

9/21/79

Natural History Notes



MIKE DOMBECK grew up in the Moose Lake area and graduated from Hayward High School and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He has a B.S. degree in Biology and an M.S. degree in Aquatic Biology. He has taught Zoology at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and is now a fisheries biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, living in Munising, Michigan. Mike has also been an area fishing guide since his high school days.

THE SUGAR MAPLE

During the autumn months when the leaves are beginning to turn color, the most brilliant foliage belongs to the sugar maple. Whether the leaves are scarlet, yellow, orange, or shades of crimson it is a magnificent and breathtaking sight. It is thought that the intensity of color is due in part to the acidity of the soil, dryness of the weather and sweetness of the tree's sap. All these factors contribute to nature's spectacular autumn color show.

The sugar maple, also known as rock maple or hard maple, is an important economic resource in Wisconsin, not only for the maple syrup, but also as a source of lumber. From this species of tree we get the wood known as curly maple and bird's-eye maple. The latter was once a popular type of wood used in furniture making. The distinctive grain is believed to be produced by hundreds of bark-bound buds. Others maintain it is caused by a fungal growth. Whatever the reason, it is truly a beautiful and distinctive grain. Curly maple, which is caused by dips in the wood fiber, is the type of wood demanded by fiddle makers for use in the backs of violins. This rare wood type is also a favorite for gun stocks and other fine woodworking. The extreme hardness of this maple is evident in the case of a marble floor in a Philadelphia store that wore out before a floor of maple laid at the same time. This wood also has the characteristic of becoming smoother with age rather than rougher — just take a look at Grandma's rolling pin!

A mature sugar maple averages 70 - 100 feet in height but specimens 135 feet tall have been found. The main trunk may be free of branches half the length, resulting in knot-free lumber unrivaled among the hardwoods. The leaves are dark green, lighter underneath, with three or five lobes approximately four to five inches long and wide. The bark is gray, smooth on the branches, becoming deeply furrowed vertically on the older trunks. This maple is able to tolerate disturbance of the root system as in



Sugar Maple



75-100 ft.

the installation of pipes and drains. However, it cannot tolerate gases and smoke of larger industrial areas. Therefore, the sugar maple is suited for small towns and villages.

In the spring of the year when the temperature starts getting above freezing during the day, followed by crisp, cold nights, is when the sap of the sugar maple starts flowing. The sap of a particular maple may be as high as 6% sugar, producing three quarts of maple syrup, which in turn can be made into three pounds of sugar. This maple syrup may be sold as is or used for flavoring of confections and tobacco, or blended with corn syrup. Maple syrup is high in phosphates which cause calcium retention. It has been used in the past as treatment of certain bone diseases such as rickets.

The next time you have a stack of pancakes with maple syrup, or see a beautiful piece of bird's-eye maple, just remember where it all started — with the sugar maple.

FOR **NEW HOMES** AND
REMODELING....

Roger Hoff Construction

Phone 634-3385

On Main Street - Downtown Hayward
Phone 634-8550
Open Daily 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Sundays 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Scheer's
NORTHWOODS SPORTS

- FISHING TACKLE
- FISH LOCATORS
- REEL PARTS & BULK LINE
- ELECTRIC TROLLING MOTORS
- CYPRESS GARDEN SKIS & ACCESSORIES
- GUNS — AMMUNITION
- ARCHERY

The Largest Display of Mepps and Mr. Twister Baits in the North

One Stop Shopping for the Sportsman