

Maple Tree ID



Gearing up for the maple syrup season that typically begins in late February and early March, winter tree identification is an important skill in the process. All trees have sap, but only maple trees have the sugar content

necessary to make sweet maple syrup. Maple trees can be identified by looking at the bark, branches and buds. See if you can ID a maple tree with these tips!

Maple trees have opposite branches where the branches grow across one another. Ash also have opposite branching and may grow in similar conditions, however the bark of a maple tree is gray and shaggy. Maple trees that have been tapped for maple syrup may also have tap scars or “belly buttons” in their bark.



In young trees, maple trees can be identified just by looking at their buds. Maple buds are small, brown and, just like the branching pattern, grow oppositely on the twigs.



Soft Maples

Sugar and black maples are prized for their high sugar content, but maple syrup may also be made from other maples such red and silver maple and even box elder trees.



This group, known as soft maples, have a much lower sugar content which means it takes a lot more sap to make syrup.

Red maples are popular trees in landscaping and have reddish buds. These buds, along with other soft maples, swell and open earlier in the spring than sugar maples.

Stop by the Visitor Center Office for program information.