



WELCOMES YOU TO SUGARING WITH THE *TAPPING BIT*

The *Tapping Bit* you've just received is specially designed for tapping maple trees to extract sap for syrup. Tapping bits come in a few sizes. Antique spiles are 7/16" and some big commercial operations use 3/16" spiles. Your tapping bit fits the standard size spiles for today's small maple operation: 5/16".

How to Tap a Maple Tree

Ready to tap? In addition to your bit, you will need:

- a cordless drill,
- a hammer,
- 5/16" spiles, and
- buckets or other closed containers to catch the sap.

Proceed to your first tree. Choose a height that is both convenient for the driller and the collector. Choose a spot that is easy to drill at that moment, but also think about the current depth of the snow: is the collector going to have to reach over their head to collect the bucket when the snow melts?

Having settled on a height, inspect your tree. For best results, you should choose a place on the tree that is either below a big branch or above a big root, and not near a knot or wound in the tree. Cardinal direction doesn't matter too much—every year you should tap at least 6" away, horizontally, and 12" away, vertically, from the prior year's tap anyway—but a southern tap *will* flow before a northern one, so do think about how you'd like to time your season this year.

When you've chosen your spot, drill a hole of about one and one-half inch deep at a slight, upward angle and look for nice, light, creamy wood chips and sawdust coming out. If what you see is dark or dead, find another place on the tree to tap and try again.

When you have your hole, set your spile in the hole by gently tapping it with your hammer. Hang your bucket and put on your lid. Move on to the rest of your sugarbush. Now it's time to wait for the sap to run!