



**MAINE MAPLE
PRODUCERS**
ASSOCIATION

THE MAINE TAP

NEWS AND RESOURCES FOR SUGARMAKERS

Quarterly Newsletter

September 2025

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Producer Spotlight Alderwood Farms, Inc.



Member of



President's Message

Summer has certainly flown by and will soon be a distant memory. With fall approaching, fair season is well underway. Opportunities to educate and sell our maple products are growing at fairs across Maine, and I encourage everyone to take advantage of them. The more potential customers we can reach during the fair season, the more we grow our customer base and increase the demand for our Pure Maine sweetener.

CDL has stepped up and donated this year's evaporator for our raffle. Many thanks to them for supporting us. Bill Mason was gracious enough to donate an evaporator for many years, and we thank him for his support and wish him well as he slows down and enjoys some well-earned time off.

A big thank you to Kurt Sawyer and John Lee (and their wives) for jumping in and creating a booth for our association at the Union Fair! They did a great job, and it was well received with the fair committee excited to have us back next year.

Topsham fair was again a great success. It was only our second year there, but just like in Union, the fair was very appreciative of our efforts to educate and sell products.

With Fryeburg Fair fast approaching, our new education and sales booth is taking shape. A group of us met there recently to begin construction on walls and shelving to create a welcoming atmosphere showcasing Pure Maine Maple Syrup. The fair has been extremely cooperative, installing a sink and upgrading electrical service for our cotton candy machines and offering assistance to get us moved in. Any member is welcome to participate and have maple products for sale. Contact Scott Dunn or Sean Dunning to sign up. Anyone who would like to assist by doing education is also welcome. Our mission at the fair is to promote and educate the public about our industry. This year will be a learning opportunity on how we can best utilize the space for demonstrations and other activities. If you have suggestions and would like to help out, we welcome your participation.

Also, as we are approaching October, that means the Fall Event. This year, it is October 12th. Please update your information on the website if you plan to be open and what activities you plan to offer.

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Producer Spotlight ~ Alderwood Farms, Inc., Tony and Vickie Carroll, and son, Aaron Carroll, Limerick, Maine, York County

Tony Carroll, like many Maine maple producers, was introduced to maple as a young boy, on a small scale, with his family. The Carroll's grew their operation over the years. By 1984, when Aaron was a young boy, the business began in earnest. Last February "brought an unexpected and difficult twist to our maple season." Often in our lives we are faced with hardships that test our strength, which Tony, Vickie and Aaron experienced what could have been a tragic accident, but they persevered, had the support of family, friends and neighbors, and recovered. See the rest of the story at the end of the Producer Spotlight.

The operation...collecting, boiling and finishing

We started on a 3'x10' flat pan Grimm evaporator. In 1984, we had 350 taps (Aaron was in the second grade). We were in the old sugar house at the time. In 2017 we built a new sugar house and increased the tap count to 850. We also went to a 3'x10' wood-fired Waterloo Small Brothers evaporator with a steam away vented to the outside.

We own most of the land that we tap, which is all within a half mile of our farm. We lease a small amount of land. We use 3/16" tubing in our small orchards where we have 75-250 taps. Fifty-to-150-gallon tanks are used to pump out to a collection tank. With the convenience of our oil-fired evaporator and the addition of a Leader Micro 2 RO we find this helps speed up the process and compensates for limited help with day-to-day chores. We finish the syrup on a gas fired finisher and bottle it. Tony and I do this while Aaron continues boiling and washing up. I make maple sugar, candy, lollipops, fudge and brittle to sell in my shoppe.



Tony, age 4, collecting sap at the farm.

In addition to producing maple, we raise and sell beef - Angus and Hereford cross beef steers - approximately 20 cows/calves. The beef is sold in our gift shoppe. We also sell square and round bales of hay, corn for silage, and grain that is mixed with oats from the County.



Vickie, in Vickie's Olde School Gift Shoppe

Marketing

Maple syrup is sold in Vickie's Olde School Gift Shoppe, our gift and farm store located next to the sugar house. During Maple Sunday events, we offer maple products in the shoppe and set up in the sugar house to sell syrup. Our daughter, Alicia, and granddaughters, Reese and Skylar, make and sell cotton candy and popcorn. Our daughter, Betsy, and grandsons Peter, Nicholas, Andrew and Charlie, have all helped on Maple Sunday. We also sample our maple syrup by serving ice cream topped with our syrup, while our grandson, Charlie, offers grilled smash burger sliders as a tasty sample of the beef we sell.

Lessons learned and future plans

By diversifying we have been able to offer a variety of farm products. It also keeps us very busy, so we have decided, for now, not to expand our maple business beyond our retail sales. Our adjacent woodlots have many young maples that we anticipate tapping using vacuum and pumping stations to bring sap directly to the sugar house.

MMPA membership

Being a member of the association helps us stay informed about changes to rules, regulations, laws and about trends and upcoming events.

Continued on page 3...

Producer Spotlight ...Continued from page 2

Aaron's story:

February 11th brought an unexpected and difficult twist to our maple season. While shoveling snow from the barn roof, Aaron misjudged the location of a translucent panel and fell 15 feet through it, landing hard on the concrete floor. The fall left him with a broken shoulder, rib, hip, and pelvis. As frightening as it was, we are deeply thankful it wasn't worse.

The weeks that followed were a blur of recovery—six weeks in a wheelchair before he could finally begin physical therapy, which through the end of May. During this very difficult time, our family friends, and neighbors were there for us in countless ways—offering help, encouragement, and kindness that carried us through. We can't enough for their generosity and care.

Today, Aaron is back working on the farm. We're grateful every day for how far he's come, for the love and support of our community, and for the blessing of having him here, doing what he loves. **(Cover photo:** Vickie and Tony's grandchildren Skylar, Reese and Charlie "looking, listening, and checking the sap run.")



Aaron boiling sap (before addition of new steam hood).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Invasive Plant Educational Workshops

<https://extension.umaine.edu/agriculture/invasive-plant-educational-workshops/>

Dayton (Sugarbush Specific): September 9th, 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Maine Maple Fall Fest, October 11 and 12 (see application on page 7)

North American Maple Syrup Council Conference

<https://michiganmaple.org/north-american-maple-syrup-conference-2025/>

Port Huron, MI, October 22-25

Maple Grading School

<https://extension.umaine.edu/maple-grading-school/>

Port Huron, MI, October 21 and 22

President's Message, ...Continued from page 1

We are finalizing a junior maple association membership for those who have kids and grandkids involved in maple production. I feel strongly that the future of our association and continued growth requires bringing young sugarmakers into our group. I welcome any suggestions or assistance in working with our new young members.

Our monthly directors' meetings are always open to the membership, and we welcome members' input.

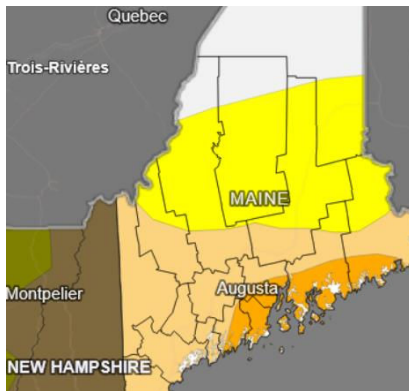
Thank you,

A.T. Greene
President



EXTENSION PIPELINE

Sugarbush Management and Dealing with Forest Stressors



This map from the US Drought Monitor shows which parts of the state are in which levels of designated drought. This map is used by the USDA to trigger some disaster declarations and loan eligibility. Individual states and water supply planning may use additional information to inform their declarations and actions.

Legend	
Drought & Dryness Categories	
	% of ME
D0 – Abnormally Dry	36.8%
D1 – Moderate Drought	34.1%
D2 – Severe Drought	7.1%
D3 – Extreme Drought	0.0%
D4 – Exceptional Drought	0.0%
Total Area in Drought (D1–D4)	41.1%

The most recent [National Weather Service drought monitor](#) update (at the time of writing this, 8/26/25) showed that 36.8% of the state was classified as abnormally dry, with moderate drought in 34.1% of the state, and severe drought across 7.1% mostly along the mid-coast region.

Maple trees have built in resilience mechanisms to withstand stressors like drought. As an example, the energy reserves (carbohydrates/sugars) from photosynthesis in one year get stored and used over roughly 3 to 5 years. If the trees were reliant on reserves from 1 previous season, a season of extreme drought, or defoliation by insects would put the trees at a high risk of death.

Trees in optimal growing conditions, such as deep fertile moderately well drained soils, will be able to withstand more stress with less damage. Trees that are on the edge of their preferred habitat, or that are already stressed, are more susceptible to crown die back or other signs of stress. This includes trees that;

- Are on subprime soils (too wet, too thin, too well drained)
- Stands that are too dense (too many trees per area)
- Areas of compaction or root damage
- Recently logged areas with bark, crown damage, or soil damage
- Areas that have been recently defoliated

Research hasn't shown clear connections between stressor events in one year and changes to sap yields or quality in the next. That said, there are several groups in Quebec, New York, Vermont, here in Maine and elsewhere that are looking for opportunities to study this connection. As an example, I plan to track sap yields in the Big Six area where severe forest tent caterpillar defoliation occurred in 2024. Because of the multiple year release of stored carbohydrates, this type of research has to be long term and can include many factors that complicate the results.

As we all know a sugarbush isn't a potato field. We can't just turn on the irrigation, or easily spray for pests, or run cultivation equipment to loosen up compacted soils. That said, there are some things that you can do to improve the health of your stands and to increase trees' resilience against these stressors.

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Extension Pipeline *...continued from page 4*

1. **Learn about your soils:** You've likely dug a few holes, or have a sense of where the wet spots are, but using a tool like the [Web Soil Survey](#) can give you a lot more useful information. This tool allows you to select an area to review, and provides details on soil texture (clay, loam, gravel, etc.), drainage, depth to water table, rockiness, and depth to restrictive layers.
2. Work with a forester to **develop a forest management plan:** A forest management plan provides details about your forest like stand species and densities, site characteristics, and overall stand health. The plans use those current characteristics to develop plans for future management to maximize the stand health and productivity. Your [local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\) office](#) has cost share programs to cover most of the cost of these plans.
3. **Maintain diversity in the stand:** Just like in farming systems, when a forest only has one type of tree (sugar maples) it is much more at risk of insect and disease outbreaks. Sugar maples are also shallow rooted putting them at higher risk of wind throw than many other tree species. Maintaining around 25% non-sugar maple trees can break up the march of pests, give beneficial insects and animals more habitat, and provide better structural support for the stand.
4. **Avoid compaction and slow erosion:** Heavy rainfalls can wash out roads, remove protective leaf litter, wash away nutrients, and reduce the rooting zone for trees. Leaving down woody debris on the forest floor will slow water movement and build soils (and help with soil moisture retention). For access roads, consider water bars, culvert installation, and intentional diversion of water to slow it down. The NRCS can also help with water management and cost sharing water management practices.

I am working with a team from UMaine and the University of Vermont to launch a course on ***Resilient Sugarbush Management***. This in-depth course will be available to maple producers, foresters, and others interested in sugarbush management, and can be taken as an online course from anywhere. I will be promoting it widely when it goes live sometime in December. Please reach out if you'd like to set up a sugarbush walk to discuss concerns or plans for your woods. Jason.lilley@maine.edu – 207-581-8368



MMPA workday at the Freburg Fairgrounds at our new education and sales booth. Crew pictured, l-r: John Lee, Alan Greene, John Kirsch, Scott Dunn, Tom Pingree, Ryan Liberty (front).

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF SYLVIE GIROUX

On Friday, August 1, 2025, Sylvie Giroux, beloved wife of Jean-Claude Paré, passed away at the age of 64. She leaves behind her devoted husband, four children—Mélanie, Jessica, Alex, and Stéphanie—and four cherished grandchildren: Samuel, Marie-Pier, William, and Éliane.

I first met Jean-Claude and Sylvie in the mid-1990s, during our initial trip to Dole Pond for a load of maple syrup. At the time, Sylvie spoke very little English, and I didn't know a word of French. Jean Claude was learning, and somehow, we all found our way—stumbling through conversations that became easier as the years passed, and our friendship deepened. Sylvie's English steadily improved, and I was lucky to share many meaningful conversations with her—about her family, her love for going on trips, and the world of maple syrup.



Family meant everything to Sylvie. She was the heart of her home—always present as a wife, mother, and grandmother. I still remember the stories she shared about their family trips to places like Old Orchard Beach, or her adventures in the woods with Alex and the crews. Jean-Claude would often send me photos of their family enjoying a meal out or simply relaxing in the backyard. As JC once said to me with pride, “Sylvie made a wonderful family.” And she truly did.

Sylvie and Jean-Claude poured their hearts into Dole Pond Maple Products, a name now synonymous with high-quality Maine maple syrup. In January 2025, they were honored with the MMPA's Sugarmakers Award—a moment of immense pride for them both. Sylvie could often be found running their large wood pellet-fired evaporator or tracking down leaks along their miles of tubing. Just this past winter, she joked with me that since she was turning 64 in March, maybe it was time for JC to do more of the leak-seeking so she could spend more time in the sugarhouse. She had a spark that made you smile. And working alongside Alex in the woods, the two of them were an unstoppable team.

After Sylvie's funeral in Saint-Zacharie, I returned with Alex and Kristen to their beautiful new home. At the funeral there were five urns- one larger one for JC and four smaller ones for each of the children. I watched with a somber face, as Alex gently placed his urn up on the mantle. While many of us will miss Sylvie dearly, the ache will be especially deep for Alex this fall, when he walks into the woods without his mom by his side.

Early on the morning of Saturday, August 2, I was alone in the sugarhouse bottling syrup. My help hadn't arrived yet when I received a message from JC. It read: "Sylvie left for heaven last night at 10:22 PM. She left like an angel." I sat at the bottling machine, tears falling down my cheek. Just two months earlier, she had been diagnosed with pancreatic and liver cancer. JC had told me it was very bad. I knew it was serious—but that morning, the weight of reality truly set in.

Not long before she passed, Sylvie sent me a text I'll never forget: “Hi Michael... I cry, but I am positive, and I want to spend more time with my family.....I love you! Please take care of yourself, life is very short. Sylvie xxx.” Words we should all carry with us.

Thank you, Sylvie, for everything you shared—for showing us how to love deeply, work hard, and cherish family above all. May we honor your final message to me: “Please take care of yourselves. Life is very short.”

Michael Bryant
Hilltop Boilers, LLC



Maine Maple Fall Fest 2025

October 11-12, 2025

Application

\$75 fee per sugar house to be on the Fall Fest Map

Fees will be used for marketing Fall Fest only

Mail checks to: MMPA C/O Scott Dunn
419 Chicopee Rd.
Buxton, ME 04093



Sugar House

Name: _____

Owner Name: _____

Sugar House

Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Event description: (You can edit your own description on the website, too.)



MPA Union Fair booth. The space was created by Kurt Saywer and John Lee – and their wives. Thank you!



c/o A. T. Greene
Greene Maple Farm
Phillip View Farm
723 Bridgton Rd.
Sebago, ME 04029
Quarterly Newsletter (September 2025)

