

# Arkansas State Symbols

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## How Did Arkansas Get Its Name?



Many names of places in our state came from the languages of the explorers who discovered and lived in Arkansas. The Native Americans, Spanish, French and Americans all helped name places in our state. The word "Arkansas" came from the Quapaw Indians, by way of early French explorers. The explorers met a group of Native Americans, known as the Ugakhpah, which means "people who live downstream". These Native Americans later were called the Quapaw, who were also called the Arkansaw. This name came to be used for the land where these Native Americans lived.

## Our State Beverage



Milk was adopted as the Arkansas State Beverage by the General Assembly of 1985. Dairy farming is an important part of Arkansas agriculture. Reasons for the designation included milk's healthfulness, the desirability of encouraging milk consumption, and the importance of the dairy sector in Arkansas. Dairy production was long a mainstay of Arkansas farming. In 1940, Arkansas's milk cows numbered about 439,000, the gross farm income from dairy totaling \$23 million. Since then, the size of Arkansas dairy herds has dwindled: in 2002, dairy herds totaled 32,000 head. The value of sales of Arkansas milk and other dairy products in 2002 was \$54.05 million.

## Our State Bird



The mockingbird was adopted as the Arkansas State Bird by the General Assembly of 1929. The mockingbird, one of the best-recognized birds in the South, does not migrate. The mockingbird can sing for hours on end; it can mimic other bird species as well as dogs, sirens and even squeaky gates – thus its scientific name, *Mimus polyglottos*, or "mimic of many tongues."

## Our State Butterfly



Diana Fritillary Butterfly  
- Female

In 2007, the Diana Fritillary became the official state butterfly. These butterflies are large and beautiful with a wingspan of about 3.5" and bright colors on their spotted wings. Males are dark brown with orange markings. The larger females are black with bright blue markings and white spots. Diana Fritillary butterflies live in the moist mountain areas of Arkansas and feed on the nectar of flowers. Mount Magazine is one of the best locations to see them during the summer.



Diana Fritillary  
Butterfly - Male

## Our State Historic Cooking Vessel



Adopted as the State Historic Cooking Vessel by the General Assembly in 2001, the Dutch oven is a deep, heavy kettle with attached legs, flat lid and arched wire handle. It was essential for cooking during the rustic colonial, territorial and early statehood periods. To make foods such as stew, biscuits or even cake, the cook would place the Dutch oven over an open fire or hot coals and add more coals on top of the lid for even heat distribution. Today, this link to Arkansas's culinary past is still used by campers and chefs alike.

## Our State American Folk Dance



The square dance was adopted as the Arkansas State American Folk Dance by the General Assembly of 1991. Square dancers perform a variety of steps which are usually told to them during the dance by a person known as a square dance caller.

## Our State Flag



### FLAG COLORS

The area outside of the diamond is red  
Diamond outline border is blue  
The 25 stars in diamond border are white  
The four stars in the center are blue  
The word Arkansas is blue  
The inside of the diamond is white

Our state flag, designed by Miss Willie K. Hocker of Wabbaseka, Arkansas, was adopted in 1913. The 25 stars indicate that Arkansas was the 25th state admitted to the United States. The three large stars in the center stand for the three nations that have ruled Arkansas: Spain, France and the United States. Also, Arkansas was the third state formed from the Louisiana Purchase. The large star above ARKANSAS symbolizes the Confederacy which Arkansas was a part of from 1861 - 1865, and the diamond formed by the 25 stars represent Arkansas as the only diamond producing state in the Union.

## Our State Flower



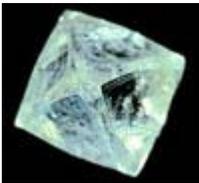
The apple blossom was adopted as the Arkansas State Flower by the General Assembly of 1901. Apple blossoms have pink and white petals and green leaves. At one time Arkansas was a major apple producing state. The town of Lincoln in Washington County hosts the annual Arkansas Apple Festival.

## Our State Fruit and Vegetable



The South Arkansas Vine Ripe Pink Tomato was adopted as the Arkansas State Fruit and Vegetable by the General Assembly of 1987. The tomato is officially defined as a fruit but is commonly used as a vegetable. In the 1920s, southeast Arkansas market farmers favored breeds that ripened to a pink hue and could be picked and shipped at “breaker” (first ripening). Pink tomatoes have been crowded out of national markets by more durable competitors. For Arkansas consumers, though, the vine-ripened pink remains available in farmers’ markets and other locally sourced produce stands during summer. The Pink Tomato Festival is held each year in Bradley County.

## Our State Gem



The diamond was adopted as the Arkansas State Gem by the General Assembly of 1967. Diamonds were discovered in Arkansas in 1906 near the mouth of Prairie Creek southeast of Murfreesboro. Unsuccessful efforts were made to mine Arkansas diamonds commercially; after World War II, the failed commercial mine became a privately run touristy attraction. It became Crater of Diamonds State Park in 1972 when the state bought the property. Since then, the park has attracted over 2.3 million visitors; from 1972 to 2005, 25,369 diamonds weighing a total of 4,954.41 carats have been reported.

## Our State Grape



The north central part of Arkansas has a rich heritage of vineyards and wineries. Approximately 150 commercial wineries have operated in Arkansas since 1870; as of 2009, seven wineries continue this tradition. Acknowledging this unique part of our state’s history, the General Assembly of 2009 adopted the Cynthiana as Arkansas’s official state grape.

## Our State Grain



The state’s leading agricultural crop, rice became a state symbol in 2007. Arkansas is the nation’s top rice-producing state with almost half of all American rice grown here. Most of the state’s rice farms are in the eastern half of the state. They grow about 240 million bushels of rice each year, which means \$1.55 billion and 20,000 jobs for the state’s economy.

## Our State Insect



The honeybee was adopted as the Arkansas State Insect by the General Assembly of 1973. Honeybees carry pollen from flower to flower. The bees also produce honey which is collected and sold by beekeepers. An old fashioned dome beehive is one of the symbols on the Great Seal of Arkansas.

### Our State Instrument



The fiddle was adopted as the Arkansas State Instrument by the General Assembly of 1985. Otherwise known as the violin, the instrument has been commonly associated with Arkansas folk music and culture. The humorous tale "Arkansas Traveler" illustrated the fiddle's association with early Arkansas. Today, the art of fiddling is promoted in Arkansas by local folk music societies, a handful of violin-makers and the state's annual Old-Time Fiddling Championship, held each autumn at the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View (Stone County).

### Our State Mammal



The white tail deer was adopted as the Arkansas State Mammal by the General Assembly of 1993. The deer raises the white underside of its tail when frightened. Young white tail deer have a white spotted red coat which changes to brownish gray before the end of its first year.

### Our State Mineral



The quartz crystal was adopted as the Arkansas State Mineral by the General Assembly of 1967. Quartz crystals are mined in the Ouachita Mountains and are used in computers and sold to visitors to our state. Sometimes called "Arkansas diamonds", quartz crystals are not true diamonds.

### Our State Nut



The pecan was adopted by the General Assembly in 2009 as the official nut of the State of Arkansas. Pecan trees grow throughout much of the South. First cultivated in the 1880s, the tree's wood is prized for flooring, cabinetry and smoking meats. The tasty nuts are utilized in many sweet and savory recipes. In 2008, Arkansas's pecan groves produced approximately one million pounds of nuts..

### Our State Rock



Bauxite was adopted as the Arkansas State Rock by the General Assembly of 1967. Bauxite is used to make aluminum which is used to make soft drink cans and aluminum foil. Arkansas is home to the largest bauxite deposits in the United States, located in Pulaski and Saline Counties.

## Our State Seal



On the shield of our state seal are a steamboat, a plow, a beehive and a sheaf of wheat, symbols of Arkansas' industrial and agricultural wealth. The Angel of Mercy, the Sword of Justice and the Goddess of Liberty surround a bald eagle. The eagle holds in its beak a scroll inscribed with the Latin phrase "Regnat Populus", our state motto, which means "The People Rule". The seal was adopted in its basic form in 1864, and in its present form in 1907.

## Our State Tree



The pine was adopted as the Arkansas State Tree by the General Assembly of 1939. The loblolly and shortleaf pine are varieties of southern yellow pine found in our state. Both varieties may grow to be 100 feet tall and can be found in our two National Forests, the Ouachita National Forest and the Ozark St. Francis National Forest. Before European-American settlement, almost all of Arkansas was forested with notable diversity. Early logging was small scale but by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, railroads brought mass access to external markets and Arkansas timber left the state at a rapid rate. By 1930, many areas were "logged out." Since then, however, strong markets and improved forestry techniques have contributed to the pine forests' recovery. A 2005 assessment revealed more than 5 million acres of pine (both loblolly and shortleaf) and mixed-pine forest in Arkansas.