

M A S S A C H U S E T T S
SUGAR BUSH NEWS

The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Maple Producers Association

4th Annual Maple Weekend March 18-19

Massachusetts Maple Producers Association will coordinate the third annual 'Maple Weekend' on March 18-19, 2017. This weekend of events promotes local, pure Massachusetts maple products.

Sugarmakers are encouraged to participate by opening their sugarhouses to the public during that weekend and offering demonstrations, tastings, tours, meals and other activities to entertain and educate customers. Participating sugarhouses will be featured on the Mass Maple website, and the Association will purchase advertising to attract consumers to the website. **See the back of the membership renewal form in this mailing for details about how to participate.**

Restaurants around the state will be asked to highlight items on their menus featuring Massachusetts maple syrup. Sugarmakers who have contacts at restaurants should contact Coordinator Winton Pitcoff to help solicit participation.

Previous years' events have been very successful. Dozens of sugarhouses and restaurants have participated, and there has been excellent press coverage. This is an exciting opportunity to have a coordinated range of activities designed to raise awareness about our work and encourage consumers to purchase pure maple products direct from their local sugarmakers. Members are strongly encouraged to participate by offering an open house and publicizing the weekend's events to your customers via Facebook and other social media.

Emails over the next few months will offer more details and solicit input, but please fill out the enclosed form and start planning your events today!

MMPA Annual Meeting and Workshops

The 2017 Annual Meeting and trade show will be held on Saturday, January 14, from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Mohawk High School in Buckland.

The trade show will feature a range of dealers from the maple industry. As in past years, members can bring hydrometers for free testing. If you would like to participate in the blind tasting, and allow fellow sugarmakers to sample your syrup and offer comments, please bring a pint of syrup. The business meeting in the morning will include a recap of the year's events and an election of board members, and we'll enjoy a great barbeque lunch.

After lunch, Henry Marckres, Consumer Protection Chief and Maple Specialist for the State of Vermont will present this year's workshop. He'll focus on identifying and preventing off-flavors, and on entering maple products in contests. Details are on the enclosed sheet. Register today when you renew your annual membership!



Maple Month Kickoff to be held in Westhampton

The MMPA March is Maple Month Kickoff will be held Friday, March 3 at 10 a.m. at Steve's Sugar Shack in Westhampton. Host sugarmaker Steve Holt will welcome MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux and other guests as we tap the ceremonial first tree of the season. All MMPA members, along with other supporters of the maple industry, are welcome to attend.

From the MMPA President

As this calendar year quickly comes to an end and another sugar season is right around the corner, I hope everyone has had the chance to enjoy one of the many opportunities to gather with fellow sugar-makers. With most of Massachusetts experiencing a significant drought and some having gypsy moths or forest tent caterpillars we will again attempt to predict how our upcoming sugar season will be impacted. After last year's season I have learned that we can watch trends and acquire averages but it is impossible to know what Mother Nature is actually going to bring us.

What we can control is our management practices and remembering that we are making a food product. As I go on tours and to meetings it is very evident that as an industry we are working harder to produce the highest quality maple syrup and maple products possible. Maple contests are getting more entries and the number of ribbons being awarded

is increasing. Congratulations to all who have been recognized!

Finally, I look forward to working with members and the board to come up with new value added products, increase awareness of maple syrup as an ingredient, and expand our marketing outreach. We want to give customers a reason to visit sugarhouses and meet sugarmakers. As Howard Boyden says, we need to work together to "Make Maple a Staple!"

Happy Holidays, and see you in January.

Missy Leab



Massachusetts Maple Producers Association Board of Directors

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.

Name	Term Expires	E-mail Address	Town
Keith Bardwell	2019	kwb1987@comcast.net	Whately
Howard Boyden – Vice President	2019	boydenmaple@gmail.com	Conway
Dana Goodfield	2018	danachevww@aol.com	Conway
Missy Leab – President	2015	missy@iokavalleyfarm.com	Hancock
Tom McCrumm	2019	tom@southfacefarm.com	Ashfield
Trish Schmidt	2019	windsorhill5@yahoo.com	Windsor
Gary Shaw	2017	shawssugarhouse@comcast.net	Buckland
Stan Zawalick	2017*	szawalick@massmaple.org	Florence
Paul Zononi	2017*	pzononi@massmaple.org	Haydenville

*Those Directors with a * next to their term expiration date will have served two consecutive terms as directors, and cannot be re-elected without at least a one year break.*

Containers

Mass Maple Warehouse	212 Reynolds Rd., Shelburne, MA	413-625-2900
Devon Lane Farm Supply	357 Daniel Shays Hwy., Belchertown, MA	413-323-6336
Red Bucket Sugar Shack	Kinne Brook Rd., Worthington, MA	413-238-7710

Main Office

Winton Pitcoff - Coordinator/Treasurer	winton@massmaple.org	Plainfield
Mass Maple Association office	PO Box 6, Plainfield, MA 01070	413-628-3912
E-mail: info@massmaple.org	Mass Maple Website: www.massmaple.org	



Pictured (L-R) are Judy Haupt, Joyce Ripley, Howard Boyden, Leon Ripley, Jeanne Boyden, Rob Leab, Melissa Leab, Serena Zononi, Paul Zononi, and Tom McCrumm.

Massachusetts Maple Producers Take Top Honors at International Meeting

There was a sizable Massachusetts delegation attending the 2016 North American Maple Syrup Council (NAMSC) / International Maple Syrup Institute (IMSI) annual meetings, held in October in Burlington, VT. The meeting is an annual gathering of sugarmakers, researchers, and industry leaders, and is a great opportunity to network, learn about the latest news and research, and participate in planning efforts for the further development of the maple industry.

Sugarmakers from the United States and Canada submitted 170 entries into the annual maple syrup, maple products, and maple syrup contest. Many Massachusetts entries were deemed 'Excellent' by the judges, and Melissa Leab, of Ioka Valley Farm in Hancock, won top prize in the Maple Cream category. Her cream also took Best in Show for all maple products.

In addition, it was announced that sugarmaker Tom McCrumm from South Face Farm in Ashfield, will be inducted into the NAMSC Maple Hall of Fame in Croghan New York in May. Tom joins several dozen other prominent sugarmakers and industry leaders who have been inducted in the past, including Linwood Lesure from Ashfield, Russ Davenport from Shelburne, and Richard Haas from Turners Falls.



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Candidates for the Mass Maple Board of Directors

Mass Maple members will elect four board members to three-year terms at the annual meeting in January. Stan Zawalick and Paul Zononi have served two three-year terms each and so are leaving the board, as per the term limits in our bylaws. Gary Shaw has served for one term and has chosen to not run for another. Tom McCrumm has served a one-year term, and is running for a three-year term. The four members below have been nominated, and nominations for others will be accepted at the meeting.

J.P. Welch

If elected to the board my hope would be to promote the use of pure maple products. I feel maple should be used on a lot more than just pancakes and we can promote other uses, such as coffee, baking, marinades, barbecue, cocktails, etc. On our farm in Worthington we boil for 5,100 taps, all on high vacuum. We use reverse osmosis and boil 16-17% sap. Our range of production the last few years has been from 1,850-2,020 gallons. All of our taps are within one mile of the farm. We do approximately 5% wholesale to stores, but our emphasis is on retail sales at farmer markets and fairs. We also have a web site and ship. We also grow Christmas Trees and are able to retail most of those. My passion is maple, and I feel my marketing experience would be very helpful to the Association.

Jason Goodhind

I'm interested in serving on the Mass Maple board because I think it's important to hear what the smaller operations or hobbyists have to say, and to try to retain a Valley/Central Mass presence on the board. I would really like to serve and have a better understanding of how the board works on issues like membership, board elections, and promoting the benefits of Massachusetts maple, and to encourage other members to become actively involved so it isn't the same sugar houses represented year after year on the board.

Our sugarhouse in Hadley has 600 taps on gravity tubing and produces .2-.25 gallons of syrup per tap yearly. We boil on a 2x6 H2O wood fired evaporator and run our sap through a H2O hobbyist reverse osmosis machine. We have a very simple sugar house and woods. We really try to focus on cleanliness in the woods, in order to improve sap yield, and in our sugar house, to ensure that we produce a quality product.

Tom McCrumm

I have been involved with maple sugaring since the early 1970's, including 30 years as a producer in Ashfield. During that time I was the Association coordinator for about 15 years. It is important for our Massachusetts producers to have a strong organization which can represent them with state and federal governments as well as with other producer organizations. I hope to be able to add some historical perspective as a board member and help guide the Association forward.

Thomas LeRay

I am a 3rd generation maple syrup maker from Royalston, along the New Hampshire border. I promote Massachusetts maple syrup at local retailers. Just recently I saw a local store that had a New Hampshire vendor. I educated the store on Massachusetts maple syrup, and the she now has a Massachusetts producer's products in her store. I am a true believer in educating the next generation about the benefits of producing the many products that grow in their back yard. I offer educational brochures, talks, and field trips for local schools. I am currently chairman of the Royalston Right to Farm which gives me a lot of opportunities to talk and promote Massachusetts maple products. I have participated in Maple Weekend. It is the greatest thing to meet lots of people from all over the world! They like the small town operations, as it gives them plenty of time to ask questions and just enjoy the sugarhouse and friendship.



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Preparing for Maple Weekend

When getting ready for maple weekend, or for any weekend that you're welcoming customers to your sugarhouse, here are a few things to keep in mind.

Getting the word out

Promote yourself. Use Facebook, email lists, press releases to local newspapers, calls to your local chamber of commerce or other community organizations, and other methods to let people know that you'll be open for Maple Weekend. Invite your local town and state officials to stop by, as well as your local reporters.

Connect with other sugarhouses nearby and encourage visitors to stop by more than one sugarhouse by highlighting the different things each one has to offer.

Have large, clear signs at the end of your driveway and, if possible, at nearby intersections. Be sure to have complete directions on your website.

Sugarhouse

Be at your sugarhouse when you say you will be. Even if you're not boiling, customers will see your hours listed on the website and may show up at any time within that window. If they arrive to find a locked sugarhouse they're not going to have a good impression of sugarmakers.

Be available by phone. Your phone and email address are in your listing, so customers may contact you in advance with questions. If you can't be by your phone or check your email, set up your voicemail or an auto-responder on your email to let people know that you'll get back to them soon, and that you're open as advertised for the weekend.

Clean your sugarhouse. Yes, visitors love the rustic feel of some sugarhouses, but we are making a food product and they will notice rusty equipment, cobwebs, dust, oily clothes, or other unsanitary conditions. Those impressions will hurt your sales, and hurt the overall impression of the industry.

Wear something that identifies you as the owner, and have your family, staff, and volunteers do the same, so that visitors know who to direct their questions to.

Pay attention to your visitors. Greet people as they enter your sugarhouse, so they feel welcome.

Have something going on. If there's no sap, consider boiling water in your evaporator. Or make candy or cream, can syrup, or offer a cooking demonstration. Or offer a tapping demonstration.

Display antique sugarmaking equipment.

Offer tours of your operation, including your sugarbush, at set times. Include the sales area in your tours, and offer explanations of each product.

Consider some activities for children, such as a simple scavenger hunt, or coloring books.

Make some simple signs to hang near pieces of equipment explaining what they are used for. Sometimes you may be so busy that you can't answer everyone's questions at once.

Mark walking paths clearly, and remove as much snow and ice as possible. Use salt, sand, and wood chips on paths to ensure that your visitors can walk safely from their cars to the sugarhouse.

Mark parking areas clearly, to avoid having to pull visitors' cars out of ditches, and clear the snow and ice well. If you have staff or volunteers to direct drivers in the parking lot, that's even better.

Mark off areas in the sugarhouse that are off-limits to visitors, or that are particularly dangerous due to heat, etc. If you're concerned about liability, talk to your insurance agent in advance to make sure you have the proper coverage.

Have adequate lighting so visitors can see everything clearly.

Have some seating available for elderly visitors.

Have a restroom available, if possible.

Products

Offer a wide range of products. If you don't make candy or cream, consider buying wholesale product from a neighboring farm to sell.

Offer samples of all of your products. People who taste what you have for sale are far more likely to make purchases.

Demonstrate some examples of the versatility of maple syrup, like maple tea, maple milk, maple soda, maple lemonade, maple popcorn, etc.

Hang signs with allergen warnings. Even if you're only selling pure maple products, a sign that explains there are no allergens in pure maple syrup can be helpful.

Make sure to have business cards or brochures for customers to take home, so they remember where to go when they run out of the maple products they buy.

Offer literature with recipes and nutrition information for maple products.

Have a sign-in sheet and collect email addresses.



Commonwealth Quality

Commonwealth Quality, a brand designed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, serves to identify locally sourced products that are grown, harvested and processed right here in Massachusetts using practices that are safe, sustainable and don't harm the environment. Massachusetts sugarmakers developed a set of guidelines, based upon MMPA's Quality Control manual and the Handbook of Best Management Practices for Massachusetts Maple Syrup Farms, to be used for Massachusetts sugarmakers who wish to participate in the Program.

Participation in the program is voluntary and largely self-regulated, with participants self-auditing their operations using a checklist. Participation will allow sugarmakers to display the Commonwealth Quality seal on their products. To date, four sugarmakers have signed up to participate in the program.

Guidelines for participation and more information about the program are available at <http://www.thecqp.com/images/maple/maple.html>, or contact Winton Pitcoff at winton@massmaple.org.



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What's this 'Verona' thing I keep hearing about?

Each year the New York State Maple Producers Association holds their annual trade show and conference in Verona, New York. And each year Mass Maple charters a bus and offers rides to the event for free to our members (two seats per membership, seats are limited).

There are dozens of great workshops for beginners as well as experienced sugarmakers, ranging from tapping to sugarhouse management to marketing, and two high school gymnasiums full of equipment vendors. Each year about 1,000 people attend. This year, the event will be held on Saturday, January 7. Details are at <https://goo.gl/DJOVke>.

Registration is \$30 (\$40 after December 20). Let me know in advance that you want to join us (indicate on the membership form, or send an email to winton@massmaple.org), and I'll collect money on the bus.

Bus Pickups

Deerfield: Williams Farm Sugarhouse (477 Greenfield Rd. On Routes 5 & 10, 1/4 mile south of Historic Deerfield Village). Bus leaves promptly at 4:45 am. Please be there early.

Cummington: Southeast corner of Rte. 9 and Fairgrounds Rd., large parking lot on the left as you head west on Route 9. Bus will arrive about 5:30 am, will load immediately and be gone. Be there by 5:15 please.

Pittsfield (if needed): Dicks Sporting Goods parking lot (635 Merrill Road), 6:00 a.m.

The bus returns to Pittsfield by 8:00, Cummington at 8:30, and Deerfield shortly before 9:30 p.m.

Online Resources

University of Vermont Extension has lots of great sugaring resources available online, including two new videos on grading. Their library is available at <https://goo.gl/B1RFTN>.

The International Maple Syrup Institute also has lots of useful information and resources available for download, including maple nutrition and health benefits information, at <https://goo.gl/jPS1o9>.

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Maple Pecan Tiramisu

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3 large eggs
1 cup maple pecan infused Bourbon whiskey (recipe follows)
6 Tablespoons Massachusetts maple syrup
2 Tablespoons Marsala wine
8 oz. Mascarpone cheese
1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 Tablespoon cinnamon
10 maple ladyfingers (recipe follows)
Crushed pecans and white chocolate leaves for garnish

Combine egg yolks, 5 tablespoons of Massachusetts maple syrup, and wine in a large bowl. Beat until smooth. (2-3 min.)

Add Mascarpone and beat until smooth. (3-5 min.)

In a separate bowl, beat egg whites until foamy.

Slowly add remaining tablespoon of Massachusetts maple syrup and 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar and beat until stiff peaks form.

Gently fold into Mascarpone mixture.

One at a time, brush all sides of each maple ladyfinger with infused bourbon and place half on the bottom of a small serving dish.

Cover with half of the Mascarpone mixture.

Repeat with second half of ladyfingers and Mascarpone mixture.

Sprinkle with cinnamon and crushed pecans.

Refrigerate overnight.

Place white chocolate leaf in center before serving.

Maple pecan infused Bourbon whiskey

Soak 1/2 cup of pecans in water for 30 minutes. Strain and place on baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Cover with 1 teaspoon Massachusetts maple syrup and 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract. Bake 20 minutes at 350 degrees until brown. Cool and place in bowl with 1 cinnamon stick. Pour bourbon into bowl and cover. Refrigerate 2-3 days.

Maple ladyfingers *adapted from Joy of Baking*

1/2 cup cake flour, sifted
3 large egg yolks, room temperature
2 Tablespoons Massachusetts maple syrup, divided
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
3 large egg whites, room temperature
1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
2 Tablespoons Massachusetts maple syrup

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line two baking sheets with parchment paper. To make the piping of the cookies easier, use a pencil and ruler to divide the parchment paper into three - 3 inch rows, with about 1 inch between rows. Have ready a large pastry bag

with a 1/2 inch opening cut at the end.

In your electric mixer, fitted with the paddle attachment beat the egg yolks and 2 tablespoons maple syrup on high speed for about 5 minutes or until the mixture becomes thick and pale yellow. (When you raise the beaters the batter should fall back into the bowl in a slow ribbon.) Beat in the vanilla extract. Sift the cake flour over the batter but do not fold in.

In a clean bowl, with the whisk attachment, whip the egg whites until foamy. Add the cream of tartar and continue to beat until soft peaks form. Gradually add the 3 maple syrup and whip until stiff peaks form and the whites are glossy. Fold the whites into the egg yolk and flour mixture in three additions, mixing only until incorporated.

Transfer the batter to the pastry bag and, holding the bag at about a 45 degree angle to the baking sheet, pipe the batter into 3 inch long ladyfingers, using the lines drawn on the parchment paper as your guide. Pipe the batter leaving about a 1 inch space between the cookies.

When you have piped all the cookies, lightly brush the tops with maple syrup. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes or until the ladyfingers are firm and browned.

Remove the baking sheets from the oven and slide the parchment paper from the baking sheets onto a wire rack. Let the ladyfingers cool for a few minutes and release them from the parchment paper, with a flat spatula, while they are still warm. If you left them completely cool before removing them from the parchment they stick and hard to remove without breaking. Finish cooling the ladyfingers on the wire rack before using or storing. If you are not using the ladyfingers right away, freeze them. Ladyfingers stale very quickly unless they are soaked in a liquid. To store, place in a plastic bag between layers of wax or parchment paper and freeze up to 2 weeks.

Makes about 4 1/2 dozen 3 inch Ladyfingers

Pecan Garnish

Remove pecans from bourbon and bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until browned.

White chocolate leaves

Gently wash and dry maple leaf. Brush with melted white chocolate and refrigerate until hard. Peel leaf off of chocolate and brush with shimmer powder.

Samantha Drake, S. Easton, MA

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 three sizes of glass maple leaf bottles and five-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, labels, hang tags, producer manuals, instructional and educational videos, etc.

HOURS: The warehouse is open seven 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.

Welcome New Members

The following people joined MMPA in the last six months. If they're neighbors of yours, stop by and welcome them!

Sarah Cummings, Buckland

Big E Staff Positions

As in past years, Mass Maple will be seeking applications from people interested in the booth manager and assistant manager positions for our booth at the Big E. Contact winton@massmaple.org if you'd like more information.

All Sugarmakers Count

The annual USDA survey of sugarmakers is critical to understanding the scale of our industry and advocating for the research and support it deserves. Information submitted is confidential, and is not shared with any other government agency. If you want to be included, see <https://goo.gl/Vnpc95>.

Our Heritage Is Maple Sugaring...



Call and ask for our maple equipment catalog and current used equipment list. Bulk maple syrup bought and sold. Syrup and equipment may be accepted in trade toward equipment.

Photo: Ken Bascom with Jack and Jerry collecting sap, 1953.



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Field Trips

Mass Maple is planning to offer funding to help cover the costs of transportation for school groups that would like to visit sugarhouses during the sugaring season. If you have worked with schools in the past and would like us to let them know about this offer, please send their contact information to winton@massmaple.org. If you would like to be connected with schools that are looking for sugarhouses to visit, please let me know as well.

Online Sugarhouse Directory

Remember that you can make changes to your online directory listing at any time. Check out the directory at <http://www.massmaple.org/directory.php> and if you have any changes contact Coordinator Winton Pitcoff at winton@massmaple.org or 413-628-3912, or mail changes to MMPA, PO Box 6, Plainfield, MA 01070. Please note that being a member of Mass Maple does not mean you are automatically included in the directory – you must let us know that your sugarhouse is open to the public and that you would like to be listed.

Webinar: Introduction to Maple Syrup Production

This online course from the Cornell Small Farms Program will be offered January 17-February 21, with webinars each Tuesday evening from 6:00-7:30 pm EST.

Maple syrup production is rapidly growing around the Northeast and offers a sound financial opportunity to utilize woodlots. This course explores the range possibilities of maple sugaring on your land – be it for supplemental income or for your livelihood. Also discussed are “alternative” trees for production, including Birch and Black Walnut.

The course instructor, Mike Farrell, serves as the Director of Cornell University’s Uihlein Forest, a maple syrup research and extension field station in Lake Placid, New York.

Learn more and register at: <https://goo.gl/pcRrp4>.



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