

Perth, Ontario, Canada

Festival of the Maples

By Tom Kirvan

A SWEET CELEBRATION IN ONTARIO'S MAPLE HEARTLAND

Every spring, as winter's chill gives way to warmer days and the sugar maple sap begins to flow, the charming town of Perth, Ontario comes alive with one of Eastern Ontario's most beloved seasonal traditions: Perth Festival of the Maples. Held annually on the last Saturday of April, this free, family-oriented event celebrates the maple syrup harvest and marks the "sugar season" in Lanark County – long considered the Maple Syrup Capital of Ontario.

The Festival of the Maples began in 1974, originally known as the "Spring Festival of Maple." Its founders sought to bring the community outdoors after a long winter and to showcase the region's rich tradition of maple syrup production. Over nearly five decades, it has grown from a modest local celebration into a major cultural event that draws tens of thousands of visitors. Locals take immense pride in their maple heritage – a legacy deeply rooted in the rural farms and sugar bushes of Lanark County, where families have tapped trees and boiled sap for generations.

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

The 2026 edition is scheduled for Saturday, April 25, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in downtown Perth along Gore Street, Foster Street, Herriott Street, and the Tay Basin area.

This one-day celebration brings together local producers, artisans, community groups, musicians, and food lovers for a full roster of activities, including:

- Maple tastings and maple products – pure syrup, maple butter, candies, and more offered by local growers.
- Taffy on snow demonstrations, where hot maple syrup is poured over "snow" to create chewy, sweet treats.
- Annual syrup competitions, showcasing award-winning producers from the Lanark & District Maple Syrup Producers' Association.
- Live entertainment – local bands, performers, and stage acts keep the festival lively throughout the day.
- Kids' activities, including pony rides, petting zoos, climbing walls, and play areas.
- Classic and antique car shows, artisan markets, pancake breakfasts and more, adding variety to the festive downtown atmosphere.



A CANADIAN CONNECTION FOR PRIMERUS MEMBERS

Primerus has a member law firm in Canada, **Mann Lawyers**, located in Perth, specializing in family and business law, commercial and residential real estate, personal injury, litigation, condo development, wills and estate planning, employment law, bankruptcy and more.

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Visitors can also explore more than 170 vendor booths lining the historic streets, where crafts, food, and community exhibits reflect the character of the region.

The Festival of the Maples quickly became one of Ontario's signature spring events. It now attracts more than 15,000–20,000 visitors each year who arrive to enjoy the sweet tastes of spring, community camaraderie, and the picturesque setting of Perth's heritage downtown.

The festival's free admission and broad appeal have helped it grow in both scale and reputation. People come not only from across Ontario but also from Quebec, Ottawa, and even farther afield, turning downtown Perth into a bustling hub of maple-inspired fun each spring.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

The Festival of the Maples provides a significant economic boost to Perth and the surrounding Lanark region, which is located an hour's drive from the Canadian capital of Ottawa. By attracting thousands of visitors in a traditionally quieter tourism season, it:

- Supports local vendors and maple producers who sell products directly to the public, increasing sales and visibility for their craft.
- Drives foot traffic to downtown businesses, including cafés, restaurants, boutique shops, and accommodations, which benefit from increased customer spending throughout the day.
- Generates revenue for community groups and charities, such as through fundraiser initiatives like the "Empty Bowls" soup event that raises money for the Perth Food Bank and other local causes.
- Boosts seasonal employment and volunteer participation, with many local students and residents helping support the festival's operations each year.

Local sponsors, organizations, and the Perth & District Chamber of Commerce work together to underwrite costs and ensure the festival remains free and accessible – serving as a testament to community collaboration and pride.