

“Sweet Gift” of Spring

By: Meagan Moellers

Fifth Generation of the Green Family Makes Maple Syrup in Our Neck of the Woods

Many of us can't trace our family tree back to 1851. Dale Green can! In fact he can do even better. He collects sap from some of the same trees that his great, great grandfather tapped 158 years ago! From New England, this ancestor found what he was looking for in the wooded hills of Northeast Iowa. The Green family can proudly say that they have not missed a single sugaring season since 1851. After many years of collecting one of nature's incredible wonders, it's easy to say that the Green's have perfected the art.

Dale and Karen Green continue to own and operate one of Iowa's oldest businesses and the processes are the same as they were “way back then”. That's even true of the trees in the timber. The Green's do not plant maple trees, but let nature renew itself. It takes nearly 75 years before a tree is large enough to tap. Therefore, Dale's timber has trees of all ages, including some 200 years old.

It's hard to imagine that each season can produce slightly different “crops” of maple

syrup. To the average consumer the difference may not be noticeable. Producers and connoisseurs notice subtle changes occurring in color and flavor from year to year and from the beginning of the season to the end. Even a mid season snowfall can affect the qualities of the syrup. Dale's family enjoys taking daily samples to see the differences as they document specific weather conditions.

The season usually begins around March 1st. “If I had to pick the most favorable weather conditions, I would choose 25° during the nighttime, no wind during the day and temperatures need to warm to 42°. Freezing and thawing are the keys.” Dale explains. “But even then, it doesn't necessarily make syrup production predictable.”

The business is both art and science. In fact, it's mostly working with Mother Nature, deciding how factors such as barometric pressure will affect the evaporation process, a lot of genuine hard work and plenty of patience. But when the finished syrup is shared with friends and the compliments are given, it's worth the time and investment.

How do you like your maple syrup? Dale's favorites include over waffles made in a cast iron pan on a wood stove, simply pouring it over cottage cheese and fresh maple taffy, otherwise known as ‘snow candy’. This is prepared by pouring very hot maple syrup over cold snow. Are you getting hungry?



Dale and Karen Green.



Inside this issue...

PAGE 2	Renewable Energy Resources
PAGE 3	Annual Meeting Update Outage Map
PAGES 4-5	Products & Services
PAGE 6	Rebate Program
PAGE 7	Energy Audit Program USDA Grants Home Efficiency Expo
PAGE 8	Youth Tour Scholarships
PAGE 9	Capital Credit Search
PAGE 10	Green's (cont. from cover)
PAGE 11	Maple Syrup Recipes
PAGE 12	Dates to Remember Touchstone Energy

Join the Fun!
Maple Syrup Festival
Sunday, March 29
Sunday, April 5
10 am - 2 pm
1437 111th Avenue
(three miles south of Frankville)

(More on page 10.)

“Sweet Gift” of Spring

(Continued from cover)

To share this natural treat with others, the Green’s have hosted a Maple Syrup Festival each spring since 1991. It’s a time to enjoy pure maple syrup drizzled over hot pancakes and savor wood smoked kielbasa sausages prepared and served right at the Sugar Bush farm. Families can enjoy pony and wagon rides while getting a glimpse of how maple syrup is processed. What a way to celebrate the beginning of spring and the closing stages of this ‘endless winter’!



Wagon rides are provided through the sugar bush during the Festival.













Quick Facts

- Sap is 98% water. Remaining is a mixture of sugars, calcium, potassium, phosphorous, iron, and trace amounts of B vitamins. That’s why it takes about 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup after all the water is removed.
- Maple syrup was first collected by Native Americans and later adopted by European settlers.
- During WWII, people were encouraged to ration their foods by sweetening with maple syrup and maple sugar. Recipe books were even changed.
- The natural antioxidants in pure maple syrup are good for your immune system, male reproductive systems and helps prevent damage to the heart.

Sources: www.realmaplesyrup.com and Wikipedia

How the Green’s produce their maple syrup

-  Dale closely watches the weather forecast each spring (early March) when the snow starts to melt.
-  Each tree is tapped. (A new tap is required annually for each of the 1,900 trees)
-  A 7/16” hole is bored 3 inches in the sugar maple tree and a spile (hollow spike) is inserted.
-  The hole releases the sap and it drips into the metal pails when conditions are right.
-  Two teams of horses pull tanks through the woods and 4-5 people help to gather the sap.
-  The sap is stored in underground glass lined cisterns
-  The sap is heated in a large wood fired evaporator to ‘boil off’ hundreds of gallons of water.
-  A thermometer is used to know when syrup is done (7° hotter than boiling water). Have to calculate the barometric pressure.
-  Heavy Orlon filters ensure the consistent quality of the syrup and remove sugar sand and calcium.
-  The hot, pure maple syrup is finally poured into glass containers for the rest of us to enjoy!



Festival attendees from all over Northeast Iowa come to partake in the annual Maple Festival at Green’s Sugar Bush near Frankville.



Pancakes, kielbasa sausages, applesauce, pure maple syrup, coffee and milk make a real treat to savor!



Recipes...

Try using your fresh maple syrup from Green's Sugar Bush in these recipes. Enjoy!



French Toast Casserole

8 eggs
1 ½ c. Half n Half
1/3 c. maple syrup
1/3 c. brown sugar
10-12 slices Texas toast
Double stack in pan

Topping:

½ c. butter
½ c. brown sugar
2/3 c. maple syrup
2 c. pecans (chopped)

Grease 13 X 9 pan (casserole). Mix eggs, milk, syrup and sugar in bowl and place bread in dish. Cover with mix. Then cover with Saran Wrap overnight. Cook topping 1 to 2 minutes and stir in nuts. Pour over the mixture. Bake 45-50 minutes and then allow to set 10 minutes. Serve.

Janice Dougherty – Waukon

Maple Nut Cookies

These chewy cookies are flavored with maple syrup and coconut, plus macadamia nuts for crunch. You may substitute other nuts or double up on the coconut. If you like, add some white chocolate chips.

1-½ c. all-purpose flour
2 t. baking powder
½ t. salt
½ c. shortening
1 c. packed light brown sugar
1 large egg, lightly beaten
½ c. pure maple syrup (not imitation)
1 t. vanilla extract
½ c. shredded sweetened coconut
½ c. chopped macadamia nuts

Preheat oven to 375°. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a small bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.

In a large bowl, cream shortening and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg, maple syrup, and vanilla extract. Beat on medium speed until well-combined.

Add flour, coconut, and macadamia nuts. Stir with a large fork just until combined.

Scoop tablespoons of dough and place on prepared baking sheets 2 inches apart. Bake 10 to 12 minutes until golden. Let cool 5 minutes and remove to racks to completely cool. Store in a covered container.

Yield: 3 dozen

Priscilla Keck – Decorah

Send or e-mail your favorite recipe. If we print your recipe in our newsletter you'll receive \$5 off your next electric bill. E-mail to: mmoellers@hawkeyerec.com



March – No newsletter

April – Recipes that are cooked in the microwave (Need by March 15)

All recipes can be found on our website.

Maple Butter Twists

½ c. milk
¼ c. margarine
3 T. sugar
1 ½ t. salt
2 unbeaten eggs
1 pkg. dry yeast
3 ¼ - 3 ½ c. flour

Heat milk with margarine, sugar, and salt until margarine is melted. Cool to lukewarm. Dissolve yeast in warm water. Add milk mixture and eggs. Mix well. Gradually add flour to form a stiff dough. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise until light (1-1 ½ hours). Toss dough on well-floured surface. Divide dough in half. Roll out one portion into a 14x8 rectangle. Spread with half of the filling. Roll up starting with 14" side. Cut roll in half lengthwise and twist strips together, put cut sides up in the pan. Shape into a ring and place in well-greased 8" round pan. Cover. Repeat with remaining dough using another 8" pan. Let rise till light (45 minutes) and bake at 350° for 25 minutes. Frost if desired using a powdered sugar frosting.

Filling

¼ c. soft margarine
½ c. brown sugar
1/3 c. white sugar
¼ c. maple syrup
2 T. flour
½ t. cinnamon
½ t. maple flavoring
1/3 c. walnuts

Cream together all ingredients.

Lisa Lensing – Decorah

Bohemian Pancakes (Sputniks)

1 t. salt
1 c. flour
1 c. milk
5 or 6 eggs



Beat salt, flour and milk; add eggs, then beat until smooth. Heat oil in a skillet on the stove. Pour a thin batter in skillet. Brown and turn over, the edges will curl up. Serve with butter and real maple syrup.

My kids always ask for them when they come home.

Judy Spalla – Decorah