

## Sugar Maples

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Franklin Township is a rural town in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, so all of the nature that is here is quite natural. Deer roam in the small woodland areas. Fish swim in the several rivers. Wild flowers bathe in the sunlight. So, today I will explain why my favorite tree in all of Franklin Township is the sugaring maple tree.

The sugaring maple tree is one type of three that can produce syrup. It has the highest concentration of sugar in its sap of all the sap-producing trees. It is native, especially to the northern hemisphere, and can be found in North Eastern United States and Eastern areas of Canada. This explains why the Canadian flag has a maple leaf on it.

Sugaring maple trees can be found in many areas of Franklin Township, including my backyard! The sugaring maple tree at my house is quite large and the branches are durable enough for a tire swing. In the summer, it provides amazing shade from the heat. In autumn, it creates a beautiful shower of colorful leaves. But, one of the most amazing things about it is its backstory.

The story of this tree dates back to the early 1800s. The house I live in was built in 1790, and back then there were no grocery stores to provide food. The families that lived in our house before us planted trees that produced food for them. The reason I said the early 1800s is because sugaring maple trees can only be tapped when they are 40 years old. Along with my sugaring maple tree, which lives on an average of 300 to 400 years, there are also chestnut trees, apple trees, and at one time we even had cherry trees in my yard.

If you are interested in learning more about sugaring maple trees and the process of making syrup, our local Hunterdon County Park System at Echo Hill offers an educational and fun walking tour in early March. The tour is an interesting way to see and learn about sugaring maple trees and how to tap them. I have not yet taken the tour, but I have asked my mom if we can go next year.

In conclusion, the sugaring maple tree is a great tree. It produces the best maple syrup, can live for hundreds of years, and makes a great tire swing tree! I recommend you plant one in your own backyard!