



## Extension Notes

### Agriculture and Natural Resources

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## Kentucky Maple School taps into state's sweet potential



Kentucky maple syrup. Photo by Stephen Patton

LEXINGTON, Ky., (Oct. 23, 2020) — There's gold in Kentucky's hills, gold as in maple syrup, that is. Though many think of maple syrup as a New England product, Kentucky woodlands are ripe for the tapping. For anyone interested in maple syrup production, The Kentucky Maple School is a good place to garner important information.

University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service and the Kentucky Maple Syrup Association will present the free, annual school in a virtual format this year, with sessions taking place on the social conferencing platform Zoom, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. ET, Nov. 7. Beginning and experienced producers, as well as those just interested in maple syrup production, will find the sessions interesting and informative.

Shad Baker, agriculture and natural resources extension agent in Letcher County, said this crop holds exciting economic opportunities for rural communities, particularly in the hills of Eastern Kentucky.

"This is a crop that takes advantage of land that, for the most part, people consider to be

wasted land, hillside land that has not historically been used for agriculture, or at least not in the past 100 years,” he said. “It’s scalable, so you can start really small, for your own personal use. It goes all the way up to bigger producers with 3,000 taps, but even the little guys can sell at the farmer’s market or sell from home and sell out. We’ve not come close to saturating the market in this state. We probably aren’t meeting 5% of the demand.”

Forest inventory data, collected by the U.S. Forest Service and Kentucky Division of Forestry, indicate that Kentucky has more than 105 million sugar and red maple trees with a diameter of 9 inches or greater that have the potential to be tapped, according to UK extension forester Billy Thomas.

This year’s maple syrup school will feature Glenn Goodrich of Goodrich Maple Farm in Vermont speaking on the topic “25 to 125,000 Taps.” Goodrich started as a backyard tapper and became one of the leading maple syrup producers in the country.

Ben McKenney of Grandpa Joe’s Sugar House in Maine will lead a session on “Cooking with Maple Syrup” and Kate Fotos from Future Generations University will talk about other syrup options with “More than Maple: Walnut Syrup.”

Interested participants should register in advance at <http://ky-maplesyrup.ca.uky.edu/>. Organizers will provide registrants with a Zoom link to attend the meeting.

The UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, UK Forestry and Natural Resources Extension, the Kentucky Maple Syrup Association and the Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development are sponsoring this year’s event.

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