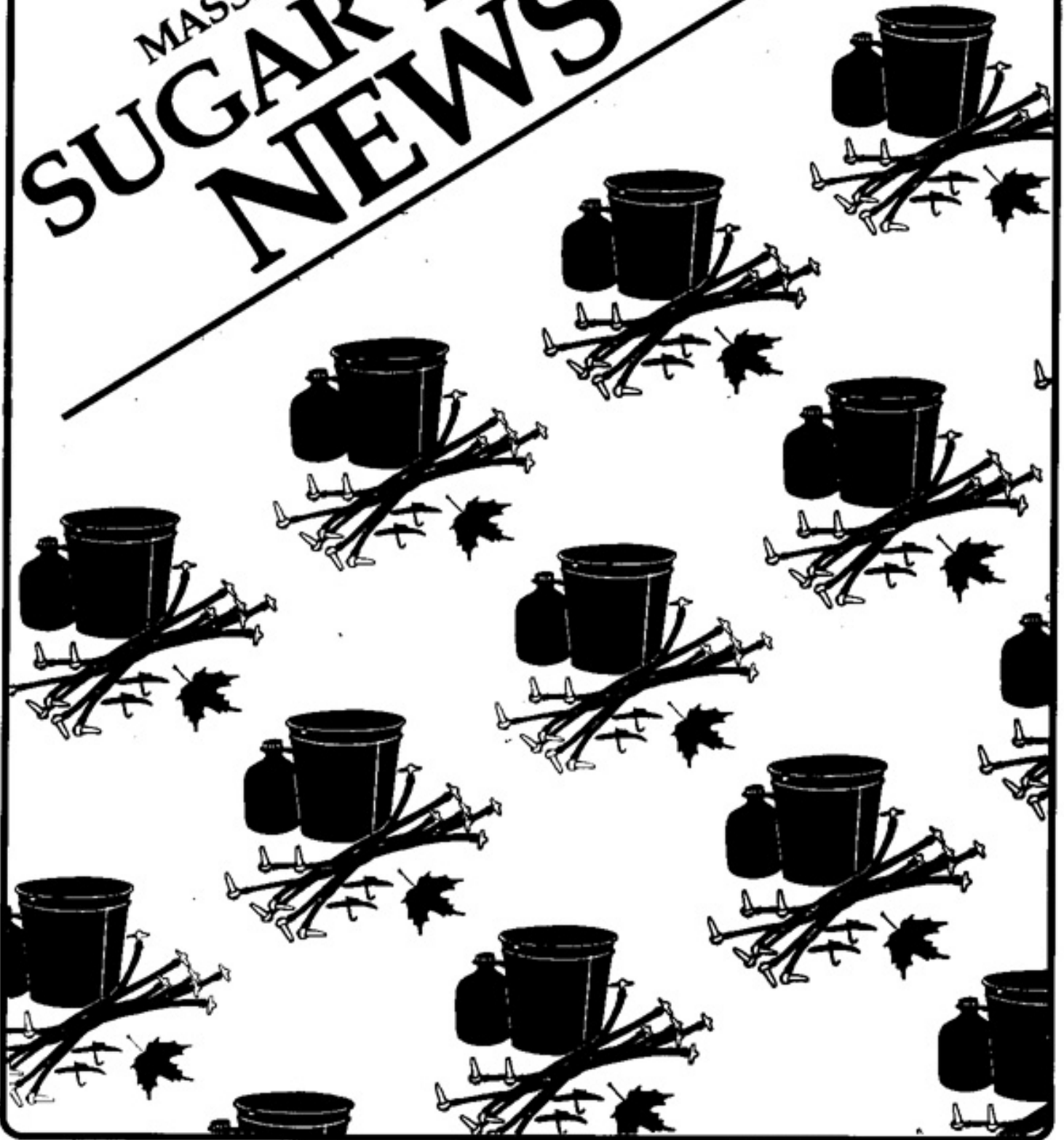


Vol. 20, Issue 2  
Summer 2010

# MASSACHUSETTS SUGAR BUSH NEWS



## From the President

Another Maple season is in the books. Down here in the valley we had the worst yield in memory. For some in the Berkshires it was a little better. However, no one I talked to reported a having a good season. Looking at the jug as half full, as a fellow sugar maker said in an e-mail "We won't need to cut so much fire wood for next year".

Thinking ahead, we are hoping for a large turnout at the annual picnic, graciously hosted by Pete and Beth Phelps. Everyone will be able to look over their new operation and also enjoy a barbecue picnic together. I will bring the information for the new grading system proposed by the North American Maple Syrup Council for people to think about.

It's also time to start thinking about our booth at the Big E. Please sign up for as much time as you can. It's a great way to meet people and share ideas with other sugarmakers, as well as educate that we really do make our own syrup in Massachusetts. It's not all made in Vermont!

-- Ed Parker, MMPA President

## From the Coordinator

All of us get asked "How's the season going to be?" usually long before we even set our taps. It's easy to give glib answers ("Ask me in May." "How should I know?"), but stop and think about what the question really means. To me, it shows that people feel connected to our product, I think more so than to other crops. I don't think corn other farmers get asked "how's the corn going to be?" or "how much milk do you think you'll get this year?"

Massachusetts residents seem to take personal pride in the maple products that we produce here. Whether it's because they know a sugarmaker, have tried themselves to make syrup on their kitchen stove, or just appreciate how much better MA syrup tastes, they're loyal customers and genuinely support what we all do.

This was a challenging season all around, but when customers make their way to your sugarhouse to stock up, or even when they ask you if the 2011 season will be better, remember to thank them for their support. And assure them that next season we'll again have plenty of the best syrup they can buy.

-- Winton Pitcoff, MMPA Coordinator

### Mass Maple Association Board of Directors and Officers

The Massachusetts Maple Producers Association is a non-profit organization representing more than 250 producers in our state. The Association is governed by a board of directors, and daily operations are conducted by a coordinator who serves at the discretion of the board. If you have any questions, problems or suggestions, please let one of the following people hear from you. The board relies on your input to keep them informed on issues of importance to you. With your feedback our association will continue to be strong and serve its members in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Name	Address	Telephone
Keith Bardwell	10 Westbrook Rd., Whatley, MA 01093	413-665-7347
Cynthia Cranston	Box 77, Ashfield, MA 01330	413-628-3911
Ed Parker, President	310 Amherst St., Granby, MA 01033	413-467-7751
Chip Williams	491 Greenfield Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342	413-522-2887
Dave Unaitis	272 Conway Rd., South Deerfield, MA 01373	413-665-7347
Andy Schmidt	PO Box 93, Windsor, MA 01270	413-684-1410
Pat Delaney	251 Daniel Shays Highway, Belchertown, MA 01007	413-835-6331
Jim Desjardins, Vice President	685 Franklin St., Belchertown, MA 01007	413-289-2189
Jeanne Boyden	642 South Deerfield Rd., Conway, MA 01341	413-369-4665
Winton Pitcoff, Coordinator	27 South Union St., Plainfield, MA 01070	413-634-5728

#### Other Contacts - (containers, etc.)

Mass Maple Warehouse	212 Reynolds Rd., Shelburne, MA 01370	413-625-2900
Devon Lane Farm Supply	Daniel Shays Highway, Belchertown, MA 01007	413-323-6336
Red Bucket Sugar Shack	Kinne Brook Rd., Worthington, MA 01098	413-238-7710
Mass Maple Association office	PO Box 6, Plainfield, MA 01070	413-628-3912
E-mail: info@massmaple.org	Mass Maple Website: www.massmaple.org	

## Kicking Off the Season in Deerfield



From left: Hosts Sandy Williams and Chip Williams, MMPA President Ed Parker, MA State Reps. Peter Kocot and John Scibak, and MA Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner Scott Soares  
*(Stephen Davis, The Maple News)*

The sap wasn't running on March 5 when the maple season kicked off with the traditional tree tapping, but the coffee and pancakes were, thanks to our gracious hosts. The Williams family fed us well and showed off their sugarhouse to the assembled crowd. MA Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner Scott Soares spoke a bit about the value of sugaring to the state's agricultural economy, and tapped a tree in front of the sugarhouse with a brace and bit.

The official Town Crier of Old Deerfield was on hand to read Governor Patrick's proclamation, declaring March to be "Massachusetts Maple Month."



Commissioner Soares taps the 'first' tree of the season.  
*(Stephen Davis, The Maple News)*

## Flip Top Cap Trial Results

*Chris Russo from Hillside Plastics and Sugarhill Containers spoke to MMPA members at the annual meeting in January about new flip-top lids that are being produced. This is an announcement from Hillside following their initial trial of the new jugs.*

The results of the Flip Top Cap Trial indicated that the flip top cap was considered superior to the current cap. However, the use of tape to make the cap tamper evident was considered undesirable by most maple producers. The trial also revealed the consumer definitely desired the flip top cap over the twist off cap.

Since Pressure Sensitive Liners are not considered tamper evident and the tape was considered labor intensive, unattractive and expensive, Hillside Plastics will not offer the flip top cap until an acceptable tamper evident capping method can be offered.

To that end we are testing an inexpensive hand held induction liner sealer that would adhere a foil liner, that does qualifies as tamper evident, to the Sugarhill container. The process would require holding the device over the cap for a few seconds after the normal capping procedure. Once we have tested its durability, we will recommend sources for the device to all interested maple producers.

At that point we will offer the flip top cap with induction liners to all maple producers equipped with an induction sealing device. The current tamper evident cap will remain available for maple producers not wishing to switch to the induction lined cap.

To further support the trial results, over the last two years many of the largest maple producer/packers have combined the induction lined flip top cap with Sugarhill Containers and the response from the retailer and consumer has been very positive.

### Vermont Maplerama 2010

The 2010 Vermont Maplerama will be held July 30-31, 2010 at The Canadian Club, 414 East Montpelier Road in Barre, Vermont. This year's event is hosted by the Washington County Maple Sugar Makers' Association and will include tours of areas sugarhouses and a variety of information of interest to sugarmakers.

Tour information and registration information can be found at <http://vermontmaple.org/maplerama.php>

## Mass Maple Warehouse

212 Reynolds Road • Shelburne, MA 01370

413-625-2900

**SUPPLIES:** The warehouse is well stocked with all sizes of maple syrup jugs, maple cream jars. Other syrup containers stocked include 3 sizes of glass maple leaf bottles and 5 gallon plastic containers for bulk packing. The warehouse also has cardboard cartons for all size of jugs, gift boxes and maple candy boxes. Many other materials are available: Posters, recipe booklets, coloring books, labels, hang tags, producer manuals, instructional and educational videos, etc.

**HOURS:** The warehouse is open 7 days a week, on a "call ahead" basis only. During the maple season if no one can answer the phone, a message on the answering machine will indicate the hours for that day when someone will be home. Otherwise, please leave a message and someone will return your call. Please be sure to call ahead for everyone's convenience - don't be disappointed by arriving unannounced and finding no one there to assist you. Terms are cash or check *only* upon pick-up – no charges.

**UPS:** We can ship only full cases of jugs. You will be billed for the cost of the jugs plus UPS charges. Call in your order to the warehouse (413-625-2900) and we will send it out with a bill. Partial cases of jugs and glass of any quantity cannot be shipped safely.

## Discount Jugs

The warehouse still has some jugs with older style allstate designs, and these are available at a discount to members. Contact Carolyn at 413-625-2900 for details.

## Jug Price Increase

Due to an increase in prices from our supplier, Mass Maple jug prices will increase on July 1. A new pricelist is being sent with this newsletter. Buy from the warehouse or dealers before then to get the 2009 prices!

## Insurance for Sugarmakers

A number of members have asked me about what kinds of insurance they should have to make sure they are fully covered if an accident occurs when a visitor is in their sugarhouse. I consulted with an agent who works primarily with farmers, who said that the most important thing is to fully disclose to your agent all of the activities that happen on your farm, including how materials are handled, transported and stored, and how your labor situation is arranged. If your agent doesn't know about it, you're probably not covered for it, he said.

## Nominations Sought for Educational Grants

MMPA is seeking nominations for our 2011 educational grant. Schools with agriculture programs that include sugaring and nonprofits that educate and encourage youth to get involved in sugaring are eligible. Please contact [winton@massmaple.org](mailto:winton@massmaple.org) with suggestions.

## Crop Insurance

We've only heard of one sugarmaker who had crop insurance in advance of the 2010 season. He reports that for a \$250 premium he was able to collect 43 cents per tap after the poor season. Contact your local FSA agent for details if you're interested in participating in future years.

## Maple Syrup: Good for You

University of Rhode Island (URI) researcher Navindra Seeram, who specializes in medicinal plant research, has found more than 20 compounds in maple syrup. The URI assistant professor of biomedical and pharmaceutical sciences in URI's College of Pharmacy presented his findings Sunday, March 21 at the American Chemical Society's Annual Meeting in San Francisco. The project was made possible by Conseil pour le développement de l'agriculture du Québec (CDAQ), with funding provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) program.

Several of these anti-oxidant compounds newly identified in maple syrup are also reported to have anti-cancer, anti-bacterial and anti-diabetic properties.

Prior to the study, the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers already knew that its product was full of naturally occurring minerals such as zinc, thiamine and calcium. But it enlisted Seeram to research the presence of plant anti-oxidants. The Federation awarded Seeram a two-year, \$115,000 grant with the help of the CDAQ and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. His research continues to determine if the compounds exist in beneficial quantities.

More at <http://www.uri.edu/news/releases/?id=5256>

*Looking for the best way to **save money** – and **save energy**?*

The **Mass Farm Energy Program** is helping farms plan and fund their energy efficiency projects.

Are you considering **reverse osmosis** or a **more efficient evaporator**?  
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The Mass Farm Energy Program can help you identify next steps related to energy use in your maple syrup production and prepare for grant programs with a **targeted energy audit**. When you are ready implement audit recommendations, MFEP also provides **financial incentives, up to \$5,000** based on energy savings, for you to complete the work. We can also assist you in pursuing other incentive programs and grants to cover more of your costs for a short payback period on your energy projects.

**CONTACT US!**

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## 2010 International Maple Conference

The North American Maple Syrup Council, Inc. (NAMSC) and the International Maple Syrup Institute (IMSI) will hold their annual meetings and conference in Stratford, Ontario, October 20-23. The theme of the Conference is Sugaring 2010: Progress and Potential.

Highlights will include:

- Business Meetings for NAMSC and IMSI
- Maple Research and Practice Presentations
- Maple Quality Assurance and Marketing
- Maple Workshops and Demonstrations
- Companion Tours
- Sugar Bush Tour (incl. other interesting features)
- Maple Products and Maple Photo Contests
- Entertainment and Delicious Food

More details and registration are available at: <http://www.northamericanmaple.org/index.php/annual-meeting>

## 2010 International Maple Grading School

The 2010 International Maple Grading School will be held in conjunction with the NAMSC/IMSI meetings on October 19-20, in Stratford, Ontario.

The International Maple Grading School is for maple producers, bulk syrup buyers, state inspectors and others needing to accurately grade maple syrup or judge maple product entries at fairs and contests. Quality control issues are also addressed. This school will provide a strong scientific base combined with intensive hands-on exercises. This approach will enable participants to learn how to grade or judge maple products with confidence.

The registration fee of \$130 per person includes refreshments, lunches, reference materials and a take home maple grading kit. For further information contact Kathy Hopkins, Phone 207-474-9622, 207-474-0374 or email: [khopkins@umext.maine.edu](mailto:khopkins@umext.maine.edu)



MMPA President Ed Parker educates about syringing at Ag Day at the Statehouse on April 8 in Boston. Ed and MMPA Coordinator Winton Pitcoff handed out maple candy and sugarhouse directories, and spoke with legislators and legislative staff about the maple industry in MA.

## Big E

Mass Maple will again have our booth at the Big E, and we're looking for volunteers. This is a fun opportunity for members to educate the public about sugaring and help the Association by staffing the booth and making sales. Volunteers get free admission to the fair and parking, and your choice of meal money or an MMPA t-shirt. The dates for the Big E this year are September 17 – October 3. Work shifts run from 9:30 AM - 3:15 PM and from 3:00 PM - 9:00 PM.

Contact Lisa Brackney at 413-230-3125 or 413-325-1886, or email [bige@massmaple.org](mailto:bige@massmaple.org) to sign up. Please indicate what days and shifts you're interested in volunteering.

## Summer Picnic

The MMPA summer picnic will be held July 25 at Sweet Brook Farm in Williamstown. There's a flier included in the newsletter mailing, or you can find more details online at [www.massmaple.org/picnic](http://www.massmaple.org/picnic).

## Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to Elizabeth Unitas, Tessa Desjardins and Brenna Bean, winners of the first annual Mass Maple essay contest. You can read their winning entries at [www.massmaple.org/2010scholarship.php](http://www.massmaple.org/2010scholarship.php). Watch for entry information for the next round in the fall.

## Asian Longhorned Beetle Updates

Treatment of trees in the Worcester area with Imidacloprid has begun. Treated trees will be marked with a 1" x 2" tag that says "Do not tap - treated with Imidicloprid 2010." In addition, maps of the areas where treatment is happening can be found online at <http://massnrc.org/pests/alb/>.

A handy pocket guide to the ALB is available online at <http://massnrc.org/pests/albdocs/ALBPocketGuide.pdf>.

If you think you've found an ALB, check <http://massnrc.org/pests/albreport.aspx> and fill out the form.

If you're not getting the ALB email newsletters from MDAR, sign up here: <http://massnrc.org/pests/signup.aspx>



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Crop report

Bryan's ad



## Tapping on Public Land

Some MMPA members have expressed an interest in tapping trees on state-owned land and have inquired about the protocols for doing so. The answer isn't as simple as one would hope, with different agencies controlling different parcels of land, each having their own rules for such operations.

A few people already tap in the area around the Quabbin Reservoir, managed by The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). There are a limited number of lots, and the agency is considering opening up a few more this year. The bid process for these lots is open, but most have been tapped by the same sugarmakers for many years. Winners of the bids have access to their lots for three years, and must comply with a number of restrictions, including taking down all tubing after the season. The agency sets the dates for when taps can be set and when they must be removed. Call 413-323-6921 for more information about tapping around the Quabbin.

Other staff members at DCR have said that, as a rule, tapping on state land is not permitted.

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) honors a few historical tapping operations on state wildlife lands, but these all have sunset provisions and will not be continued after they expire. No new tapping operations are allowed.

Opening up additional public land for tapping would require working with the legislature. Members interested in pursuing such an effort should contact [winton@massmaple.org](mailto:winton@massmaple.org).



### Classified

**For Sale: Leader Lapierre 19"x36" Backyarder.** Includes everything you need and is in excellent shape. \$500 for the entire set up. 978-779-6436.

### Online Resources

Article in *Northern Woodlands* magazine about balancing managing for both tapping and timber: <http://tinyurl.com/2ftwhdo>

Chart explaining a range of grant and support programs available to forest owners: <http://tinyurl.com/2enjo4e>

sugarhill

Col 2

## Welcome to New Members!

The following people joined MMPA in the past six months:

- Ben Murray, Red Gate Farm, Buckland
- Bill Rowley, Rowley Sugarhouse, Otis
- Bryon Lewis, Maxwell Road Maple, Monson
- Dave Bisbee, Mountain Maple / Bisbee Family, Princeton
- David Kembel, Boxborough
- Gary & Pat Skaza, Cooleyville Farm, New Salem
- Gary F. Shaw, Buckland
- James Dergay, Chelmsford
- Joe Laur, Sara's Sugar Shack and Bakery, Wendell
- John Kelly, Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, Northampton
- Lee McMillan, Essex Ag/Tech High School, Hathorne
- Lionel Beckwith, Plainfield
- Mass Audubon, Ipswitch River Wildlife Sanctuary, Topsfield
- Mike & Susan Favaloro, Amesbury
- Nicholas Turnberg, East Meadow Farm, East Longmeadow
- Rene and Renee Fleurette, Five Sap Maple Syrup / Fleurette Treefarm, Bellingham
- Rodney & June Lynds, Deer Hill Maple, Plainfield
- Roger P. Ball, Windsor, CT
- Stanley Lewandowski, Shelburne
- Ted Weiman, Granby, CT
- Tyler Ball, East Granby, CT

## Thank You to Donors

Thank you to the following people and businesses that donated items for the door prizes at the MMPA annual meeting in January:

- Keith Dufresne
- Devon Lane Farm Supply
- Bascom's Maple Farms
- Red Bucket Sugar Shack
- Bryon Lewis / BLTees
- Oesco

And thanks to Hillside Plastics for donating the coffee and donuts.

## New MMPA Website

Have you checked out the new Mass Maple website? It's not just a pretty new design -- there are new features as well. The directory is much easier to use, there's an interactive map of the state for users to find the sugarhouse nearest to them, there's a page with links to information about grants for farmers, and more. Check it out at [www.massmaple.org](http://www.massmaple.org).

And if you have your own website, please consider putting our logo on your homepage with a link to our site, so you can proudly tell the world that you're a member! Contact [winton@massmaple.org](mailto:winton@massmaple.org)



**LABEL DESIGN**

Arlette Murphy Engel  
Illustrator • Designer

Labels and logos set the foundation for establishing a brand identity for your product, using a distinguishing visual icon, color and typeface. It is what sets your Maple Syrup apart from all others. Does your product have a clear identity? I would be happy to work with you to create a unique brand identity for your products and business.

For a free information packet, please contact me at or go online to:  
Web: [www.arlettesarts.com](http://www.arlettesarts.com) | Phone: 732-381-1476 | Email: [arles13@comcast.net](mailto:arles13@comcast.net)

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