



Quarterly Newsletter

December 2025

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## Producer Spotlight Libby Maple & Tree Farm



## President's Message

As the days continue to get shorter and the cold settles in for winter, it can only mean that maple season is just around the corner. If you're like me, there's never enough time to prepare for next season. Despite all our efforts, sugaring always seems to start before we do.

Our autumn has been focused on maple. Starting with Fryeburg Fair and the work to get the new Maine Maple Producers Association Education and Sales display set up, to the Fall Maple Event, a trip to Michigan for the North American Maple Syrup Council meeting followed by another trip to New York to pick up a new-to-us evaporator and then non-stop work in expanding a sugarbush for the last month. It's been all maple all the time. There are worse ways to spend time and money.

The trip to Michigan for the NAMSC meeting was extremely educational and interesting, and we're already planning for Ontario 2026. I highly encourage all of our members to take advantage of the benefits of NAMSC. From the Maple Digest to the MapleResearch.org website, membership has its benefits. Please use them. (See the NAMSC summary report on page 7.)

A reminder, we have numerous committees that work diligently to plan and coordinate the various events our association is involved in. New ideas, voices, and hands are always welcome. Please reach out if you would like to assist in some way.

There are several upcoming 2026 events that should be on your calendar, and I encourage all our members to participate in:

- January 14, Education program at the Agricultural Trade Show.
- January 14, Annual Meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Agricultural Trade Show.
- March 10, 1:00 p.m. Governor's Tree Tapping.
- March 22, Maine Maple Sunday.
- June 26 and 27, Maple Mania at the Windsor Fairgrounds.

The effort to bring back Maple Mania is well underway. If you'd like to assist with planning or have ideas to contribute, contact one of the committee members to participate.

Have a safe and peaceful holiday season.

*Thank you!*

A. T. Greene  
President

## Producer Spotlight ~ Libby Maple & Tree Farm, Jay and Kathryn Libby, Cornville, Maine, Somerset County

Jay and Kathryn Libby have been sugaring for 30 years. After attending a Maine Maple Sunday with their three boys they were hooked! They thought making maple syrup would be a good way to engage their boys in an activity that took place outside and would provide an activity they could do as a family every Spring. They began the old-fashioned way with buckets on the trees with their young family working together each season to collect and boil sap. Jay and Kathryn are proud to say they have kept the process as simple as possible, producing small batch maple using firewood harvested from their property. The sugarbush is located on the Libby's 150-acre property; all 1,200 taps are on their property, and "there's plenty of room for growth without having to tap elsewhere." The Libbys were named the 2025 Outstanding Tree Farm of the Year. See the end of the Spotlight on page 3 for more on their award.



### The operation...collecting, boiling and finishing

We purchased our first evaporator in 1999 at the Skowhegan State Fair, a 2 x 6 Dominion & Grimm. We upgraded again in 2007 to a 3 x 10 Patrick Phaneuf, and once again in 2024 to our current 3 x 12 Lapiere Vision. Each year we have added additional taps and eventually tubing as collection has increased. Sap is collected in a 350-gallon tank with a pump, collecting from several tanks that are roadside on our property. We have 350 taps on a pump, and the remainder are on gravity feed to nine collection tanks.



We are proud to say that we keep our process as simple as possible, and we are doing our best not to use other fuel sources such as electric and oil. Sap goes to syrup on the boiler itself (no reverse osmosis). There is a natural draft to the firebox; approximately 10 cords of wood are used each season to fuel the evaporator. The wood is collected on our property in the off season, and nothing goes to waste; there is a use for every product that is produced on our farm. A steam away hood with a pre-heater and condensate recovery system provides plenty of hot water in the sap house. It's a very efficient system.

### Marketing

We sell most of our syrup from our sugarhouse, and a large part of it on Maine Maple Sunday Weekend – long-term customers purchase our maple products each year. We also sell to a few businesses which use our products as thank you gifts for their employees and customers as well as a few restaurants. A fair amount is also sold online. Facebook and word of mouth have really been the biggest way to get the word out. We also attend local fairs and are active in the community.

### Lessons learned and future plans

We have learned many lessons over the years! I think our biggest lesson learned was to get others involved as much as possible. Many hands make a difference in a season that is often concentrated into a short amount of time. We have all of our family members involved. Our children, grand-children and even Kathryn's mom, Mary Jane who is 89 years old. She looks forward to working in the sugarhouse, helping to bake and package treats and spending time with her children, grand-children and great-grandchildren. We also have neighbors and family friends that help every year and some that have been helping for more than 20 years. Making maple syrup is a lot of work and can also be a lot of fun when you involve friends and family.

*Continued on page 3...*

## Producer Spotlight *...Continued from page 2*

We are working on our future plans. We have been fully retired since 2018, and our boys are still working full-time and raising their young families. Each year we discuss new goals for the following year and right now we are continuing to add taps and fine tune our process with our new evaporator. We have to work within the framework that we have currently and our children's. Small changes each year for now, adding taps, and expanding our reach to customers is what we are focused on. 2023/2024 was very busy here as we built our new sugarhouse, enhanced our original sugarhouse to a sales room and added our new evaporator. We are confident that our children and grandchildren will continue to work to grow Libby Maple and we are looking forward to future expansion in the years to come.

### MMPA membership

We joined MMPA many years ago. Joe Suga and his wife Adele came to our sugarhouse and taught us a lot. They encouraged us to join MMPA, and we have learned so much from fellow producers. We also appreciate that the Association is involved at the national and state level to promote Maple. We have heard from many of our customers that they heard about us through the website and through other channels.

**The “Outstanding Tree Farm of the Year Award** is a prestigious recognition that honors family forest owners who exemplify excellence in sustainable forest management, balancing ecological integrity with economic viability. Since 1954, this award has recognized individuals or families who have gone above and beyond in their commitment to conserving our natural resources while fostering the health and productivity of their woodland areas.” Jay and Kathryn Libby were presented with this year's award by Amanda Beal, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Conservation. Under the guidance of their consulting foresters, the Libbys manage their woodlot with the primary objectives of improving the quality of the trees, providing recreational opportunities for their family, and enhancing the natural character of the property. (Pictured above: Libby family, Forestry Field Day.)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**MMPA Annual Meeting, January 14, 2026, at the Ag Trades Show in Augusta, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Syrup and Confections Contest

Tech Sessions on

- Roadway use and regulations
- Filtering, bottling, and labeling
- Maple food safety topics: New and Old
- Extension Maple Research Updates

Annual Business Meeting and Awards

And Lunch!



2025 annual meeting.



## EXTENSION PIPELINE

### *Enough, But Not Too Much: Defoamer Best Practices and Current Issues*

We've all done it. You look away for two seconds and the sticky frothy bubbles are shooting up over the sides of the evaporator. It's a wicked mess. It's lost time. It's lost syrup. Having a good defoamer system that efficiently and effectively brings down the foam is important for avoiding that mess. However, there are syrup quality and upcoming regulatory concerns why we all need to find that sweet spot. Just enough defoamer to effectively control foam, without adding high quantities that create off-flavors.

In the last few years, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been working to add maple syrup to the Codex Alimentarius. This is an internationally shared listing of definitions specifying the exact composition of each listed food item. This is very important for increasing the international marketing of maple syrup. In that process FDA started asking questions about defoamer use. If the average maple syrup has defoamer *"present at insignificant levels"*, defoamer can be classified as a processing aid. If it is above that *"insignificant level"* it must be listed as an ingredient. Of course, there is no definition of what a significant vs. insignificant level would be. If the level is set below our average defoamer residue level, we will lose our "Pure Maple Syrup" designation. Our labels will have to list ingredients of "pure maple syrup AND X-type of defoamer".

I am working on a research project with Centre Acer in Quebec, University of Vermont Extension, and Cornell Cooperative Extension to develop a testing procedure for sampling defoamer levels in syrup. In the first year of the project we worked with producers to track daily defoamer use compared to daily syrup production. This allowed the lab in Quebec to calibrate daily syrup samples with defoamer concentrations that should be present in those samples. Once the lab detection and calibration process is completed, the team will purchase syrup from the retail marketplace to assess average defoamer levels across the region. We hope this research will show very low levels of defoamer residue and that the FDA says "good enough". However, we will present whatever results we come up with and may end up having to do work across the industry to get us below a new designated level.

While protecting the Pure Maple Syrup label is important, it is also important to avoid excessive defoamer in our syrup. Defoamer off-flavor can show up in different ways.

1. A waxy or oily mouth feel that coats your mouth,
2. OR, A taste of rancid oil, like the smell of a convenience store with a fry-o-lator. This is most common if using organic oils from last season.

Conventional defoamers (Atmos, or Aldo Kosher) are more effective and can be used in smaller quantities than organic defoamers (safflower, or canola oils). No matter the type of defoamer used, they should all be used in the smallest quantity to be effective. Often times the first run or two, along with the last boils of the year can require more defoamer. Operations that do not sanitize their lines can have more issues with early season foaming. This is caused by the high levels of microbial activity in that sap. If you notice boils that require high levels of defoamer use, best practice would be to divert those batches to a value-added stream and away from Grade A retail containers.

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**Maine Maple Producers Association  
Application for Membership**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Business/Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Owners Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Sugarhouse Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Due \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail application and check to: Maine Maple Producers Assoc., C/O Scott Dunn,  
419 Chicopee Rd. Buxton, ME 04093**

**Please check items that apply:**     Member     Bulk Producer     Equipment Dealer

**MMPA APPLICATION**     **NEW** or     **RENEWAL** *(please check)*

**\$100.00 MAPLE PRODUCER MEMBERSHIP** (Licensed Producers)

*You must be a MMPA Member to host Maine Maple Sunday.* Listing on website includes: address, phone #, Maine Maple Sunday map, Fall Maple map, Newsletter & Maple Digest (1 MMPA vote) Includes Website link, Brief Biography & notes (100 words or less, Logo + Photo & link to Social Media Accounts); emailed to

[dunnfamilymaple@gmail.com](mailto:dunnfamilymaple@gmail.com)

**Friends of Maine Maple Producers and Business Membership**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$50.00 Friends of MMPA:** Newsletter, No voting rights, No listing on MMPA website/No use of trademarks of MMPA.

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$150.00 Non-Producer Membership (non-producer):** No voting rights, Newsletter, Rights to use Maine Maple Sunday trademark for advertising and Marketing.

SOUTHERN MAINE MAPLE SUGARMAKERS ASSOCIATION: Southern Maine Maple Sugarmakers Association - Contact Richard Morrill through email at [nashvalleyfarm@fairpoint.net](mailto:nashvalleyfarm@fairpoint.net) to become a member. You may also visit [www.smmsa.org](http://www.smmsa.org) or mail to SMMSA 79 Nash Rd., Windham, ME 04062



# Maine Maple Sunday Application 2026

Maine Maple Sunday Weekend is open for all MMPA members to participate. Listing on the MMPA website map is optional. Members can log into their accounts and adjust their listing and add photos. (**Prices or discounts are not permitted to be advertised on the MMPA website.**) You may also submit your description with your application for it to be added. (**MMPA officers will not be held liable for transcription errors or late submissions**)

**Maple Sunday Applications received after March 1<sup>st</sup> will be subject to a \$50 late fee. After March 14<sup>th</sup> they will not be processed.**

### Event details:

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## Bulk Producer Syrup Sales

The MMPA website will soon have a page to assist our bulk producers selling bulk syrup to other producers. Bulk producers will be able to list contact information as well as how to order bulk syrup. Contact information and ordering information should be submitted to Scott Dunn at [dunnfamilymaple@gmail.com](mailto:dunnfamilymaple@gmail.com) or mailed to: MMPA, C/O Scott Dunn, 419 Chicopee Rd., Buxton, ME 04093

## Equipment Dealers

The MMPA website equipment dealer page has been updated and now offers more for the dealers. Dealers are now able to choose between two options to be listed on the website. Dealers do not need to be MMPA members to be listed on the dealer page.

\$25 for a business card size listing with contact information and one logo.

\$100 Approximately a 4-inch by 6-inch space, where you can provide your own artwork with photos, logos, and other information. You can also opt to provide the information that you would like, and our webmaster will incorporate it into the space. Remember, there is only so much space, so photos and logos will be sized accordingly. Please provide some sort of sketch so we can reduce the number of revisions needed as the webmaster works by the hour.

Dealer listing information should be submitted to Scott Dunn at [dunnfamilymaple@gmail.com](mailto:dunnfamilymaple@gmail.com) or mailed to: MMPA, C/O Scott Dunn, 419 Chicopee Rd. Buxton, ME 04093

## 66<sup>th</sup> Annual North American Maple Syrup Council Annual Meeting

### NAMSC Report from Port Huron, Michigan, by Alan Greene, MMPA President

(This is an abbreviated version due to space. The full report is available on the MMPA Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/686689535440264> . FB post includes many event photos, as well.)

It was decided that future convention hosts would be encouraged to keep the meeting and training sessions on sequential days, and the tours would be at either end of the convention.

The research committee is chaired by our very own Kathy Hopkins, and they pick and choose research that NAMSC is asked to fund.

A brief discussion was held about Vermont's decision to pull back from NAMSC. Discussion ensued about the use of Zoom to shorten the conference.

The research committee reported that Center Acer asked for \$100,000.00 to study defoamer in syrup, gave \$50,000.00 last year and \$39,200.00 this year to complete the study. All this was to prove there was no defoamer in syrup, so we may ward off FDA and others who are questioning the 100% pure product.

Ohio Maple Producers are setting up an Introduction To Maple Standards and requested \$4605 to build a program any NAMSC member can use as a precursor to the maple grading school.

#### Treasurer's report:

\$104k checking  
 \$146k Research fund  
 \$ 89.5k Legacy fund  
 \$340,357.96 total

#### Membership:

Currently 10,490 members of NAMSC  
 The budget is \$123,056.05

Thursday, we hopped on the buses to go on all-day tours of three sugarhouses and the USS Edson. It was built in 1956 at Bath Iron Works.

Friday morning class was based on best management practices of 3/16 taught by Dr. Abby Van de Berg. She has been working with Future Generations University in West Virginia. There will be a 3/16 guide coming out this winter to detail all that they have learned on care and cleaning.

#### The long and short of it was:

- .8" hg per foot of elevation is achieved.
- Real world #'s are actually .5 -.7" hg, but only when new or properly maintained.
- 15 taps per lateral is optimal.
- When properly sanitized 3/16" will achieve 86% efficiency as compared to new 3/16".
- 30 minutes of contact time is required (with steri caps) to get proper sterilization.
- Do not leave sanitizer in tubing in spring.
- Sterilization works best in the fall.
- Leave system dry.
- 600ppm concentration for sterilization.

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## NAMSC Report ...Continued from page 7

- Maximum contact time for sterilization is 48 hours
- Always rinse after sterilization.

Most importantly, do not use 3/16" if you can use 5/16" with real vacuum. 3/16" is not a replacement for 5/16" and mainline with real vacuum.

### Class on growing your sugaring business:

- Make your money in the sugarbush. Any work in the woods has huge payback in the long run.
- Consider selling sap to grow your operation.
- Vacuum is imperative.
- Don't be afraid to tap more if you have the capacity.
- Build markets as you grow.

### A class on Spotted Lantern Fly (SLF):

SLF came to our country from China in what was believed to be landscaping stones around 2012 in Pennsylvania. It spread rapidly, arriving in 10 states by 2019. Its primary tree of choice is Tree of Heaven, an invasive ornamental tree from China that is found throughout the US. It does use maple trees as a host and, so far, weakens the maples without killing them. After 3 years, the SLF reduces in numbers all on their own. An effort to treat for them leaves minute residue in the maple tree that will require more study to determine what an allowable limit is.

Saturday a vote was officially held to accept Oregon as a member.

I was asked to serve on the education committee.

"Making the Grade: Sensory characteristics of syrup meeting grade A flavor" by Mark Isselhardt of UVM:

- Always have more than one person taste testing syrup.
- Maple syrup only has a required minimum density. There is no upper density.
- 5-10% of syrup tested most recently had off flavor.
- There are 98 different flavors/odor compounds identified.
- Consumers want a short clean aftertaste with no off flavor.

I attended a packed room update on the Acer Institute, defoamer in maple syrup. The ongoing argument is that defoamer is not in maple syrup. Where it was standing room only, and I was out in the back entryway, I was unable to take notes. The takeaway of initial findings on what was studied this spring shows there is defoamer in syrup. More study is being done, but this will not be the last we hear of this. Whenever possible, we as maple producers should use defoamer as sparingly as possible.

After lunch, I attended Maple Microbiology 101 - sap, sap lines, and distillates by Qian Wang:

- The microbiome in our tubing is 1000 times smaller than 1 mm.
- Ropy syrup caused by microbes costs \$5.5 million in losses. Proper sanitation is key to preventing ropery syrup.
- Numerous disinfectants have been tried. Most are a waste of time and money. Starsan was found to be the most effective. Fifteen minutes of contact time with Starsan is required.

Howard and Jeanne Boyden of Massachusetts were nominated to the Hall of Fame.

It was well worth the trip!

## Extension Pipeline ...Continued from page 4

Relying on squirt bottles and especially spray bottles for defoamer applications can result in too much being applied. (Spray a window with a spray bottle and see how much comes out!) No matter the type of defoamer, only drops at a time should be used. In our research we saw that producers who are using defoamer cups used significantly less defoamer than other methods.

Automatic drippers may seem like a good solution to the problem; however, most models do not adjust to the actual foam levels and can result in excessive defoamer being applied. Think about a defoamer cup that only contacts the syrup when a foam level rises, or a hand drip bottle where you can easily decide to not add any if the foam does not come up. An automatic dripper does not have that flexibility.



For organic producers, our project saw that producers using the Trans-0 580 defoamer used the same amount or more than those using organic plant-based oils. Between the limited effectiveness, and *the Organic Materials Review Institute dropping the organic certification for Trans-O 580*, it should no longer be used for certified organic production.

I am always happy to discuss approaches to limit the defoamer use and improve syrup quality in your operation. I'm also planning to share specific results from our project at the MMPA Annual Meeting. I look forward to seeing you all there.

And don't forget to submit your syrup to the Annual Meeting contest. It's a free quality assurance check, and an opportunity for marketing if you take home a ribbon!

- Reach me at [Jason.lilley@maine.edu](mailto:Jason.lilley@maine.edu) or 207-581-8368

## 2025 U.S. Maple Producer Survey

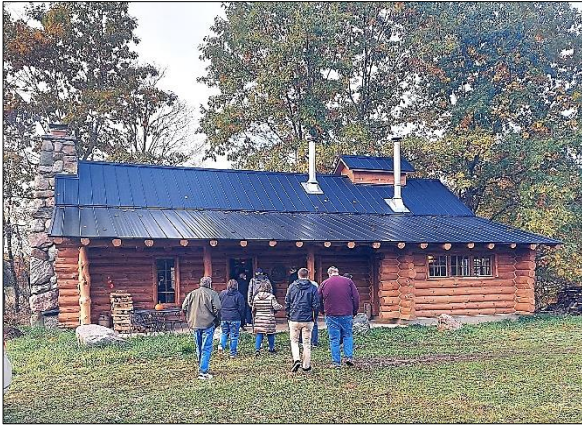
You are invited to take part in this research study because you are a maple sap or maple syrup producer in the United States. This study is being conducted by Mark Cannella at the University of Vermont Extension.

The survey research is being conducted to explore the trends and issues important to the success of maple producers nationally.

**The survey is available online at this Qualtrics link: [2025 U.S. Maple Producer Survey Survey](https://qualtrics.uvm.edu/jfe/form/SV_efD2a2tAeTKxW8S) or [https://qualtrics.uvm.edu/jfe/form/SV\\_efD2a2tAeTKxW8S](https://qualtrics.uvm.edu/jfe/form/SV_efD2a2tAeTKxW8S)**

Participants who complete the survey will be invited to register for a \$75 gift card raffle; 30 winners will be selected.

If you would like to request a hard copy survey with anonymous return envelope, please contact Corinne Cooper at [Corinne.Cooper@uvm.edu](mailto:Corinne.Cooper@uvm.edu) or by phone at [802-656-4820](tel:802-656-4820) or [1-866-860-1382](tel:1-866-860-1382) (toll-free in VT). You will be asked to provide your contact information and mailing address, which will not be stored or linked with your survey responses in any way.



NAMSC Michigan tour: Sugarhouse, conference attendees/ evaporator on tour.



MMPA booth at Fryeburg Fair. Far left: David Leavitt showing boy how to tap a tree while Brian Dunham and boy's mom look on. Scott Dunn showing Waylon Knox how to tap while dad, Eli, looks on. Shawn Dunning with Fair pres. Dale Hastings.

Tree-tapping was a big hit with the kids!



c/o A. T. Greene  
Greene Maple Farm  
Phillip View Farm  
723 Bridgton Rd.  
Sebago, ME 04029  
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