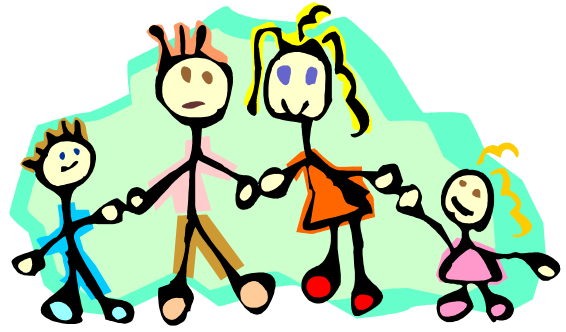


## A Family Project: Making Maple Syrup at Home

Families who want to make a small amount of maple syrup as a family project can do so with inexpensive equipment.



### Equipment Necessary

Maple syrup can be produced with a minimum of equipment, but a few standard items increase the efficiency of the operation and the quality of the product:

1. A drill with a 7/16- or 1/2-inch bit for drilling tap-holes in trees.
2. A metal or plastic collection spout for each tap-hole.
3. A collection container (milk jugs or plastic buckets) can be used for each tap-hole.
4. A pan and a heat source for boiling down the sap. The size needed will depend on how much sap you intend to handle.
5. A thermometer that will read at least 7 degrees above the boiling point of water.
6. Wool, felt, orlon or other filters for filtering finished syrup while hot.
7. Storage facilities and containers for the finished syrup.

### Tapping the Tree

Hand drill a 1/2" hole 2 1/2 to 3" into a tree. Only tap trees 10-12" or more in diameter. Tap the spile into the hole, set or hang a bucket to catch the sap. Open buckets used for sap collection should be covered to keep out rainwater, snow, debris, insects and other foreign materials. Sap should be collected daily and cooked as soon as possible because it spoils quickly, particularly if it is warmed at all.

### Boiling the Sap

To begin evaporation, fill the evaporating container (preferably a large shallow pan) with sap. Begin heating the sap to the boiling point, taking care not to burn or scorch the sap. (A Teflon-coated pan is ideal.) As evaporation lowers the level of sap in the pan, add more sap. Continue this process until most of the sap in the pan is highly concentrated and the boiling point of the sap begins to rise above the boiling point of water. Cook the sap to 7 degrees above the boiling point of water.

Throughout this process, it may be necessary occasionally to skim the surface of the boiling liquid to remove surface foam and other materials.

### Bottling the Syrup

Once the desired boiling point has been reached, the syrup is ready for filtering and packaging. Hot syrup should be filtered through a suitable filter of wool, felt or orlon to remove suspended particles, such as sugar sand, and improve the appearance of the syrup. After filtering, the syrup should be packaged, also while hot. A temperature of at least 180 degrees F is necessary to prevent spoiling while in storage.

**Enjoy your Syrup!**

*It was a lot of work, but well worth the effort!*