

Making Maple Sugar Trees



Virginia's largest producer of maple trees is located in Highland County, in the valley. A maple tree is at least 45 years old before it is tapped for syrup. Each tap yields an average of 10 gallons of sap, which makes about a quart of syrup. Warm sunny days and frosty nights are ideal for sap flow. The maple season may last four to six weeks, but sap flow is heaviest for 10 to 20 days. With this information, children can learn about how syrup is made and can develop a more concrete understanding with the creation of handprint-maple trees.

You will need:

- Brown paint
- Light blue construction paper (1 per child)
- White crayons (1 per child)
- White construction or copy paper (1 per child)
- White sugar sprinkles
- Glue
- Scissors
- Paper plates (to put the paint on)
- Paint brushes

How to:

1. Discuss with children the process in making maple syrup and where maple syrup comes from. Talk about the ways we use maple syrup.
2. Model the craft as you explain it to children. They should each have the necessary materials at their seats.
3. Children will cut the white paper in half, making a curvy line. Take one half of the white paper and glue it on the bottom of the light blue paper so the blue paper is up and down portrait style. Cut off any excess white paper.
4. Children then paint the palm and fingers of their hand brown, spread their fingers out, and make a handprint where the white and blue papers meet.
5. They can then get some more paint on a finger and paint on a trunk at the bottom of their handprint. Children then wash their hands.
6. The paint should be dry so children can put some glue on the handprint and trunk and then sprinkle sugar on top of the glue so it sticks.
7. Lastly, children use a white crayon to draw falling snow if they would like. Display these maple trees around the room.

Suggested Books:

Why Christmas Trees Aren't Perfect by Richard H. Schneider
A Wish to be a Christmas Tree by Colleen Monroe