

**Andover Public Library
New Acquisitions**

Burning Lamp, Amanda Quick
Take Three, Karen Kingsbury
Take Four, Karen Kingsbury
Devil Colony, James Rollins
A Dangerous Woman, Mary McGarry Morris
The Wisest Man In America, WD Wetherell
Combat-Related Traumatic Brain Injury and PTSD, Cheryl Lawhorne and Don Philpott
Behind the Scenes at the Museum, Kate Atkinson
Maximum Ride #5, James Patterson
Robert Ludlum's The Janson Command, Paul Garrison

Defending Jacob, William Landay
The Thief, Clive Cussler
Knit Two, Kate Jacobs
The Throne of Fire #2, Rick Riordan
Kill Shot, Vince Flynn
The Wolf Gift, Anne Rice
Beyonders: Seeds of Rebellion, Brandon Mull
The Shark King, R. Kikuo Johnson
Chopsticks, Amy Krouse Rosenthal
She Walks in Beauty, Siri Mitchell
Micro, Michael Crichton
Nancy Clancy, Super Sleuth, Jane O'Connor
Come Home, Lisa Scottoline
Stay Close, Harlan Coben
Elegy for Eddie, Jacqueline Winspear

**Disappointing Season For
Local Maple Producers**

By Eric Johnson
Tucker Mountain Maple

After a record-breaking season for maple producers last year, the 2012 season was a disappointment. Some producers reported their crop being as low as one quarter of their normal crop, while others saw their production at roughly 50% to 60% of normal.

For many Andover-area maple producers, the season started in early February, a full 10 days to two weeks before normal tapping dates. Many producers start watching the 10-day forecast, looking for a stretch of days where the daytime temperatures were around 40 degrees and the nighttime temperatures around 25 degrees. This season it came early, and many producers were caught off guard.

There used to be an adage for sugarmakers that you should be "all tapped by Town Meeting." This season it was "all tapped by Valentines Day (February 14th)."

Joyce Jones runs a 140-tap operation on the west end of Maple Street. Her overall production of 9½ gallons was approximately a quarter of her normal production of 35 to 40 gallons. For Joyce, the season started 14 days earlier than normal, right around the 10th of February. She noted that despite her syrup being pretty dark in color, it had a nice medium flavor. Her plans for next year include a slightly larger evaporator in hopes of a banner year of sap.

Dave Pilla, Woodlands Manager at Proctor Academy, also tapped out a full two weeks ahead of his normal tapping time. This early tapping had a benefit for Proctor, as the main focus of their sugaring operation is educational. Most years, the bulk of the sugaring season at Proctor occurs while students are on Spring Break.

Dave noted that the syrup was of very good color and flavor during the season. Proctor's total production was about 40% of their normal crop. The Proctor sugarhouse was shuttered on March 25 this year, a full 10 days ahead of last season's closure.

Salisbury Sugar Works, run by Parker

Rowe and his crew out of a sugarhouse on North Road in Salisbury, set out a total of 3,100 taps this season. Salisbury Sugar Works taps three sugarbushes – a south-facing bush in Boscawaen, one in East Andover near Dyers Crossing, and one at a higher elevation in Hill. This diversity allowed Salisbury Sugar Works to have a longer season than normal.

Parker's south-facing sugarbush began running in early February and ran well until the warm spell during the week of March 17 to 22. Conversely, Parker's Hill sugarbush, which is at over 1,000 feet in elevation, ran well until the first week in April. Parker's total of over 600 gallons of syrup is down from last year's record of over 1,100 gallons.

At Tucker Mountain Maple, we set out an additional 200 taps this year, for a total of 1,350 taps. We tapped our first trees on February 5, nine days ahead of last year's start. Our last boil was on March 30, also nine days ahead of last year's schedule. Our "syrup-per-tap" production was off by more than 50% from last years' record season and off by 40% from our normal per-tap production.

We made a good mix of the four syrup grades this year, whereas last year, over 80% of our syrup was just one grade – Grade A Dark Amber. New for us this year was a high-efficiency "arch" or firebox, which was custom-made by Island View Fabrication in East Andover. The higher boiling rate cut our boiling time in half, meaning a lot less wood burned per gallon of syrup made.

Across the maple syrup producing region of the US and Canada, early reports are that 2012 production is between 50% and 60% of expected crop. As with any crop that relies on the whims of weather and tree physiology, there are bound to be years when the production does not meet expectations.

As a life-long Red Sox fan, I have been conditioned to remember that when the season disappoints, I think, "Well, there is always next year." As we cleaned up the sugarhouse a few weeks ago, that same phrase was uttered on more than one occasion.



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