

Welcome to Our New Newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of the **New Salem General Store News**, our brand new monthly newsletter. Each month we plan to tell you about upcoming events at the store, inform you of new products and new items on sale, and profile one of our local or regional suppliers. This month, to celebrate the arrival of spring and the maple syrup season, we are featuring an interview with our syrup supplier Milt Severance, owner of Severance Maple Products in Northfield, Mass.

Please be sure to visit our new web site at www.newsalemgeneralstore.com, sign up for e-mail newsletter and event alerts, and let us know what you think! On the web you will find up-to-date information on the latest promotions and events, our deli & grill menu, and archived issues of each month's newsletter.

Rick

Rick Oliver, Proprietor

News & Events

Friday, April 10

Organic Wine Tasting

4:30-6:30 p.m.

Featuring 3 organic wines from Bonterra Vineyards

Wednesday, April 29

Hilltown Business Club

6:30-8 p.m., 16 W. Main St.

Community, commerce & connection for New Salem, Shutesbury, and Wendell

On Sale Now!

Garelick 1% Milk \$2⁷²/Gal.



Our maple center features syrup, maple sugar, and other sweet local products.

Local Vendor Spotlight:

SEVERANCE MAPLE PRODUCTS

'I like making syrup. It gets in your blood.'

By John W. DeWitt

Spring is here – which in Massachusetts means enduring the mud season long before we get to “April flowers.” But the freeze-thaw cycle that makes dirt roads and driveways treacherous also makes possible the miracle of maple syrup. To find out more about this perennial New England favorite, we caught up with Milt Severance, owner of Severance Maple Products in Northfield, Mass., whose high-quality maple syrup products are prominently featured at the New Salem General Store.

NSGS News: *Most of us are annoyed by the freezing and thawing and can't wait for warmer weather to arrive. But it's different when you make syrup. How's the sugar season going so far?*

Milt Severance: We started on the 8th of March and have been busy since. The sap has been running pretty good this year.

Q: *How many trees are you tapping and how much syrup will they produce?*

A: We boil from about 5,000 taps. If you figure a quart per tap hole, we average around 1,000 gallons a season – as long as Mother Nature gives us the freezing nights and warm days that we require for sufficient sap flow.

Q: *Most folks know 40 gallons of sap make one gallon of syrup. What's your process?*

A: You have to gather the sap from the tree and boil it down. When we bring the sap to the sugar house, we filter it through a milk sock filter, then a diatomaceous earth filter,

then we use UV light to kill bacteria. We put it in the big tank for a day or so, and then run it through a reverse osmosis filter that removes approximately 65% of the water. That reduces the boiling time by three quarters – otherwise we would have to use a lot more wood. ... After we boil it down, we check the grade and bottle it.

Q: *Most people don't realize how demanding it is to make syrup. Do you get much sleep during sugar season?*

A: I get about 4 hours' sleep a night. I've been doing this probably 30 years and I like making syrup. It gets in your blood. ... It's a lot of hard work – but the end product is worth it.