

How fresh is your maple syrup?

December 7 2015

The maple syrup that's tapped from the tree may not be as fresh as you think it is.

Sugar [maple trees](#) can store carbon from the atmosphere for several years in non-structural reserves as a buffer against disturbances such as droughts, hurricane damage, or attacks by insects. A new study shows that trees draw on this reserve when springtime sap begins to flow.

Thus, the sweet sap of maple trees integrates sugars produced during several growing seasons. The findings may provide new insights on how trees store and regulate the availability of nutrients.

"Our findings might be interesting news for [maple syrup](#) producers, as they suggest that springtime sugar mobilization in maple trees depends on reserves built up over several years rather than on just the last season," said Dr. Jan Muhr, lead author of the *New Phytologist* article.

More information: Muhr, J., Messier, C., Delagrange, S., Trumbore, S., Xu, X. and Hartmann, H. (2015), How fresh is maple syrup? Sugar maple trees mobilize carbon stored several years previously during early springtime sap-ascent. *New Phytol.* [DOI: 10.1111/nph.13782](https://doi.org/10.1111/nph.13782)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: How fresh is your maple syrup? (2015, December 7) retrieved 3 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2015-12-fresh-maple-syrup.html>

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