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# Live Free and Dig

## with the Littleton Garden Club

## Maple trees and maple syrup, Part 2

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There are many legends about the origins of maple sugaring and these can be found on the Maple Valley Co-operative web site. But no-one really knows how it was discovered. One story is that a chieftain found his people drinking maple syrup straight from the tree. He considered this to be lazy and punished them by watering down the sap from the tree and making it to flow only in the spring, when it had to be boiled down.

Another is that a chief threw his tomahawk at a maple tree and it began to drip sap. His inventive wife decided to collect the sap and cook meat in it. The result was a delicious meal. It is said that this chieftain was the first to use the word Sinzibuckwud which means "drawn from trees". Traditionally collecting and boiling the sap was the work of the women of the tribe. It takes about 40 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of maple syrup from a sugar maple tree.

When Europeans arrived, they learned how to tap trees from the indigenous people. They were eventually able to drill with augers and made maple sugar as well as syrup because it was very expensive to import sugar made from sugar cane. Over the centuries there have been many innovations in the making of maple products such as the use of metal evaporating pans and the availability of fuels such as propane and oil. Plastic piping can collect sap from a number of trees and deliver it to a collection tank.

Canada is the biggest producer of maple syrup in the world. In the US Vermont is the largest syrup producing state. NH does its fair share and every March the NH Maple Producers Association sponsors Maple Month when local sugar houses are open for sales, tours and demonstrations of tapping. Children whose treats usually come from the grocery store can see how nature gives us gifts.

Here are some recipes using maple syrup. credit Wanda McClure

**Maple Poppy Salad Dressing.**

3/4 c mayonnaise
3/4 c maple syrup
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

Whisk together, then add 1/2 teaspoon poppy seed. Refrigerate

Maple Syrup Roasted Brussel Sprouts

This is a good way to introduce people to Brussel sprouts.

Times for this recipe may vary according to the size of the sprouts.

1 1/2 lbs. Brussel sprouts
3 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
3 Tablespoons maple syrup

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F

Trim the sprouts. Remove any wilted leaves. Cut the sprouts in half.

Add the Brussel sprouts, oil, salt and pepper to a large bowl. Toss to fully coat the sprouts.

Spread the sprouts on a large baking sheet in a single layer.

Roast for 10 minutes. Stir the spouts and flip them over if you can. Roast for 7 more minutes.

Drizzle the maple syrup over the sprouts and stir to coat.

Roast for 7 more minutes.

**Maple Pecan Pie Filling**

Beat together 2 large eggs, 1/3 cup sugar, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1/4 cup melted butter, and 1 cup maple syrup.

Add 1/4 cup pecan halves.

Pour filling into a 8 inch pastry lined pie pan.

Bake at 375 for about 40 minutes.

Maple Nut Cream Pie

Arrange 1 cup of coarsely chopped walnuts on the bottom of a 9 inch pie pan.

Cream 2 tablespoons butter, 1/2 cup sugar and 1/8 teaspoon salt.

Add 2 beaten eggs, 1 cup maple syrup, and 1 cup cream or evaporated milk.

Pour over walnuts.

Bake at 450 for 10 minutes, then reduce the heat to 350 and bake for about 30 minutes longer, or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

If you want to learn more about maple trees and maple syrup, visit the Maple Museum at The Rocks in Bethlehem. Call 603 444 6228 for hours.

If you want to join with others who are interested in the natural world, connect with the Littleton Garden Club, a group of active and lively people. Visit our Web site at https://littletonnhgardenclub.org/.