

## Maple syrup production improves

Strong prices, firm consumer demand, and the introduction of new technology promise to make this year's maple syrup season a big success.

The sap starts flowing in the maple bushes of Eastern Canada about mid-March and runs until mid-April and, with the right kind of weather — sunny days and frosty nights — national production will rise well above two million gallons, worth substantially more than last year's estimated \$22-million yield.

In Quebec, where more than 90 per cent of Canada's maple syrup is produced, the provincial government is encouraging the use of plastic tubing. Plastic taps are inserted into the trees, which allows the sap to run directly to the evaporator site or to central collection points. The technique yields 30 to 100 percent more sap and greatly reduces labour costs.

In response to rising oil and gas costs, many producers are returning to the use of wood to fire their evaporation tanks. The sap must be heated to about 104 degrees Centigrade. Water, which constitutes about 96 per cent of the sap, is evaporated, until a syrup of at least 66 per cent sugar is obtained.

### High standards sought

Canada No. 1 maple syrup must be uniform in colour, free from cloudiness, and



*The collection of maple sap in the traditional buckets is picturesque but time consuming.*

meet certain colour requirements — extra light, light or medium. It must have no trace of fermentation or other objectionable odour or taste. The same requirements apply to Canada No. 2 syrup, but a stronger maple flavour is allowed and the colour class must be amber. Canada No. 3 maple syrup, used for processing, or exported for use in syrup blends, is not considered a retail product.



*Many producers have switched to more efficient clear plastic tubing to collect the sap.*

Although Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes have different grade names, all maple products must meet Agriculture Canada standards.

Recently, producer associations have stepped up efforts to prohibit the use of the name "maple" on syrups that are not pure maple syrup.

### The oldest maple in Canada

The oldest and most beautiful sugar maple is believed to be situated near the hamlet of North Pelham, 19 kilometres west of Niagara Falls, Ontario.

"Comfort", the name of the giant, is 24.6 metres high, its "head" an almost perfect circle of the same measurement in diameter.

Although the exact age of the tree is not known, the Ontario Forestry Association believes it could be between 450 and 500 old, so that it was at least 300 years old at the time of Confederation in 1867.

### Forest waste converted to energy



*The Total Chiparvestor, a new product of Morbark Industries, Inc. of North Bay, Ontario, transforms in minutes twisted undergrowth and trees normally allowed to decay, into fuel chips, which are later converted to energy by a wood-burning boiler system. A ton of green wood is about equal to 6,500 cubic feet of natural gas, a third of a ton of coal or one barrel of oil.*