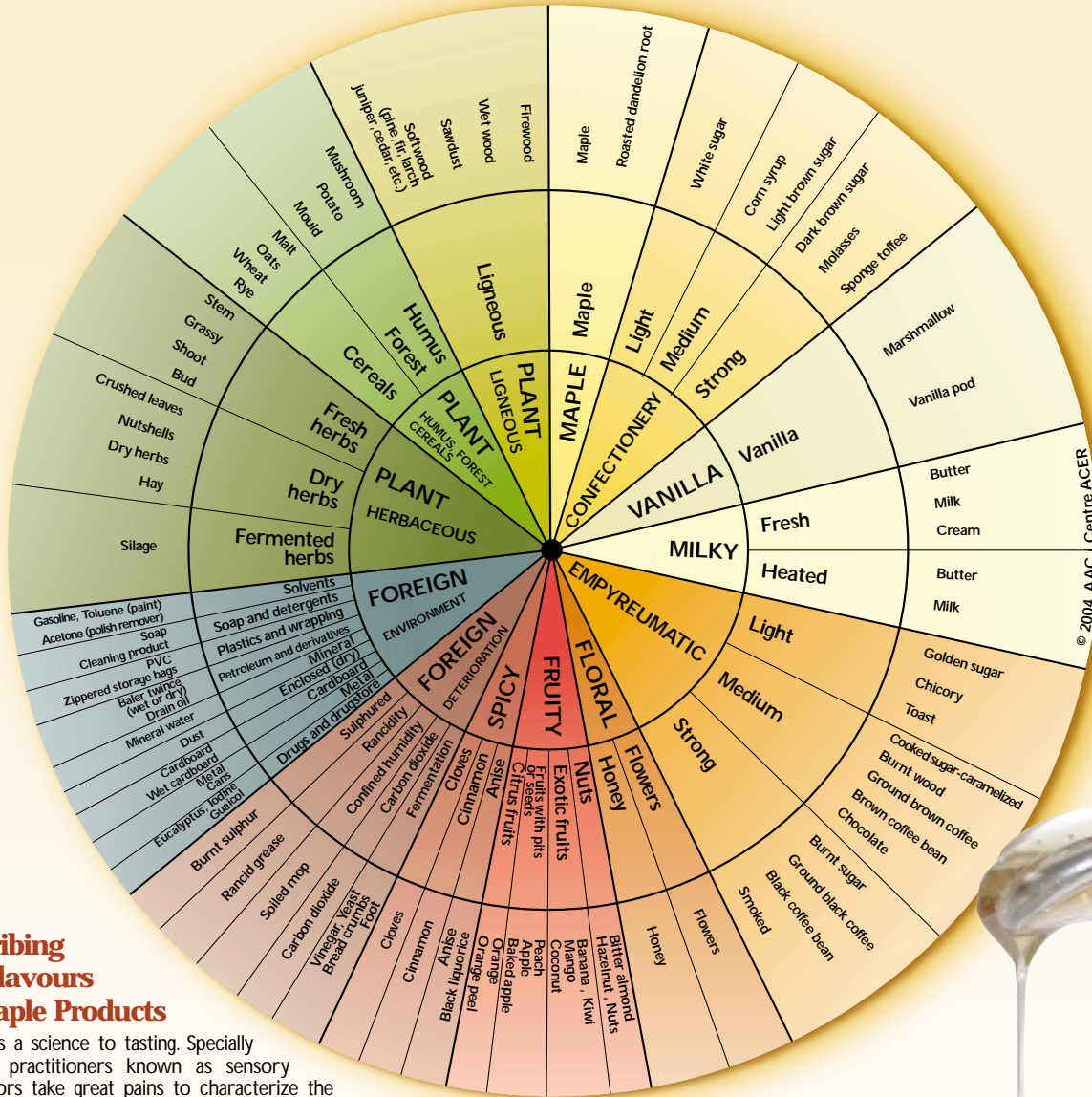


# Flavour Wheel for Maple Products



## Describing the Flavours of Maple Products

There is a science to tasting. Specially trained practitioners known as sensory evaluators take great pains to characterize the taste and smell sensations that foods produce, and share their discovery with others. One of the most difficult parts of taste evaluation is finding the right words to describe your perceptions. Learning the terminology of tasting is a little like learning a foreign language. To help, specialists in sensory evaluation and of maple products have come up with a flavour wheel that groups terms used to describe maple syrup flavours. The wheel was developed from a list of some 250 reference characteristics provided by several tasting panels. It is like a dictionary, providing a common language so all stakeholders can work to improve the quality of maple products.

## Tasting Maple Syrup

Although professional tasters require extensive training, you can sharpen your tasting skills by following these steps:

- 1 First, smell the syrup by taking three quick sniffs. Make a mental note of your impressions. Next, take a small sip of the syrup and swirl it around in your mouth. It is a good idea to spit it out if you can. Take about a minute to concentrate on the full range of flavours.
- 2 Try to associate the flavour with your own experience (for example, the aroma from a bag of marshmallows).
- 3 If possible, share your reaction with others, as this often helps trigger memory associations. Once you have identified what you think characterizes the taste, memorize the sensation and the name for it (for example, vanilla).
- 4 Finally, where possible, assess the degree of intensity (for example, mild, medium or strong).

## Could You Be a Good Taster?

An accomplished taster continually explores a vast repertoire of foods, from artichokes to zucchini. Moreover, the food experiences are filed away in the taster's memory banks, readily recalled to help name each new taste sensation. When tasting foods with a view to describing the sensory experience, the basic rules are: be in good health, avoid smoking, coffee, chocolate and any foods with a strong or persistent taste prior to a tasting, and avoid perfumes, scented lotions and creams. Experts have learned that these conditions will affect the taste perceived. Tasting should be an enjoyable experience for the taster and should be done in a well-ventilated room, where there are no extraneous odours or noises.

[http://www.agr.gc.ca/maple\\_wheel](http://www.agr.gc.ca/maple_wheel)



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