

Making molasses in DAVIDSON COUNTY

You can call it molasses, but what Gilbert Futrell makes every October is actually sorghum syrup. A member of EnergyUnited who lives in Davidson County, Mr. Futrell says he's "trying to keep an old tradition alive." You can meet Mr. Futrell and watch him make molasses the weekend of Oct. 25-26 at Horse and Mule Days at Denton Farm Park. (For more about Horse and Mules Days, call (800) 458-2755 or visit www.threshers.com.) He will have molasses for sale there, too. A quart costs \$8, and he will have pints and half pints available.

For shipping information, contact Gilbert Futrell, P.O. Box 565, Denton, NC 27239.

Photos by Villa Photography

ABOVE

Gilbert Futrell (left) gets help with this labor-intensive process from his friends (from left) Grady Berrier, Robert Berrier and Sherman Berrier.

RIGHT

A fire of pine wood slabs fuels the skimming pot. Tending the fire is Robert Berrier, a master welder who made the stainless steel skimming pot for the Futrell syrup-making operation.

BOTTOM RIGHT

Mr. Futrell feeds the Sugar Drip sugar cane into a mill to extract its juice to make the syrup. He grows the cane himself. He strip its and cuts it down before it's ready for the press. It takes him five hours to press enough cane to produce one batch of syrup.

This year he planted his sugar cane crop on June 14, later than usual due to an overabundance of rain. His molasses-making season runs through October.

BOTTOM LEFT

Sugar cane extract boils in a huge pot that holds two and a half barrels of juice. Boiling the juice removes the water from it. During the 8-hour cooking process, chlorophyll from the sugar cane rises to the top and must be constantly skimmed off and discarded. Mr. Futrell says the only additive in his molasses is "extra arm work."

