

Maple Syrup Crew Leaders

In 1942, the monks of Saint John's started tapping sugar maple trees to make pure, sweet maple syrup. Our syrup season is about to begin once again. The Arboretum is in need of volunteers to act as crew leaders who will be responsible for collecting sap.

Ongoing Sap Collection

Throughout the syrup season (early March to mid-April), we will need assistance with sap collection. Sap flows out of the taps into a bag or bucket. Crew leaders will be responsible for leading volunteers in sap collection, which includes gathering sap from the bags/buckets and depositing the sap into barrels located throughout the woods. The amount of sap in the collection bags will vary from day to day depending on the temperature. Some days, the collection process may take 2 to 3 hours.

Requirements of Crew Leaders

- As a crew leader, you will commit to one day in the 6-day class cycle to report to the sugar bush from 3:00-5:00 pm or one day during the weekend. This will amount to about 4 or 5 days during the maple syrup season. The season runs from March 5 to approximately April 9, 2011 (weather dependent).
- During your scheduled time, you will be asked to either collect sap yourself, instruct other volunteers on how to collect sap, or other tasks if there is no sap to collect.
- In order to be a crew leader, you must attend one training session where we will cover the proper method of collecting sap. Training sessions will be from 3-4:00 pm, Monday through Friday during the week of March 7th-11th. **You only need to attend one training session!**
- You will be responsible for getting out to and back from the sugar bush on your own. Directions are listed below.
- The terrain is varied and hilly. Crew leaders must be comfortable with walking through hilly woody areas and carrying 5 gallon buckets of sap.
- As the weather can vary greatly during syruping season, you will want to wear proper clothing: boots, jacket, gloves, hat, etc. It is recommended to wear wool or fleece and dress in layers.

Sugar Shack Location

Saint John's Sugar Shack is located near the Prep School Athletic Fields. Walk down the Old Entrance Road (leads to the footbridge over the highway) and pass the stone arch on your right. Take the next right (past the large red blinking radio tower on your right). Walk up the slight hill and past the rugby and ball diamond. The sugar shack is the small brown building on the left side, just before the woods. It takes about 20-30 minutes to walk out to the sugar shack from campus.

We encourage you to walk out to the shack as the road is plowed but often muddy and rough. If it is necessary for you to drive out to the shack, just be aware that the driving conditions are not ideal and people have gotten stuck before. The sugar shack location is indicated on the Arboretum trail map. Maps are available outside the Arboretum offices (New Science Center 104 SJU), at the Great Hall, or OLC.

Becoming a Crew Leader

If you are interested in becoming a maple syrup crew leader, please contact Sarah Gainey by e-mail sgainey@csbsju.edu or phone (320)363-3133.

