

How to tap a tree?

Assuming you have properly identified the tree as a maple and the weather is right, you are ready to tap your maple trees. **Read the following directions completely before beginning.**

Step 1: Tools required are a drill bit, drill (cordless, corded, or hand brace), spout, small hammer, bucket or other type of collection device and a cover, if applicable.

Step 2: Install the drill bit into the drill.

Step 3: locate the southern exposure of the tree. The south facing side tends to thaw faster and produce sap earlier than the other exposures.

Step 4: locate a spot on the southern side that is free of defects. Look up to see if there are any large branches that have broken and check around the trunk for rotten spots.

Step 5: holding the drill at chest height, place the bit against the chosen spot and drill into the tree. The ideal tap hole depth is 1" in the white of the wood.

Step 6: Identify which end goes in the tree and which end the sap comes out. Before inserting the spout into the tree, make sure that the hook is attached and facing the out (if applicable). If using flat bucket covers attach the cover to the spout by sliding the hinge in the cover out past the center notch, threading through the hole in the top of the spout and then feeding the hinge back through the cover. Insert spout into the tap hole with your hand and press in firmly.

Step 7: Using the hammer, tap the spout firmly into place, with short wrist taps, listening to the sound made with each blow until the sound changes from a hollow tapping to a solid thud. Stop when you hear the thud. Over driving spouts will cause the tap hole to crack open under the pressure. Cracked taps holes will leak sap down the bark instead of out the spout and into your bucket.

Step 8: Attach bucket or collection vessel.

Step 9: Attach oval or domed bucket cover, if applicable.

Buckets should be checked daily. When checking buckets for sap also check to see that the spout is still firmly set into the tree. The wind can loosen buckets that have sap in them by swaying them back and forth.