

STORING YOUR BUMPER CROP

By Les Ober, Geauga County OSU Extension

Maple syrup is often referred to as “liquid gold.” The increased demand for maple syrup and the escalating value of this year’s crop, has added new meaning to this old adage. Once the season is over you need to use a little TLC when it comes to storing maple syrup so it will maintain its quality and value. If you have a lot of syrup setting in drums here are a few suggestions. Move the drums to a cool dark place as soon as possible. The absolute worst thing that you can do is to leave your syrup in the sugarhouse or storage shed, especially if the temperatures inside that building tend to rise during the summer months. The syrup should have been hot packed when it was placed in the drum. If no, it is a good idea to reheat the syrup to 180 degrees and repack the syrup in the drum. This is also a good time to re-filter the syrup. Never open a drum that was properly sealed unless you are going to can it. Syrup that was improperly packed can mold, ferment and spoil, if exposed to warm conditions. It is also not wise to can up all of your syrup in advance. Syrup should be canned no more than two or three months in advance of retail sales. Syrup left in jugs for a long period of time tends to drop in color grade. All canned syrup should be kept in a cool dark place until sold to avoid problems.

The best place to store syrup is in a cooler or freezer, but few producers have access to this type of facility. An acceptable alternative would be to place the drums in a small dark room (preferably insulated), with an air conditioner to keep the temps below 60 degrees. Never store syrup in anything but lead free, food grade containers. How and where you store your syrup can be just as important as how you produce it.

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