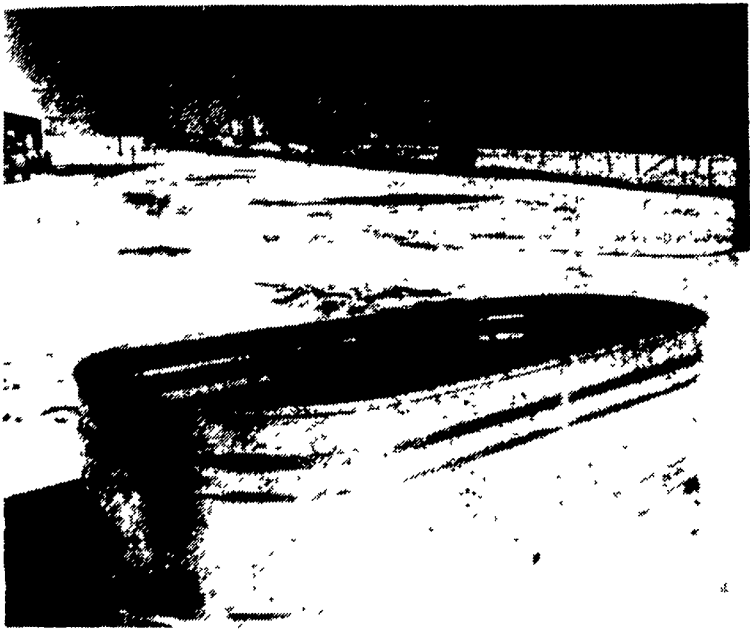


From Sap To Syrup

(Continued from Page B2)



A stock tank is used to collect sap from taps on road trees. Sap is filtered of debris before concentrating into syrup.

tamination and ensure the best quality produce possible. Swift-ness of operation is of utmost importance; once the maple buds swell, the sap develops a bitter "buddy" taste and the work of collecting sap is over. At the end of the season, they clean the tubing with a Clorox® solution and store the color coded tubing for the year.

Although the Firth operation began with Troy, and he continues to have a hand in every phase of the operation for quality control, the whole family is now involved. Troy's wife, Lynn, whips up dinner for the crew during the busy season and, together with Troy's mother, Lucille, makes maple cream, conducts tours of the operation and sells maple products at festivals. His father, Frank, spends several hours each day selling retail at the sugar house. Lynn has also been instrumental in developing a new brochure and in exploring new marketing contacts for Firth Maple Products. She also makes up the gift baskets which they ship through UPS, year

round.

Their brochure is informative, explaining the process leading from sap to syrup and giving tips on storing and cooking with the product. Listed are the grades of maple syrup, each weighing 11 pounds per gallon: 1) Grade A light amber (Fancy) — the most expensive light grade; 2) Grade A medium amber — light in color, mild in flavor. The most popular; 3) Grade A dark amber — slightly darker in color, a more distinct maple flavor, often preferred on pancakes due to its stronger maple taste; and 4) Commercial grade — dark in color, strong in maple flavor. Used widely in cooking and baking.

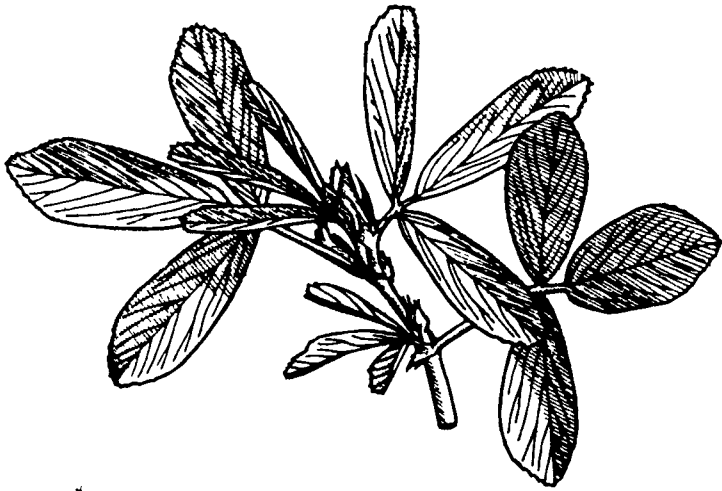
Is there a trick to cooking with maple syrup? According to the Firths, maple syrup can be substituted for sugar in most recipes by using ¾ cup of maple syrup for each cup of sugar and reducing the liquid in the recipe by 3 Tablespoons.

The Firth brochure advises that

unopened containers should be stored in a cool, dry place; opened containers should be stored in the refrigerator. If syrup is purchased in a large container, it can be recanned into smaller jars by heating the syrup to 180 degrees and poured into sterilized jars and sealed. Syrup can also be frozen. Maple Butter may be stored for several weeks in the refrigerator or frozen.

The Firths sell items wholesale and retail at the sugarhouse, through health food stores and by mail order, where they offer a variety of gift baskets featuring maple syrup, maple butter, pancake mix and honey from their own hives. They also carry a cookbook featuring maple recipes. A catalogue may be obtained from: Firth Maple Products, R.D.2, Spartansburg, PA 16434 or by calling (814) 654-7265.

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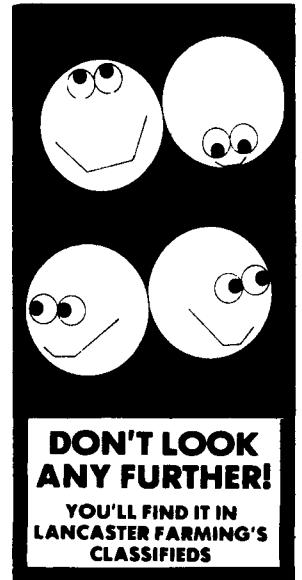
Aphanomyces root rot	Anthracnose (race 1)
Bacterial wilt	Fusarium wilt
Phytophthora root rot	Verticillium wilt
Common leaf spot	Pea aphid
Stem nematode	

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