

How and When to Sanitize Maple Sap Tubing

By the end of syrup season, the last thing anyone wants to do is spend more time in their sugar camp cleaning. It has been a long season of long days and nights. It can be very tempting to walk out of the woods without looking back and tell yourself that you will worry about the clean-up later or even at the start of next year. That is not a good plan, especially not if you are using 3/16-inch tubing and want to have good sap flow next sugaring season.

3/16-inch tubing has gotten a lot of bad press in recent years. Plugged tubing and reduced yields have convinced many syrup producers to pull down their briefly loved 3/16 systems, replacing them with the more traditional 5/16-inch tubing systems and investing in a vacuum pump. That may not be necessary, however; it just may take one last walk in the woods to sanitize your tubing system after the production season is over.

The Appalachian Program at Future Generations University is hosting tubing sanitation workshops across the region to demonstrate and teach a tubing sanitation system based on research out of the Proctor Maple Research Center and developed by syrup-maker Arthur Krueger in Vermont that promises to keep the sap flowing year-after-year through your 3/16-inch tubing system already setup in the woods.

Beginning at 9:00 am, each of these workshops will include the following topics:

- The Theory of 3/16- inch Tubing Systems
- Microbial Contamination and Growth in Saplines
- A Summary of Tubing Sanitation Research
- The Elements of “The Krueger Method” of Sanitation
- Followed by Lunch and Field Practice

Workshops are scheduled for:

3/26 - Tom's Creek Maple, Wayne West Virginia
4/2 - Family Roots Farm, Wellsburg West Virginia
4/23 – The Laurel Fork Sapsuckers, Monterey VA

Please wear appropriate footwear and clothing you do not mind getting stained/bleach marks.

Offered in collaboration with the West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association and the Virginia Tree Syrup Producers Group