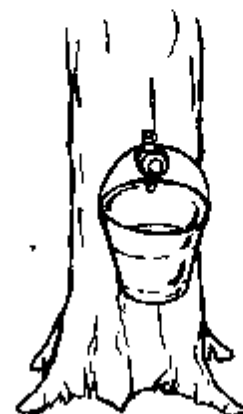
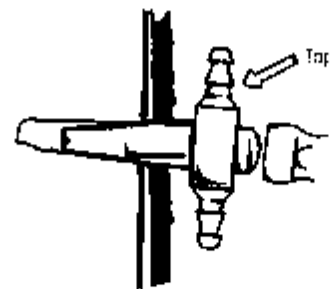
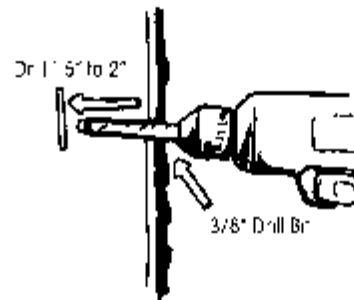
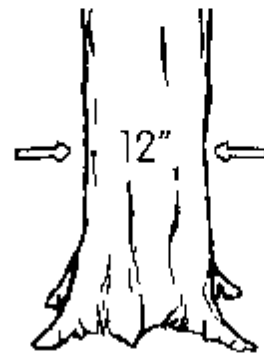


Maple Tree Tapping



Guidelines for Tapping Maple Trees

1. Tap trees in February and March.
2. All maples can be tapped, but sugar maple is best. In Virginia, sugar maple is not common east of the Blue Ridge. However, it is planted as an ornamental, so you may find one in a schoolyard or similar place throughout the state.
3. Maples are one of the easiest trees to identify in winter. Buds, twigs and branches are all arranged opposite from each other. In Virginia, only maple, ash and dogwood (spells m.a.d.) have opposite arrangement.
4. Select a tree that is at least 12" in diameter. Do not tap a tree that is under stress from recent drought or defoliation.
5. Use portable drill with 3/8" bit, to drill a hole for the spout. Drill 1.5 to 2" deep. Never drill a tree when the bark and wood are frozen.
6. Tap holes do injure a tree, but it is minor. The hole should close in 2 to 3 years. Wood from a tapped tree will show a streak of discoloration about 1/2" wide and 18" long.
7. To make the sap sweeter, boil it so that the water evaporates. The more you boil, the sweeter the sap.



For more information, read the chapter on maples in Euell Gibbon's *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*.