

House Bill 1628

By: Representative Smith of the 129th, Post 2

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to other state symbols, so as to designate the blueberry as Georgia's official state
3 berry; to provide legislative findings and declarations; to repeal conflicting laws; and for
4 other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

7 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

8 (1) The blueberry is an indigenous American species with deep roots in America's
9 history. By the time the Pilgrims arrived, Native Americans were already enjoying
10 blueberries year-round through clever preservation techniques. They were dried in the
11 sun, then added whole to soups, stews, and meat; or crushed into a powder and rubbed
12 into meat as a preservative. Native Americans gave blueberries to the new settlers,
13 helping them make it through their first winter. Blueberries also have a place in the
14 annals of folk medicine. Their roots were brewed into a tea to help women relax during
15 childbirth, and blueberry syrup was a cure for coughs. Blueberries and bilberries (their
16 European cousins) have long been associated with good eyesight. Modern science is just
17 beginning to discover what ancient cultures have long known: Blueberries are good for
18 us in many ways; and

19 (2) In studies at the U.S.D.A. Human Nutrition Research Center, blueberries ranked
20 highest in disease-fighting antioxidants when compared to 34 other fresh fruits and
21 vegetables. Antioxidants work by neutralizing free radicals, the by-products of
22 metabolism that can damage cells and DNA and lead to some forms of cancer, heart
23 disease, stroke, and other chronic diseases of aging. Anthocyanins, the pigments that
24 give blueberries their beautiful color, also give them their high antioxidant activity; and

25 (3) Ongoing research points to a possible relationship between blueberries and improved
26 brain function. In one U.S.D.A. study, a diet rich in blueberries reversed some loss of

1 balance and coordination, while improving short-term memory in aging rats. These
2 findings have important implications for our aging United States population; and
3 (4) Preliminary studies at Rutgers University in New Jersey have shown that blueberries
4 may promote urinary tract health by preventing infection-causing bacteria from adhering
5 to the lining of the bladder; and
6 (5) Just one-half cup of blueberries helps meet the recommended five to nine daily
7 servings of colorful fruits and veggies.

8 **SECTION 2.**

9 Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to other
10 state symbols, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

11 "50-3-81.

12 The blueberry is designated as the official Georgia state berry."

13 **SECTION 3.**

14 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.