



Welcome to the Buck Family Maple Farm ([Buckfamilymaple.com](http://Buckfamilymaple.com)). We are so glad to have you visit our family run farm to explore the direct connection between the forest and the maple syrup you are so familiar with. We have been making maple syrup as a family for over 30 years. Since 2017 we have been making syrup here in Washington on our 70 acre woodlot. We have approximately 2000 taps and produce an average of 800 gallons of syrup each year. Operations in the 1000-5000 tap range pale in comparison to those with tens of thousands of taps. But our size is very common and very important to Vermont. In a state that produces 2,000,000 gallons of syrup annually and ranks first in US maple production you can begin to appreciate contribution these many family farms make to the culture and rural character of the state.

Our family is dedicated to managing our forest for the native plants and animals that live here first and foremost, and second, to produce pure Grade A Vermont maple syrup. The most striking thing you will notice while walking through the forest is, instead of a monoculture of sugar maple trees, there is a significant diversity of tree species and ages. This integrated forest structure provides it with a measure of resilience to destructive natural and invasive forces (eg severe storms and foreign plants such as barberry). The diversity also provides a wide range of wildlife habitat types that support a corresponding diversity of animal life.

Once you arrive at the sugarhouse you will see all of the equipment used in a modern maple sugaring operation. Whether syrup is made on the stovetop or in our stainless steel evaporator the principle is the same: concentrate the natural maple sugars to 67% by removing excess water. There are many components of chemistry, physics, and mathematics that go into the production of maple syrup. These include temperature/density correlations, evaporation rates, and sap to concentrate flow rates, to name a few. Fortunately there are many measuring tools that do much of the thinking and interpretation for us. When all is said and done, our maple sugaring operation is concerned with two things, 1.) Forest health and 2.) Food safety. In support of these goals we are certified as an organic maple producer by the Vermont Organic Farmers Association and recognized by Audubon Vermont as a bird-friendly forest.

You are certain to develop questions during your trek but let us offer some to get you thinking:

1. What tree species did you encounter?
2. Were any wildlife or evidence of their presence seen?
3. Does tapping a tree injure it?
4. Does the pipeline system interfere with wildlife movement?
5. Does the vacuum suck the sap out of the tree?
6. How does sap flow from one end of the evaporator to the other when it is a level surface?

Looking forward to seeing you,

Cathy and John Buck