

From Sap to Syrup - Maple Sugar Season on Tap at PPL Montour Preserve

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The maple sugar season will soon open at PPL Montour Preserve in north central Pennsylvania, where the history and production of the natural confection has become a late winter rite that attracts thousands of visitors every year.

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"There's nothing quite like taking a walk on a crisp winter day through a grove of mature sugar maples and then seeing how the clear sap is collected and turned into rich, amber syrup," says Jon Beam, a naturalist at PPL Montour Preserve. "Our authentic sugar shack in Goose Woods produces about 15 gallons of maple syrup per season, enough to give every visitor a sample to taste."

Maple sugaring has been a tradition for more than 20 years at PPL Montour Preserve, offering free sap-to-syrup programs for school children, teachers and the public. More than 3,000 people attended last year.

This year, PPL Montour Preserve will hold its maple sugaring open houses from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Feb. 24 and noon to 4 p.m. March 3. Programs will start in PPL's Environmental Education Center, 700 Preserve Road, Danville, Pa., and begin on the hour starting at 9 a.m. on Feb. 24 and noon on March 3.

Maple sugar programs for seniors will be held 2 p.m. weekdays from Feb. 20 to March 9, but reservations are required.

To make a reservation for one of the programs for seniors or learn more about the other maple sugar programs at PPL Montour Preserve, call (570) 437-3131.

Visitors begin their maple sugar tour with a talk and a film in the Environmental Education Center auditorium. From there it's only a short walk to the Goose Woods sugar shack, where visitors can see demonstrations about how to identify and tap a sugar maple and make syrup.

Boots and warm clothing are recommended. Maple products from Roloson Brothers, a commercial sugar maple farm in Troy, Pa., will be available for purchase.

Free and open to the public, the maple sugar programs are sponsored by PPL Project Earth, an initiative through which PPL educates the public about the environment and energy alternatives and joins communities on environmental and beautification projects around the world -- wherever PPL does business.

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