

Smart Squirrels

Squirrels often seem to run about without any purpose. However, a naturalist in the State of Maine recently discovered that the squirrel's activities are well planned and efficient.

It was a cold January day when the naturalist was watching a red squirrel who seemed to be nibbling on a sugar maple. Then the squirrel would run to a tree where some of the sap had leaked out and lap at it with his tongue. The naturalist knew that conventional wisdom said it was too early to tap trees for sugar. He also knew that the sap from the trees is 98 percent water and could not provide enough energy to keep the squirrel going in cold weather. Becoming more curious, he decided to study the squirrels' activity in detail.

He discovered that the red squirrels were systematically tapping the sugar maples with a peculiar bite into the tree. Each bite went through the outer and inner bark and into the xylem where the sap runs. The squirrels were then allowing the running sap to dry until the sugar content was more than 55 percent. Not only were squirrels tapping just the maples, they only tapped them when the weather was right for the sap to run. The mad running up and down the trees actually followed a careful daily schedule of tree visitations that could include over 70 trees!

Could it be that humans learned from squirrels to tap sugar maples? Whatever the answer to that question, we know that it was the Creator Himself Who taught the squirrel the processing and use of this sugary winter treat.

Matthew 7:11

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Prayer: Dear Father in heaven, I thank You that You not only give us things to make life more pleasant, but that You are equally generous with all Your creatures. Let me never be ungrateful to You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Ref: Heinrich, Brendt. "Nutmacker sweets." *Natural History*.