

Osamequin Farm Community Boil 2021 - 2022



**TREE
TAPPING
GUIDE**

1. CHOOSE A TREE

Start by identifying the maple trees in your yard. (You can use our [Maple Identification Handbook](#) or check out a quick [YouTube video](#) for help.) The best maples for tapping are sugar maples, red maples, and silver maples.

Once you've identified the maples in your yard, it's time to tap!

The tree should be at LEAST 10" in diameter and should appear to be in vigorous good health! If you have a very large maple, more than 24" in diameter, you could safely put 2 taps in that tree, at least 9" apart from each other.

2. PLACE A TAP

Choose a spot that's about 3 feet up from the ground for easy access, and on the south facing side of the tree if possible. Don't tap inside a big seam or in a spot where the tree seems to have healed a wound.



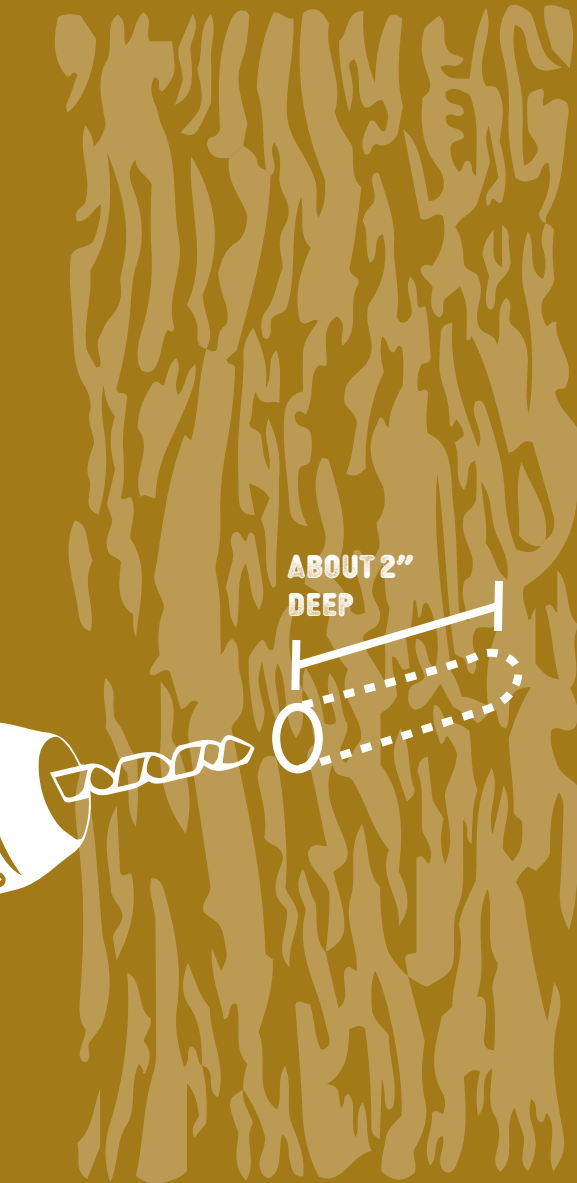
AT LEAST 10"



ABOUT
3'

SOUTH
FACING
SIDE

TAPPING YOUR TREES



3. INSERT THE TAP

Using a 5/16" drill bit or specialty maple tapping bit, drill into your tree using a slight upward angle (to encourage sap to flow down and out of the hole). You only need the hole to be long enough for your tap, don't go too deep! If you're using the taps we've provided, that will be about 2" deep.

Note: the shavings that come out of the tap hole should look fresh and white, not dark brown or gray. If you get gray shavings, try a different spot!

Using a rubber mallet, gently tap your spout into the hole - you should see drops of clear sap start to emerge almost immediately!

If you're using the system we provided, attach one end of your tubing to the spout and the other end into the hole in your bucket lid, and find a stable spot on the ground directly below to place your bucket.

COLLECTING SAP

Sap flows from the trees when the overnight temperature was below freezing, and the daytime temperature is above freezing. For us in this area, that's most days in late winter!

You'll need to check your buckets daily or every few days and swap them out as they're filled, or if the daytime temperatures are expected to be very warm - sap will spoil like milk, so you want to keep it cool and out of direct sunlight until you can boil it. Don't expect to keep sap unboiled for any longer than a week - and the sooner you can boil it down, the better.



The average "lifespan" of a tap is about 6 weeks. When the tap seems to be slowing down in production, it's time to remove your tap and let the tree begin to heal back over. A shift in the daily temperatures might signal the end of tapping season before the six weeks are up - we are at the whims of nature! You'll know the season is wrapping up when the sap begins to look cloudy, has an off-smell or taste, or when you notice the buds swelling on the tree - that means the tree is shifting its energy to the new season's growth!

BOILING SAP INTO SYRUP

Boiling sap is a simple process that, as with many hobbies, can be made as complicated as you choose! The simplest setups are pots or pans over an open fire. Serious maple operations have sophisticated evaporators to get the maximum amount of reduction in the shortest, most efficient amount of time. You can expect about a 40:1 ratio of sap to syrup from most maple trees, although the ratio depends highly on the tree itself.

At Osamequin, we use an enclosed fire box and a wide rectangular basin to boil sap most of the way to syrup, and then we finish it off on an outdoor propane burner where we have more direct control over the heat. If you're boiling at home, we'd recommend boiling outside over a fire or propane burner most of the way, and then bringing your almost-syrup inside to the stovetop to finish.

Sap becomes syrup when it reaches 7 degrees ABOVE the boiling point. That's usually about 219 degrees F, but it's a good idea to do a test to be sure - boil a pot of water to a rolling boil and test the temperature, then add 7 to that number.

You have to watch the sap very carefully as it approaches the sap temperature, because if you boil it too far it will crystallize into rocks! Under-boiled syrup will be watery and more likely to spoil over time.

Once your syrup is at the correct temperature, you'll need to strain it - you can use a large coffee filter, or purchase a special nylon or wool maple syrup filter. After it's filtered, pack the syrup into sterilized jars to keep. Make sure the syrup is still at least 180 degrees after straining to hot pack safely - you may need to reheat it.



TO PARTICIPATE IN THE OSAMEQUIN FARM COMMUNITY BOIL:

[RSVP here](#) and join us on February 6th to participate in a demonstration of tapping your trees. You can purchase everything you'll need to tap your trees from us if you like - the tap itself, tubing, and 2 buckets per tree so you can rotate them through.

Go home and tap your trees, and then bring your sap (must be 1 week old or fresher!) to the farm on Sunday afternoons to add it to our boil.

2022 COMMUNITY BOIL DATES:

February 13th

February 20th

February 27th

March 6th

Come once, or come to them all!

We'll keep in touch about exact timing of boiling days. You don't necessarily need to hang out the whole afternoon while we boil, but you're welcome to!

We'll have a closing celebration on Sunday, March 6th.

Anyone who contributes sap to the community boil will receive a share of the syrup produced at the end of maple season!