

REPORT OF THE NEFTIC COMMITTEE ON HARDWOOD TREE IMPROVEMENT

During the past year, the Committee found that it had all it could handle just working on the selection of sugar maples for high sap sugar.

Personnel involved in the current year's work were essentially the same as those listed in last year's report of the Hardwood Committee. State Committees have been working this year in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and New York; and I feel that we now have the program off the ground, although I will admit we ran into a few rough spots in the process.

In the 1963 sugaring season, we surveyed 60 bushes for between-tree variation in sap sugar. In this process we tested over 3,300 trees. 84 trees were tentatively selected for unusually high sugar content, and 2 trees for low sugar content. Several of the selections have received a preliminary screening.

The sweetest tree we have screened thus far has been one with an 8-percent, sap sugar content. This tree was checked at the end of the sugaring season, in April. I can't wait to test it at the beginning of the season, since sugar content in sap may drop as much as 50 percent from the beginning to the end of the season, within trees.

For our goal next year, we propose to complete the preliminary screening of this year's selections, and, with our new and improved techniques, to expand our surveys over a much broader area of New England and New York. Finally we will concentrate our principal individual tree selection work in the areas where our surveys have shown the greatest variation to be present.

In closing this report, I would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the various state organizations and sugar producer associations in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. Without the help of these groups it would not be possible to carry out this selection program.

William J. Gabriel, Chairman