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Sugar On Snow



Synopsis

Sometime in early march, the cry of "Sap's Rising" can be heard in rural New England. In this lovely picture book, a father, his two sons, and one dog rise (very early) to the occasion and set off at dawn to the sugar bush to begin the process. Rossiter paints the action so that it is both personal and factual; we see the entire family involved - Mom preparing the meals, Dad steering the big John Deer tractor through the fields, and the two sons, Seth and Ethan, learning how to steer, collecting the buckets, and replacing them on the spouts, and, of course, the loyal hound Chloe (probably the only dog so named on any farm in New England) trotting along for the ride. Everyone participates in the hard work - hauling the buckets full of sap to the holding tank - and also in the fun work - reducing forty gallons of sap to one gallon of syrup in a big evaporator in the steamy storehouse. And, of course, testing and tasting the syrup. Continually. Lovingly illustrated and infused with the lucid light of early Spring, the book is a real charmer: a testimony to the spirit and traditions of New England and a reminder of the very real values found only on family farms.

Book Information

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Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

Customer Reviews

PreSchool-Grade 2-An overview of a special spring harvest in the Vermont woods. Seth and Ethan help their parents collect sap and make maple syrup. Seth is particularly excited about his chance to drive the small tractor that pulls the collecting tank to the sugar bush. From rising at dawn to eating fresh maple syrup drizzled on snow late in the evening, the boys pitch in with the tasks required to

turn maple sap into a golden treat. The afterword summarizes a Native American legend about maple syrup and briefly describes current technology that simplifies sap collection. The illustrations of wildlife and the woods are clear and engaging. Each text block is accompanied by a close-up of a bird or animal, often enlarged from the scene on the facing page. However, the people have a static, somewhat idealized quality, as though posing for tableaux in an outdoor clothing catalog. Less nostalgic than Marsha Wilson Chall's *Sugarbush Spring* (Lothrop, 2000) and Jessie Haas's *Sugaring* (Greenwillow, 1996), Rossiter's book demonstrates how a family can contribute to a process that generates its own sweet rewards. Kathy Piehl, Minnesota State University, Mankato Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Nan Parson Rossiter is the author-illustrator of *Rugby & Rosie*, a 1999 American Bookseller Pick of the Lists, and *The Way Home*, one of *Smithsonian Magazine's* Notable Books for Children in 1999. She lives in Connecticut with her husband and two sons. Every spring, the Rossiters look forward to visiting a maple-sugar farm in Vermont, where they indulge in plenty of sugar on snow.

Awesome book for kids explaining how maple sap becomes maple syrup.

A lovely book to share with children coming to our maple sugar house! Beautiful illustrations, good explanations.

We enjoyed the story which helped to explain to our grandchildren what Grandpa and Grandma do in the spring. The illustrations are well done.

This is just a sweet, lovely story with beautiful illustrations. I would recommend it to anyone, but particularly people in the New England area.

This is one of those works that I classify as a very nice little read and is certainly worthwhile, but at the same time, can not get overly excited about it. I not the kids, while they enjoy it, do not go back and give it a second read as they do so many books. That being said though....This is a rather simple story of a family in Vermont, a modern family, harvesting the sap of the Maple tree during sugaring time. The interaction between the husband, wife and tow young boys is quite good and the story line, while uncomplicated...to the point of being a bit simplistic, is good and you get a warm fuzzy feeling as you read the story. The book does give a very nice overview of the sugaring

process as would be found on a family farm. We are not talking the high tech gathering methods of today, but then we are not in the nostalgic mode that we would find in *Â A Little House in the Big Woods* *Â* either. The strongest part of this work are the illustrations which are very well and professionally executed. I suppose I enjoyed the paintings of the various forms of wildlife noted in the forest during sap gathering times as much as anything. The author is an excellent artist and has captured the mood of the story and place perfectly through her illustrations. The text is quite well done and easy on the eye and mind. It tells a warm story of a family cooperating together...getting a job done as a loving family unit. This is always a good message. The author concludes the work by recording a Native American legend as to how it was discovered that the sap of the Sugar Maple Tree is a good thing. My biggest fear concerning this work is the possibility of not holding the interest of the target age. There is little to no excitement here, no conflict and the plot runs on a sort of flat line. While the adult reader will find it a pleasing read, I am not at all sure if the kids will. On the other hand, it is a quick read; a well written and illustrated work, and is certainly worth the time it takes to read and study the painting. It also teaches kids where their maple syrup comes from...i.e. from trees and hard work, and not off the supermarket shelf. Recommend this one for a nice mellow read. Don Blankenship The Ozarks

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