



Forestry & Wildlife Program  
DIVISION OF EXTENSION  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

# Tapping Wisconsin's Potential:

## UW-Madison Extension Maple Syrup Program Report (2022-2025)

UW-Madison Extension launched maple syrup programming in 2022 thanks to a grant from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service through the Acer Access and Development Program. Here is a high-level view of our accomplishments from 2022 to 2025.

“As a small producer for personal use and as gifts to family and friends, I treasure the broad spectrum of maple syrup-related information provided by this [Extension] program. It is highly valuable to me in my rural NW Wisconsin area.”

– Program participant

## Maple syrup outreach by the numbers

**50+**

**presentations**

on beginner maple syrup production and related forestry topics to over 2,000 people



**18**

**Maple Hour webinars**

with 466 live attendees and 3,500 additional views on YouTube

**3**

**sugarbush forestry workshops**

with UW-Stevens Point reaching 75 practicing foresters in Wisconsin



**45,000**  
**webpage views**

(1/1/23–8/24/25)



**1,800**  
**Facebook followers**

**4,000**  
**views**

of maple tree identification video



**1,200**  
**email subscribers**

# Determined the needs and interests of Wisconsin maple syrup producers

RESPONSES FROM 682 MAPLE PRODUCERS IN SUMMER 2022

## Producers' interests

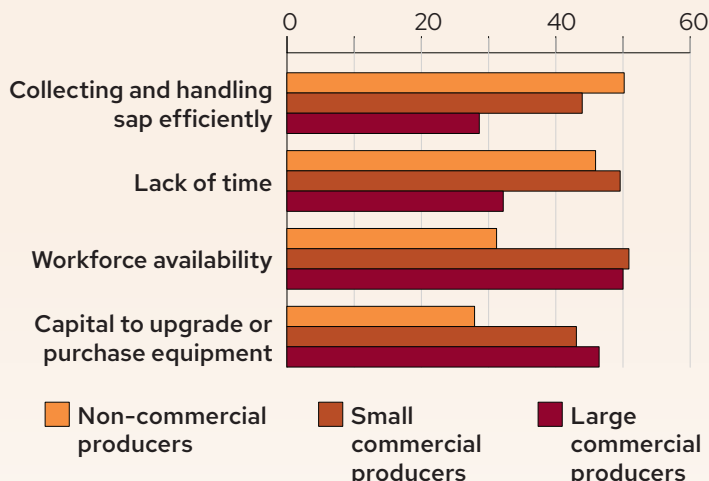
- Motivation:
  - Spending time in nature
- Interests:
  - Operating concentrating and cooking technology
  - Forest health management
  - Collecting and handling sap efficiently
- Who wants to expand:
  - Those with fewer years of experience
  - Newer landowners
  - Those more motivated by finances

## Producers' knowledge networks

- Most-trusted information sources:
  1. Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association
  2. University and Extension specialists
  3. Landowners and producers in the local community
  4. State foresters
  5. Equipment dealers and suppliers
- Producers tend to learn from informal peer networks rather than formal outreach programs or professional services.
- Opinion leaders and early adopters are more likely than others to learn from a combination of formal and informal sources.
- Future outreach should incorporate peer learning and train opinion leaders in the industry to be spokespersons for stewardship practices.

## Producers' top barriers

Proportion of respondents citing item as a barrier (%)



## Foresters' sugarbush advice

- Producers respond more positively to a forester's advice when they perceive that the forester—
  - Is competent.
  - Is trustworthy.
  - Holds similar values.
  - Actively listens to them.
- Training programs for foresters should integrate communication skills into the curriculum.

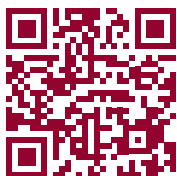
# Encouraged landowners to consider maple syrup production

FACEBOOK AD CAMPAIGNS IN SUMMER AND FALL 2023

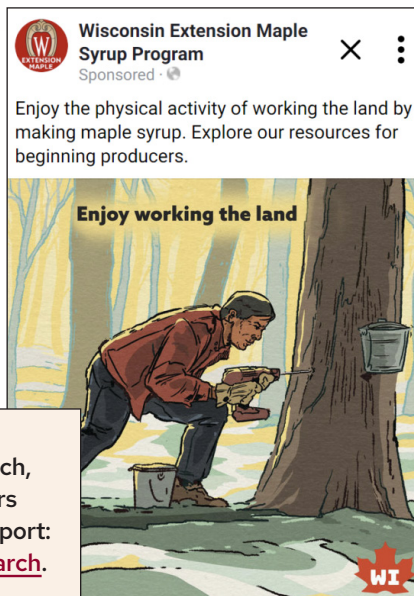
- We ran 4 ad versions informed by the needs assessment.
- Ads were seen by >300,000 Wisconsinites and garnered >5,000 clicks to visit our website.

## Most effective messages

- Lifestyle of working the land (ages 18–54)
- Food self-sufficiency (ages 55+)



Explore the details of our research, including 4 peer-reviewed papers and the full needs assessment report: [maple.extension.wisc.edu/research](https://maple.extension.wisc.edu/research).



# Built and strengthened networks of producers and professionals

- ▶ Established grant advisory group with connections to USDA, Wisconsin DNR and DATCP, Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association, UWSP's Wisconsin Forestry Center, Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council, equipment suppliers, Wisconsin Land and Water, and county governments
- ▶ Partnered to distribute the needs assessment survey with the Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association, Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council, Forest Data Network, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, Wisconsin Forestry Center, Roth Sugar Bush, Maple Hollow, The Maple Dude, and Smoky Lake
- ▶ Collaborated with the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science and the USDA Northern Forests Climate Hub to build resources to help Wisconsin syrup producers adapt to the changing climate
- ▶ Facilitated updates to Managed Forest Law guidelines for sugarbushes via ad hoc advisory committee
- ▶ Established Tribal Maple Sugaring Network with funding from an Extension Dean's Innovation Grant and the Wisconsin Rural Partnerships Institute
- ▶ Catalyzed formation of national Extension Maple Specialist group, now meeting biannually

## Helped producers learn and expand their sugaring operations

RESPONSES FROM 350 MAPLE PRODUCERS IN JUNE 2025

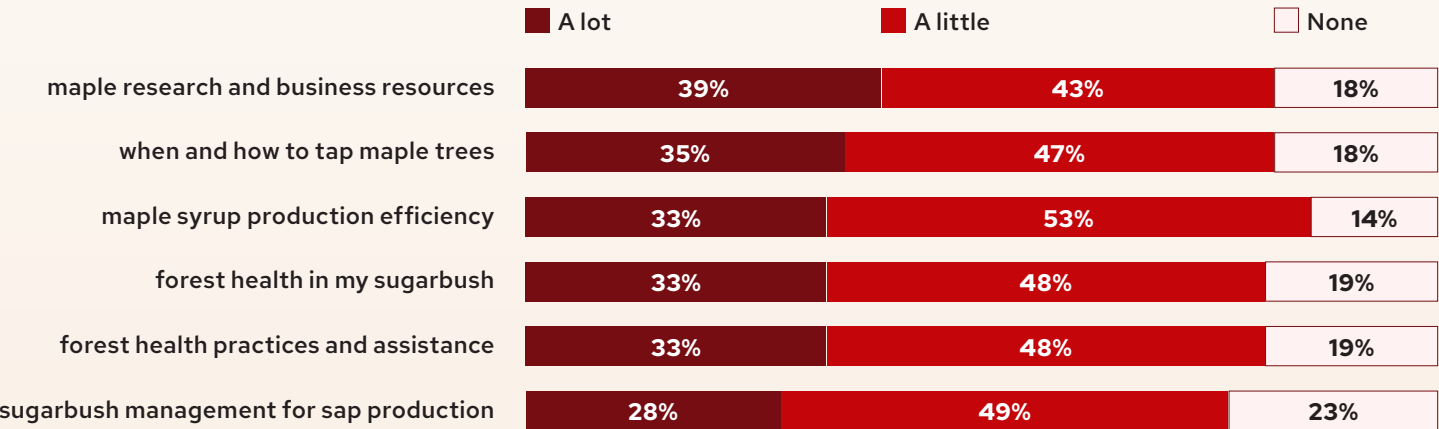


**(47% of respondents)**  
started tapping maple trees for the first time or  
grew their operation with help from our program.



**(34% of respondents)**  
grew their existing business or started a new  
business with help from our program.

▶ How did your connection with the Wisconsin Extension Maple Syrup Program INCREASE your KNOWLEDGE of the following topics:



“Your program got me started 3 years ago. It’s just a hobby for family and friends. Tap 16 trees. Made 19 quarts this year. Almost 5 times what I made last year. Keep reaching out so others can start this hobby or business.”

– Program participant



“Wisconsin Extension Maple Syrup helped me get going this year as a hobby. Expert information that was provided along with my personal research gave me the ‘go ahead’ to process and finish a gallon of syrup this year. I hope the program continues on.”

– Program participant



“Every time I logged on to a seminar, I walked away from the session with new knowledge, and connections...It has increased the amount of maple syrup we make each year, and has made us more efficient and better prepared, no matter when the sap starts to run. I truly hope this kind of programming can continue into the coming years. It was excellent.”

– Program participant

## Explore our resources and stay connected

The resources we created during the grant remain available to producers, and we continue to incorporate maple syrup into our outreach in Extension’s Forestry & Wildlife Program.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

[go.wisc.edu/maple](https://go.wisc.edu/maple)

- ▶ How-to resources for beginning syrup producers, including videos
- ▶ Resources for maple businesses and sugarbush forestry
- ▶ Climate adaptation menu and accompanying video
- ▶ Maple Hour webinar archives

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