversation focused on VMSMA insurance coverage. The Committee asked specific questions about existing insurance policies and additional coverage that should be explored. Two areas for research involved workers’ compensation insurance and a directors’ and officers’ insurance policy.

We initially intended for the Audit Committee to finish their work in two meetings; however, the conversation turned to broader, but still very important topics, and we’ll be meeting in the future to ensure that we’ve managed risks appropriately and in a fiscally responsible way to our members. Many thanks to Committee members for continuing to serve and providing support to VMSMA!





RECIPES

MAPLE KAFFIR LIME GIN & TONIC

THREE PEAKS MAPLE – NEWARK, VERMONT

- 3 Parts Gin
 - 1 Part Key Lime Juice
 - 1 Part Maple Syrup
 - 1 Kaffir Lime Leaf
 - Tonic
1. Muddle lime leaf in shaker.
 2. Add remaining ingredients and shake vigorously for 15-20 seconds.
 3. Pour over ice. Top with tonic, serve with a lime wedge.



MAPLE KETCHUP

MOMMYPOTAMUS.COM

- 12-14 oz tomato paste
 - 1/3 cup maple syrup (to taste)
 - 7 ½ tbsp apple cider vinegar
 - 2 tbsp onion powder
 - 1 tsp unrefined sea salt
1. Place all ingredients in a small pot/pan and whisk together.
 2. Place on the stove and bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until reduced to the consistency you prefer. Store in the fridge.



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.

UPDATE: POLYCARBONATE SPOUT RECYCLING INITIATIVE

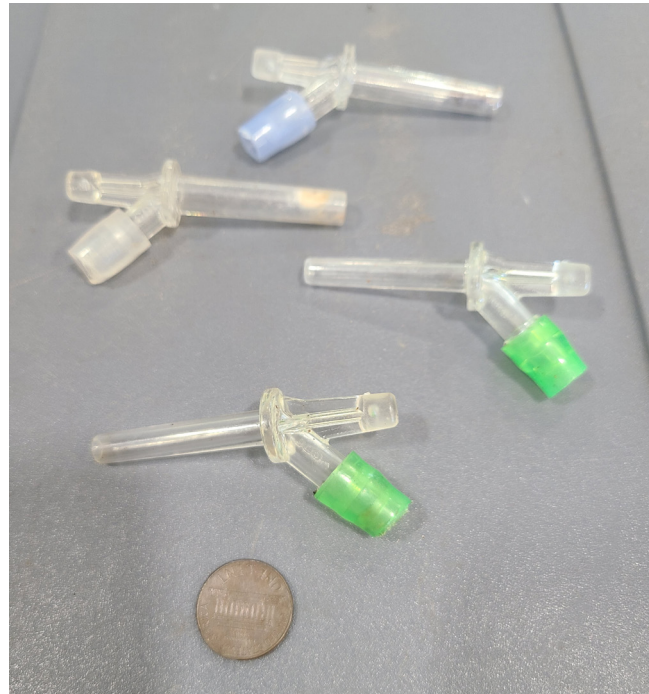
BY RICHARD A. BACKER, NORTHWEST VERMONT SOLID WASTE DISTRICT

The Northwest Vermont Solid Waste District [NWSWD] continues to seek alternatives to landfilling polycarbonate spouts [PC spouts]. Unfortunately, NWSWD has been unsuccessful during the prior 8 months in identifying a downstream facility with the in-house capacity to fully process PC spouts. Clear PC spout samples shipped to an Illinois processor did not result in advancing to bench-level processing.

Fully processing PC spouts will require three steps: grinding, washing and flotation separation to remove sapline contaminant plastic and other debris. Complicating the processing requirements, PC spouts intended for recycling compete with higher-value commodity market PC materials that are clean and without contaminant plastics. Cost effectively producing a PC spout grind material for blending with higher quality PC resins will be difficult, as most recycling facilities are only equipped with a grinding line and not equipped with a wash and flotation line.

Additionally, PC spouts are available in several colors or tints and it appears that a successful recycling program will likely require spout separation by tint or color. Currently, NWSWD's initiative remains focused on clear PC spouts.

The ease and familiarity of sending trash to the landfill competes with the difficulty and costs of developing an alternative that will recycle single use plastic PC spouts. NWSWD has collected approximately 1,000 pounds of clear PC spouts, remains committed to identifying a downstream processor for a bench-level scale test and looks forward to updating interested Vermont syrup producers with another update later in the year.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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 PO Box 83
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2020 MAPLE CONFERENCE WEEK:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6TH - FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11TH

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN VMSMA AND UVM EXTENSION



Because we need to take our Maple Conferences virtual this year, we're setting aside a whole week in December to bring you a Sunday evening Industry Panel and 3 separate interactive, online sessions each day (morning, lunchtime and evening). Registration will be required (but it's free this year!) and because we're virtual you won't have to choose between sessions that are happening at the same time. We'll record everything so you can watch any session at a later date as well.

NEW THIS YEAR!

"Tele-Maple Medicine: Why Does My Syrup Taste Sick?" - A session where you can send us a 2 oz sample of your off-flavor syrup for panelists to create a live show, tasting and diagnosing the issue. We'll code your syrup so only you will know that the panelists are reviewing your sample during the session. Interested in participating in this particular session? Please mail 2 oz of your off-flavor syrup to VMSMA, PO Box 83, Westford VT 05494 with your name and contact information by Monday, November 23 and we'll use it for Tele-Maple Medicine! Don't worry, we'll remind you a few more times before Maple Conference Week!



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