Maple Syrup Production

A part of Oure NB Agriculture

New Brunswick has a long history of commercial maple syrup Production. Today it is the third largest producer of maple syrup in the world with an annual production of over 3 million kilograms.

Indigenous people harvested this liquid gold for centuries before the arrival of the Europeans. They shared their knowledge with the first settlers, providing the only source of sugar for many families.

The Mi'kmaq used birch bark containers placed at the bottom of a maple tree in which a "V" cut was made and a reed placed at the bottom to direct the sap into the container. The sap was then boiled in a hollowed out log filled with water into which red hot rocks were repeatedly placed until the water boiled and syrup was produced.

The first commercial production of syrup in Albert County was in the early 1840's by the Colpitts family of Pleasant Vale. In their first year they gathered enough sap to produce 6200 lbs. of product.

At that time, horse drawn sleds were used to haul the large vat filled with the sap from cans hung on the tree spiel and gathered by the men and women on snow shoes. The vats were then taken to the sugar camp where it was drained into the evaporator and in some cases large cauldrons over open fires.

Today most all commercial producers are on pipelines connected from tree to tree that then drains into large collection vats placed lower on the hillside to allow gravity to do its work.

To increase productivity and efficiency many new methods are employed: from pre heating the sap using the steam heat produced from the evaporator to an osmosis system that removes the majority of the water from the sap before it enters the evaporator.

Last year maple syrup producers reported 38.8 million in revenues or 4,9% 0f NB total farm operating revenues.

The experience of going to the sugar woods and attending a "sugaring-off" is a Spring ritual that no child or adult so go without. An NB "rite of passage!"