

how to TAP a TREE

Supplies

Most of these items can be purchased from maple farms and select hardware stores. Plastic buckets can be used, or you can use the classic aluminum buckets with lids made specifically to fit the spiles.



Maple trees with highest sugar yield:
1. Sugar
2. Black
3. Red
4. Silver

This is the tap used to direct the sap into your bucket.

Look for a tree that is at least 40 years old, 25cm (12") or more in diameter, and has a large crown and lots of direct sunlight.

Use a 3/16" or 7/16" bit, depending on the size of the spile.

Re-using an old bucket? Be sure to bleach it first.



Drill the hole

- Ideally, tap above a large root, or below a large branch. Tap at least 10cm (6") away from older tap holes.
- Drill the hole about 5 cm (2.5") deep. Drilling at an upward angle will help induce the sap to flow downward through the spile.
- Drill on a sunny day—the warmer the wood is, the less likely it is to split from the drilling.
- Remove all shavings from the hole before inserting the spile.
- Tap the spile into the hole using the hammer. Tap lightly, to avoid splitting.
- Sap should immediately start to drip from the spile.



Shavings should be light brown or tan. If they're dark, the wood isn't healthy. Best to tap in another location.

Collect the sap

- Hang the bucket and lid on the spile and be sure to check the bucket daily. Each day is different, some days you will only gather a small amount, but some days you may collect a full bucket!
- Transfer sap to a clean, food-grade container.
- Store sap at a temperature of 4°C or colder. Sap spoils very quickly at higher temperatures.
- Be sure to boil the sap within a week of collection.
- The ratio of sap to syrup is about 40:1, so you will need 40L of sap to make one litre of syrup. Standard sap collection buckets hold 12L (3 gallons).



how to make SYRUP

Supplies

Use a large, deep pot to boil off the majority of the water content. Once the sap has mostly boiled down, you can finish the process in a smaller pot.



The reduced sap should reach 104°C for syrup, or 112°C for maple sugar.

OUTDOOR STOVE

Boiling sap releases a lot of steam, so boiling it outside is recommended. If you don't have an outdoor stove, a fire pit works as well.

SYRUP FILTER

Used to remove debris (called "sugar sand") from the syrup.



CONTAINERS

Any clean glass container with a tight-fitting lid will do the job.



Boil Sap

- Top up the sap in the pot often, maintaining a depth of around 30cm (12"). Keep a close eye on it; it will boil down quickly.
- As the sap boils down, it will begin to take on a golden colour. Once it has mostly boiled down and has stopped releasing a lot of steam, but is still fluid, transfer to a smaller pot. The final boiling can safely be done indoors.
- Boiling over a wood fire gives the syrup a rich, smoky flavour.

Filter Syrup

- The syrup is ready when it reaches a temperature of 104°C (219°F). This can vary somewhat depending on altitude, so aim for 40°C (7°F) above the boiling point of water.
- Heat the filter in boiling water before use to help the syrup flow through smoothly, and to destroy bacteria.
- The syrup will have lots of debris. Pour it through the filter while still hot. It will ooze through slowly.



- Once filtered, pour into sterilized bottles or jars, and use within two months. Refrigerating will help to extend its shelf life.
- That's it. Time for pancakes!

