



Harvest of the Month:

Maple Syrup

March 2018

Did you know?

- Maple sap flows best when temperatures are freezing at night and well above freezing during the day. Usually the sugaring season runs from mid-March through mid-April. The Ojibwe name for this time of year is Iskigamizige-giizis or Maple Sap Boiling Moon.
- It takes between forty and fifty gallons of sap to produce one gallon of maple syrup.
- Wisconsin is the fourth largest producer of Maple Syrup in the U.S.
- Maple Syrup has a higher nutritional value than all other sweeteners.
- The North American squirrel also taps during sugaring season by gouging the bark of young maple trees with their teeth and drinking the sap that flows.
- The sap of a maple tree looks like water.
- Maple syrup is graded by color, which can be tweaked by cooking time.

This month, students learned about diversity in food and nutrition through learning about maple syrup's history and the process for making maple syrup. Students learned that certain foods define who we are and many of those defining foods are those that are naturally available to us where we live. For example, people in Japan eat sushi because they are surrounded by water and therefore seafood. In Wisconsin, American Indians began making maple syrup thousands of years ago and it is a tradition that Wisconsinites carry on today and teach to following generations.

Students learned about the biology of maple trees in terms of when the maple sap is flowing and how the sap is significant to the trees. Emily (f2s nutrition educator), who is a maple syrup farmer herself, gave us a demonstration on how to tap and collect sap from the trees. We then went over the process of how to make maple syrup. There was much interest and many great questions from students. Lastly, we did a tasting with locally sourced popcorn and maple syrup, which tasted like kettle corn.



It was a great month to celebrate local foods!

Thank you to all who attended, volunteered, and shared their talents for our Winter Wellness Workshop last month! Our Workshop was a hit!! Master Gardeners made fairy gardens with attendees. We had WIC dietitian Amy Graber come to talk about healthy eating habits and to take us on a tour of the Kickapoo Exchange to talk about nutritious and local foods available to us. Next Meg (f2s community outreach) did a cooking demo making root vegetable slaw with local root veggies from Driftless Organics along with a tasting. Then we had a composting guru (Angie Lemar, Recycling Connections) come in to talk about vermicomposting. Lastly, we did family yoga with Marjie Bennett. We had a great mix of activities to promote wholesome and happy lifestyles. Big thank you to Crossing Rivers Health for their generous donation for the purchase of supplies for activities, to the 4H Nifty Neighbors for their delicious snacks, to Kickapoo Exchange in Gays Mills for helping us explore their grocery store and to the Village of Gays Mills for the use of their facility.

Check out the delicious snack recipes from Crossing Rivers Health!!

Rocky Road Popcorn Balls

Yield: 8 servings

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp. canola oil
- 1/3 cup popcorn kernels
- cooking spray
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup light agave nectar
- ¼ cup water
- 1 tbsp. butter or coconut oil
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup mini marshmallows
- 2/3 cup chocolate chips
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Directions

1. Heat a Dutch oven (or pan) over medium-high heat. Add oil and swirl to coat. Add popcorn, cover and cook until kernels pop, shaking pan frequently. When popping slows, remove from heat. Let stand until popping stops. Pour popcorn into a large bowl coating with cooking spray.
2. Combine sugar, agave nectar, water, coconut oil, and salt in a saucepan. Cook until candy thermometer reads 300 degrees. If you don't have a candy thermometer, test the mixture by dropping a small amount into cold water. If the mixture becomes brittle and can be cracked, it's the correct temperature!
3. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla. Add marshmallows and chocolate chips to the popcorn and immediately pour syrup mixture over it. Toss to coat.
4. Form into 8 balls, and allow to cool.

Recipe adapted from myrecipes.com



Maple Pecans

Yield: 4 servings

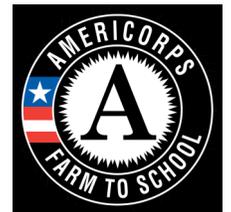
Ingredients

- ¾ cup pecans
- 1 tsp butter or coconut oil
- 3 tbsp. maple syrup
- salt

Directions

1. Heat a skillet to medium heat, add pecans, and lower to medium-low heat. Stir constantly until pecans are crisp and turn a darker brown, about 5 minutes. Remove skillet from heat.
2. Mix butter into warm pecans and toss to coat. Return to medium heat, add maple syrup and stir until syrup begins to bubble. Turn heat to low and continue to stir until syrup begins to caramelize.
3. Remove from heat, sprinkle salt over pecans, and continue to stir.
4. Maple pecans make a great topping for salads, oatmeal, yogurt, and more! They're also a great snack on their own!

Recipe adapted from allrecipes.com



Color the maple leaves!

The leaves of a maple tree are a great feature to look for when identifying maple trees.

If there are no leaves on a maple tree, the tree can still be identified. Look for a tree that has its branches, buds and leaves in opposite positions, where twigs are arranged in pairs on opposite sides of a branch, rather than alternate position (see photo).

Check out "A Beginner's Guide for Everyone" a guide put out by the Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producer's Association. This is a great guide for beginning syrup makers!

Find it here: www.wismaple.org

