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Sights, sounds, syrup

Foreign students tour operation

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COLLEGEVILLE — For many Minnesotans, the taste of maple syrup can be as common as a cup of coffee in the morning.

For 16 international students from St. Cloud State University, the sugary taste was a new experience.

Students from South Korea, China, Japan, Malaysia and Taiwan toured the maple syrup-making operation at the Arboretum of St. John's University on Saturday afternoon. Benedictine monks



Times photo by Seungjae Seo, sseo@stcloudtimes.com

Student Hsin-Lun Tsai tries maple syrup on ice cream Saturday after a tour at St. John's University.

and Arboretum workers have been making maple syrup in Collegeville for more than 60 years, producing about 100 gallons annually.

The tour was part a field trip organized through SCSU's Center for International Studies. The group has taken other field trips to the Mall of America and a Minnesota Timberwolves game.

Along with learning about the process of making syrup, the group got to taste maple syrup for the first time, either on a stick or as topping for ice cream.

Hui Chun Su, from Taiwan, could only smile when asked about the taste.

"It was really good," Su said, likening it to honey. "I liked the flavor of it a lot."

Group supervisor Jenny Knudstrup said she saw several students asking tour guides whether the syrup made at the arboretum was for sale.

"They're trying to get tour guides to give it to them in a cup so they can eat it with a spoon," Knudstrup said.

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Syrup

"They don't have anything like it at home."

Aside from getting acquainted with the taste of

maple syrup, the tour also gave the students a different look at American culture.

"I think it's important for them to see what Midwest life is all about instead of just shopping malls," Knudstrup said. "It's good to see them get out and meet local people."

The students had many cul-

tural points to take away from the day.

Su found herself intrigued by both the outdoors and the family-oriented aspects of the tour.

"I love that parents here bring their kids with to learn about the environment and things like that," Su said while

watching children tour the sugar shack with their parents. "We don't get to do a lot of stuff like this back home. We're a pretty urban country and we don't usually have as much of a chance to go outside."