

State Beverage - Milk

This designation is a fitting tribute to one of the commonwealth's leading farm products. It also salutes the state's gentle dairy cows who each produce a generous 22 quarts of milk a day. Designated April 29, 1982



State Beautification Plant - Crownvetch



Since the late 1950's, a profusion of white and lavender blossoms has trimmed the edges of Pennsylvania highways. Scientists at Penn State University developed the hearty Crownvetch to use as a groundcover for erosion control. The versatile plant is also of value to agri-business as a feed for livestock. Designated June 17, 1982

State Steam Locomotive - K4s Steam

The K4s Steam Locomotive is everyone's idea of a typical train engine. The boxy, black cylinder with the short stack on top was the main passenger locomotive of the Pennsylvania railroad for 30 years. At one time, 425 of these powerful coal-burners steamed across the state - every one built in Pennsylvania. The State Steam Locomotive is on display in railroad museums in Altoona and Strasburg. Designated December 18, 1987



State Electric Locomotive - GGI 4859 Electric

The GGI 4859 Electric Locomotive is one of the 138 sleek and shiny bullets that smoked the rails at speeds above 100 miles per hour. Built in 1937, the GGI 4859 pulled troop trains to military destinations during World War II and continued powering coal and passenger cars until retirement in 1979. The State Electric Locomotive is displayed in Harrisburg. Designated December 18, 1987



State Ship - United States Brig Niagara

The Niagara, under Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, was decisive in the War of 1812. On September 10, 1813, it defeated a British squadron in the Battle of Lake Erie. The Niagara is displayed in Erie. Designated May 26, 1988



State Fossil - Phacops Rana

A water animal measuring just one to four inches, the Phacops Rana lived and left its mark in Pennsylvania more than 250 million years ago. A science class of elementary school students brought this tiny invertebrate to the attention of the House of Representatives. Designated December 5, 1988



State Song - "Pennsylvania"

The official state song of the Commonwealth was written and composed by Eddie Khoury and Ronnie Bonner and is the official song for all public purposes. Designated November 29, 1990

Verse 1

Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania.
Mighty is your name.
Steeped in glory and tradition.
Object of acclaim.
Where brave men fought the foe of freedom.
Tyranny decried.
Till the bell of independence
filled our countryside.

Chorus

Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania.
May your future be,
filled with honor everlasting
as your history.

Verse 2

Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania.
Blessed by God's own hand.
Birthplace of a mighty nation.
Keystone of the land.
Where first our country's flag unfolded.
Freedom to proclaim.
May the voices of tomorrow,
glorify your name.

Chorus

Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania.
May your future be,
filled with honor everlasting
as your history.

PENNSYLVANIA

State Symbols



Part of knowing our state is understanding what makes it special. Each of the symbols associated with Pennsylvania is rooted in history or pays tribute to a native species or product of great importance to Pennsylvania's economy. Some of our state symbols were originally suggested to the House of Representatives by private citizens.

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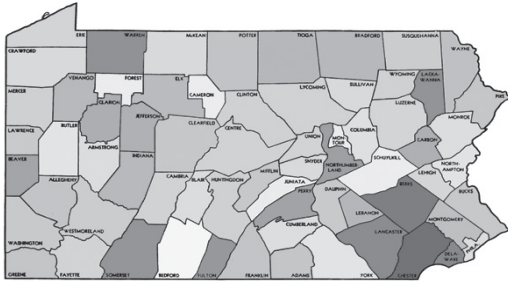
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The Keystone State

A "keystone" is a central, wedge-shaped stone which holds all the other stones of a structure in place to form an arch. In early America, Pennsylvania played a vital geographic and strategic role in holding together the states of the newly formed Union. Today, Pennsylvania continues to be of key importance to the social, economic and political development of the United States.

The Commonwealth

Pennsylvania is officially a commonwealth, a word which comes from Old English and means the "common weal" or well-being of the public. In Pennsylvania, all legal processes are carried out in the name of the commonwealth, although the word does not appear on the State Seal.



The State Coat of Arms

Pennsylvania's Coat of Arms is probably the state's most familiar symbol. Based on a 1778 design by Caleb Lowndes of Philadelphia, it features a shield crested by an American Bald Eagle, flanked by horses and adorned with symbols of Pennsylvania's strengths - a ship carrying state commerce to all parts of the world; a clay-red plow, signifying our rich natural resources; and three golden sheaves of wheat, suggesting fertile fields and Pennsylvania's wealth of human thought and action. An olive branch and cornstalk cross limbs beneath - a message of peace and prosperity.



The State Flag

In 1799, the General Assembly authorized the official Pennsylvania State Flag, a banner fringed in gold with the Coat of Arms embroidered on a field of blue. During the Civil War, some Pennsylvania regiments carried battle flags modeled after the American flag, but with our Coat of Arms in place of the block of stars in the corner. This kind of creative license was discouraged in 1907 when the General Assembly acted to standardize the State Flag.



The State Seal

Authorized by the General Assembly in 1791, the Seal of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is a symbol of authenticity which verifies that proclamations, commissions and other papers of state are legal and official. The face of the Seal displays symbols identical to the Coat of Arms, without the supporting horses, and is used most frequently as an imprint. The reverse side, or counterseal, pictures Liberty dominating Tyranny in the form of a lion, along with the warning "Both Can't Survive."

State Tree - Hemlock

The Hemlock was a sturdy ally to the state's first settlers. Many a pioneer family felt better protected from the elements and their enemies inside log cabins made from the patriarch of Pennsylvania's forests. Designated June 23, 1931



State Flower - Mountain Laurel

In mid-June, every sunny mountainside in Pennsylvania is a still-life in pink pastels - a sight which delighted members of the Pennsylvania House and Senate as well as the wife of Pennsylvania Governor Gifford Pinchot. Together, they prevailed over Pinchot's preference for the azalea to name the Mountain Laurel as the official State Flower. Designated May 5, 1933



State Bird - Ruffed Grouse

Settlers relied on this plump, red-brown bird with the feathery legs as part of their food supply. Sometimes called a partridge, the Ruffed Grouse is still a familiar sight in Pennsylvania's forests. Designated June 22, 1931



State Dog - Great Dane

The next time you visit the Governor's Reception Room in Harrisburg, look for a portrait of William Penn with his Great Dane. Now a popular pet, the Great Dane was a hunting and working breed in frontier Pennsylvania. The choice of State Dog is also unique for the vote that approved it. When the Speaker of the House called for a voice vote to designate the Great Dane, yips, growls and barks assaulted his ears from every part of the chamber! With a rap of his gavel, the Speaker confirmed that the "arfs have it" and the "Barking Dog Vote" entered the annals of legislative history. Designated August 15, 1965



State Animal - The Whitetail Deer

Indians and settlers depended on the Whitetail Deer to feed, clothe and shelter them year round. The Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed the nation's first game laws in 1721 to protect these valuable animals, some of which grow to 350 pounds. Whitetail Deer continue to flourish today in Pennsylvania's forests. Designated October 2, 1959



State Fish - Brook Trout

There is nothing more beautiful than the flash of a Brook Trout beneath a bubbling current - especially for Pennsylvania's 1.1 million anglers. Over 4,000 miles of cold water streams form the natural habitat of this fish, the only trout native to Pennsylvania. Designated March 9, 1970

State Insect - Firefly

Pennsylvanians know fireflies as "lightening bugs" that brighten a still summer night. That may be why some Pennsylvania citizens heard the word "firefly" and confused it with "blackfly," a pest that plagued the Commonwealth in 1988. To clarify the identity of the State Insect, the General Assembly rewrote the law later that year singling out the firefly by its Latin name - "Poturis Pennsylvanica De Geer." Designated April 10, 1974

