



Second Graders gathered about a maple tree with its sap buckets Photograph by Bethany Behl

Nottingham School's Annual 2nd Grade Maple Sugaring Unit

Bethany Behl and Steve Soreff, MD

One of the perennial signs of the coming Spring remains the Nottingham School's Annual 2nd graders participation in the maple sugaring unit. This has been a 37 year second grade tradition <https://forumhome.org/second-graders-go-maple-sugaring-p31006-129.htm>. Their teachers guide the students through the entire maple sugaring process.

The classes begin by using a hand auger to drill a hole in the maple tree, and then use a hammer to insert the spout into the tree. Each student gets a turn using the auger and working the spout in with the hammer. Buckets are hung on the spouts, and the students spend the next week or two watching the sap fill them. They gather the sap and transfer it into a holding tank, while using a strainer to filter the sap. Once several gallons have been collected, the boiling process begins. The teachers set up a small evaporator outside, and the sap boils for many hours, with each class checking in on it throughout this process. They learn about evaporation, and watch the sap slowly change color. Finally, when the syrup is almost finished, the students get to see the final change, and learn how to test the syrup using a hydrometer to ensure it is finished. The final

and favorite activity during this unit is the taste testing! Students enjoy a pancake breakfast during which they can sample the syrup they made here on school grounds!

There were three 2nd grade teachers involved Bethany Behl, Amelia Moore and Kelly Wheeler along with Wheeler's student teacher Victoria Sheridan. They were joined by retired 2nd grade teacher, Kathy Conway-Frangione. Kathy had done the maple sugaring with the 2nd students for over 30 years!

What a great educational event and a super way to welcoming Spring.