



MAINE MAPLE
PRODUCERS
ASSOCIATION

THE MAINE TAP

NEWS AND RESOURCES FOR SUGARMAKERS

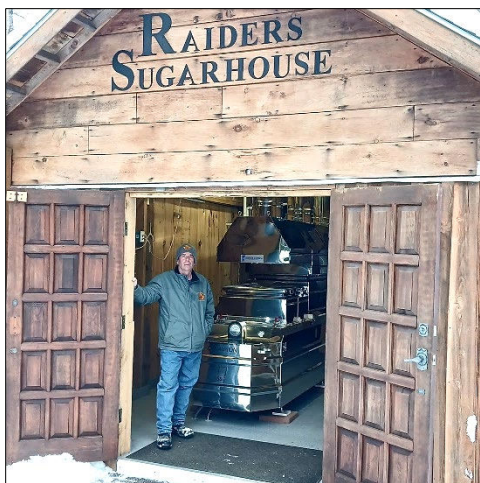
Quarterly Newsletter

March 2025

Inside this Issue:

Producer Spotlight	2
Extension Pipeline.	3
Maple Syrup Contest Winners. . .	5
Awards	6
Mason Evaporator Winner.	6
Officers and Directors.	7
Ann'l Blaine House Tree-Tapping.	7
Attendee Comments	7
Chocolate Maple Bars	8

Producer Spotlight: Raider's Sugarhouse



Member of



President's Message

Greetings Maple Producers,

As I write this, our season is just kicking off across Maine. This winter's long cold stretch has certainly driven the frost deep and hopefully will lead to a more traditional season.

At the annual meeting in Augusta, I was officially elected the president of our organization. As the second generation in my family to hold this title, I am honored and humbled to represent all of you. Thank you for your support and trust. Please reach out with questions or concerns.

The Governor's Annual Tree Tapping at the Blaine House went well. It's a great opportunity to get our message about maple syrup in front of the media. Of all the events we go to, the tree tapping brings out the largest contingent of media, eager to talk about spring and maple after a long winter. Politics aside, it's a huge asset for us to be able to have that kind of free media exposure.

New this year, the winner of the overall best maple syrup in Maine at our annual meeting in January presented their award winning syrup to the governor. Hilltop Boilers of Newfield owned by Mark and Jen Bryant got the honor. Thank you to them, the governor, her staff, the various state officials, and the legislators that attended.

Remember that our official association jugs are available at several dealers around the state. They are a fundraiser for our organization and present a great opportunity for those who need jugs to also assist the MMPA in raising funds.

The current threat of tariffs is being watched closely by all of us who depend upon Canadian imported syrup equipment. Not to mention our Golden Road and Northern Maine sugarmakers

Continued on page 2...

Producer Spotlight, Doug and Gail Tibbetts, Raider's Sugarhouse, China, Maine, Kennebec County

The Tibbetts have been tapping for 21 years. The sugar grove at Raider's Sugarhouse was established in 2003 by Doug and Gail Tibbetts alongside their sons, Cameron and Glen. In those early days, the trees were tapped and the sap boiled in an old ice shack using a large pot on a propane turkey cooker; it was a labor of love from the start.

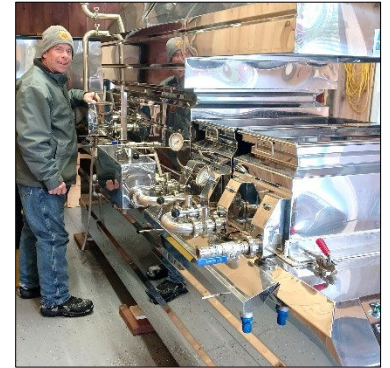
The operation...collecting, boiling and finishing

Fast forward a decade, a few hundred taps and a beloved lab-husky mix named Raider, and Raider's Sugarhouse was born!

Our original wood fired LaPierre 2 x 5 Junior evaporator kicked off production in 2012. As demand grew and the sugarhouse expanded, the LaPierre was upgraded to a Dominion & Grimm (D & G) evaporator in 2017 to a D & G 2 x 6 wood-fired evaporator with steam hood and preheater, and a Leader Micro II RO (Reverse Osmosis), offering increased efficiency and decreased boiling time.

As we continued to expand our maple groves to 3,400 taps, in 2024 we upgraded to a D&G 2 ½ x 8 oil-fired Champion evaporator with Econo Series RO, which will keep our maple production manageable for the two of us!

All our sap is collected with the use of tubing with the majority from leased land, which we have set up with a high vacuum pumping station. This leased land is five minutes from the sugarhouse; the sap is transported daily and pumped directly into the sugarhouse for processing. (Pictured, right: Doug with D&G evaporator, and in the sugarbush adding drops.)



Marketing

We market our syrup on Maine Maple Sunday Weekend, the Maple Fall Event and a few fairs. The majority of our sales come from retail marketing. During Maine Maple Sunday Weekend, we offer tours of the maple grove and sugarhouse, educate the public on how sap is processed into maple syrup, and let them sample the sweetness of maple! Our attraction for the children is our "Annual Easter Egg Hunt" in our maple grove! We are very lucky for our family and friends who come to help and enjoy the event as much as we do!

Continued on page 4...

President's Message ...Continued from page 1

who move their syrup through Canada. I certainly hope that an equitable agreement can be reached in a timely fashion that doesn't harm sugarmakers on either side of the border.

I hope you all have a great Maple Sunday and an excellent season.

Thank you,
A. T. Greene

Alan Greene
President
Maine Maple Producers Association



EXTENSION PIPELINE

Chemical Use and Safety in the Sugarhouse

How would you respond to someone getting pan cleaner in their eye? What about splashed RO soap on your skin? Having plans for using chemicals in the sugarhouse safely, and how to respond to emergencies quickly is essential. I've had many conversations with producers who don't use personal protective equipment (PPE) while using chemicals because of "how quick the use will be", or that "it's such a small amount". This article is to remind you that it only takes a second and a few drops for serious chemical injuries to occur. While the use of these products increases production ease and efficiency and can increase syrup quality, the following guidelines must be followed to avoid and prepare for accidents and injuries.

Safety Data Sheets: Every chemical product used in the sugarhouse should come with a Safety Data Sheet. Unfortunately, many suppliers do not include the SDS with the product. No matter, it is the responsibility of you the end user to have the SDS sheets on hand, available, and to understand what is listed in them. The SDS includes information about required personal protective equipment, proper storage, potential chemical reactions, what to do in the case of an accident, and more. These sheets need to be placed in an easy to find binder and hung in the room where the products are most likely to be used.



Storage: Most of the chemicals used are used in the sugarhouse. It would make logistical sense to store these products there as well. However, due to the potential for spills, contamination of surfaces, and the chance for chemical reactions to sugarhouse conditions (some common pan acids are reactive to heat and humidity!), it is important to create a storage area outside of the syrup production area. Be sure to always store chemicals to prevent access by children, animals, and sugarhouse visitors. Always store chemicals in their original containers, or in **CLEARLY** labeled designated containers. Never use soda bottles.

2. Hazards identification	
Physical state	Product AS SOLD : Powder.
Emergency overview	: DANGER! CAUSES RESPIRATORY TRACT, DIGESTIVE TRACT, EYE AND SKIN BURNS. MAY BE HARMFUL IF SWALLOWED. Do not ingest. Do not get in eyes, on skin or on clothing. Do not breathe dust. Keep container closed. Use only with adequate ventilation. Wash thoroughly after handling.
Routes of entry	: Skin contact, Eye contact, Ingestion
Potential acute health effects	Product AS SOLD
Eyes	: Corrosive to eyes.
Skin	: Corrosive to the skin.
Inhalation	: Corrosive to the respiratory system.
Ingestion	: Causes burns to mouth, throat and stomach. May be harmful if swallowed.

Personal Protective Equipment: These strong acids, bases and abrasive materials all have the chance to cause serious health issues including permanent eye damage, respiratory damage, skin burns, and more. The level of risk can be significantly reduced by taking a few seconds to put on personal protective equipment. A small investment in chemical resistant gloves and aprons, eye goggles, a respirator, and any other PPE required by your Safety Data Sheets can be the difference between 'just a small splash' and 'a serious hospital visit'.

One section of the Safety Data Sheet for a membrane soap product

Emergency Preparedness: How long would it take you to get to the nearest hospital? How about the time for an ambulance to get to your sugarhouse? For most, it's a long time. Having plans in place for if an emergency were to happen is essential for rapid response and to minimize the extent of the damage. (See section of Safety Data Sheet above.) This rapid response is dependent on having supplies on hand, like an eye-wash station or portable eye-wash supplies, the appropriate supplies in the case of

Continued on page 4...

Producer Spotlight ...Continued from page 2

Lessons learned and future plans

Over the years we have learned projects take longer than expected. We have realized making better decisions helps us become more efficient with maple production for better growth and expansion in our business. We've learned that sizing your equipment for the maple production you want to achieve is important. We suggest to those starting out in maple to educate yourselves on the equipment you will need for the size you want to become. Contact maple producers who are using newer technologies.

Our future plans include working on our bottling facility so we can increase production. This will allow us to open our retail store every Saturday for customers to stop by to visit and buy maple products!



Doug checking sap lines.

MMPA membership

We have been members of the Maine Maple Producers Association for many years and will continue to enjoy all the benefits the Association offers. The many sugarmakers we have met have been learning experiences and friendships over the years. It gives you the opportunity to learn and grow in the maple industry.

Extension Pipeline - Chemical Use and Safety in the Sugarhouse ...Continued from page 3

ingestion, chemical spill containment supplies, etc. This plan should be shared with everyone involved with your operation, and local emergency first responders.

Disposal: After using these products proper disposal and cleanup is essential for the protection of the user, syrup quality, consumer safety, and environmental safety. Thoroughly rinse and collect rinse water. Residue left behind in RO membranes, nooks of the evaporator, in tubing lines, or elsewhere can contaminate syrup. Splashing is highly likely during the rinsing process making PPE very important. Follow local regulations regarding disposal. No matter the location or situation, always neutralize the pH of materials before disposal.

Special Note on Diatomaceous Earth (DE): Did you know that DE is also used in the garden as a slug control tool? DE is made of the microscopic, fossilized remains of aquatic organisms called diatoms. Their skeletons (DE) are made of jaggedly shaped silica. When slugs crawl over this material, it scratches the mucus membranes and can cause them to dry out. Due to the sharp characteristic of DE and the potential for it to irritate the respiratory tract, it is important to 1) minimize the dust plume when mixing, 2) wear eye protection to prevent eye irritation and damage, and 3) wear a respirator or dust mask to prevent lung irritation and damage.

Your approach to chemical handling influences the personal safety of you and others in your sugarhouse. Develop safety plans and communicate those with others in your operation to make sure everyone is aware of the risks and has the tools and knowledge to respond to emergencies. Following the above recommendations will ensure that 1) you avoid injuries in the middle of the season, 2) the quality of your syrup remains high and uncontaminated, 3) the reputation of pure maple syrup remains high!

Have a great season and stay safe out there!

Jason Lilley
University of Maine Cooperative Extension

Maple Syrup Contest Winners and Awards

Syrup Contest

GOLDEN DELICATE

1. Hilltop Boilers
2. Merrifield Farm
3. Spring Break Maple & Honey

CREAM

1. Spring Break Maple & Honey
2. Merrifield Farm
3. Hilltop Boilers

AMBER/RICH

1. Hilltop Boilers (** Best In Show**)
2. Spring Break Maple & Honey
3. 207 Tappers

CANDY

1. Hilltop Boilers
2. Spring Break Maple & Honey
3. 207 Tappers

DARK/ROBUST

1. Hilltop Boilers
2. Jillsons
3. Raiders Sugarhouse

GRANULATED SUGAR

1. Hilltop Boilers
2. Spring Break Maple & Honey

VERY DARK/STRONG

1. Jillsons
2. Spring Break Maple & Honey
3. Raider's Sugarhouse



Pictured top row, l-r: Pres. Alan Greene, attendees, MMPA inflatable maple jug, George Gervais and Gail Tibbetts staffing MMPA booth. Bottom row, l-r: Jo-Ann Merrifield presenting ribbon to Jennifer Bryant of Hilltop Boilers, Kevin Brannen of Spring Break Maple Farm receiving ribbon, George Gervais receiving ribbons for Jillsons, Casey Belanger of 207 Tappers receiving ribbon, Doug Tibbetts of Raider's Sugarhouse receiving ribbon, Jason Lilley presenting ribbon to Jo-Ann Merrifield of Merrifield Farm.

Awards

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD ~ RECIPIENT: JOE SUGA

YOUNG MAPLE SYRUP PRODUCERS OF THE YEAR ~ RECIPIENT: KEIRA GREENE

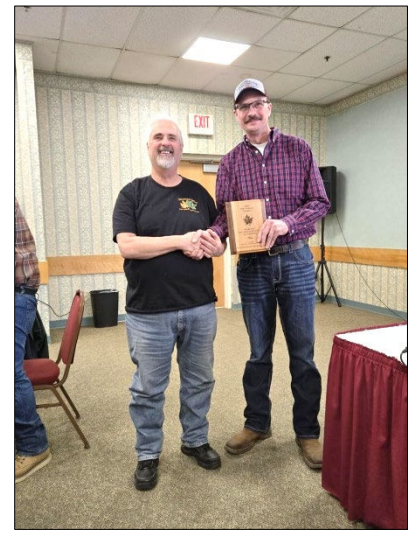
This award is given to an individual or group that is licensed with the State of Maine to sell maple syrup and is less than 30 years of age.

MAPLE SYRUP PRODUCER OF THE YEAR ~ RECIPIENT: JEAN-CLAUDE AND SYLVIE PARE

This award is given to an individual or group that is licensed with the State of Maine to sell Maple Syrup.

ALFRED BOLDUC LEADERSHIP AWARD ~ RECIPIENT: LYLE MERRIFIELD

This award is given to an individual that has been active in the Maine Maple industry within the last 5 years and shown outstanding leadership in the industry.



Pictured top, l-r: Ryan Suga accepting Lifetime Achievement Award posthumously for Joe Suga (Joe's wife, Adele, also attended), presented by Shawn Dunning; Keira Greene accepting Young Maple Syrup Producers of the Year Award; Jean-Claude and Sylvie Pare (Jean Claude accepting) Maple Syrup Producer of the Year Award. Pictured right: Alfred Bolduc Leadership Award accepted posthumously by Lyle Merrielfield's family.



The winner of the Mason evaporator, donated by Bill Mason, is Mark Thompson of Chelsea, Maine, pictured here with Doug Tibbetts who delivered the evaporator. Congratulations to Mark and thank you to Bill Mason for the donation.

Officers and Directors Voted in at the 2025 Annual Meeting

President: Alan Greene
Vice President: Scott Dunn
Secretary: Elizabeth Belanger
Treasurer: Valerie Greene

Director: Bart Bradbury
Director: Sam Lapointe
Director: Ryan Liberty
(filling new vacant position)

Annual Tree-Tapping at the Blaine House with Governor Janet Mills



Pictured l-r: Gov. Mills, Jo-Ann Merrifield, daughters Molly and Lexi, Mark Cooper, Maine State Representative and MMPA member; Amanda Beal, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry; Association President, Alan Greene. Middle photo: Alan with Gov. Mills tapping the maple, and left photo, Alan with the Governor hanging the sap buckets.

Annual Meeting Attendee Comments

Five maple producers at one table during the MMPA annual meeting shared what they value most about attending these meetings. Thank you for participating!

"I get to see people I may only see once a year."

"Reconnecting with other producers."

"It's a real shot in the arm."

"I appreciate learning about future plans for the association."

"The session topic about the forest tent caterpillar, presented by Jason Lilley, was very informative; I especially appreciated that efforts are being taken to eradicate the infestation."

John Lee, Black Owl Maple Products
Julien Castonguay, Pep's Sugarhouse

Doug and Gail Tibbets, Raider's Sugarhouse
Brian Dunham, Dunham Farm . Velvet Hollow Sugar Works

Chocolate Maple Bars

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup shortening
- 3/4 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 3 tablespoons 2% milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1-1/2 ounces unsweetened chocolate, melted
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup sweetened shredded coconut
- **FROSTING:**
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 cup baking cocoa
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, cream the shortening, syrup and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Beat in the eggs, milk and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder and salt; add to creamed mixture and mix well. Remove half the batter to another bowl.
2. Combine melted chocolate and pecans; stir into 1 bowl of batter. Spread into a greased 13x9-in. baking pan. Add coconut to remaining batter. Spread carefully over chocolate batter.
3. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack.
4. For frosting, in a small bowl, beat butter until smooth. Gradually add the confectioners' sugar and cocoa. Gradually add syrup, beating until smooth. Fold in marshmallows. Frost bars.

(From Taste of Home)



A. T. Greene
Greene Maple Farm
Phillip View Farm
723 Bridgton Rd.
Sebago, Maine 04029
Quarterly Newsletter
March 2025

