

# 52:9A-9

## LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST

Compiled by the NJ State Law Library

**LAWS OF:** 2003                    **CHAPTER:** 245  
**NJSA:** 52:9A-9                    (Establishes blueberry as State fruit)  
**BILL NO:** A3344                    (Substituted for S2678)

**SPONSOR(S):** Wolfe and Holzapfel

**DATE INTRODUCED:** February 13, 2003

**COMMITTEE:**                    **ASSEMBLY:** State Government

**SENATE:** Economic Growth

**AMENDED DURING PASSAGE:** No

**DATE OF PASSAGE:**                    **ASSEMBLY:** June 12, 2003

**SENATE:** December 11, 2003

**DATE OF APPROVAL:** January 12, 2004

**FOLLOWING ARE ATTACHED IF AVAILABLE:**

[FINAL TEXT OF BILL](#) (Original version of bill enacted)

**A3344**

[SPONSOR'S STATEMENT:](#) (Begins on page 2 of original bill) [Yes](#)

**COMMITTEE STATEMENT:**                    [ASSEMBLY:](#) [Yes](#)

[SENATE:](#) [Yes](#)

**FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:** No

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:** No

**S2678**

[SPONSOR'S STATEMENT:](#) (Begins on page 2 of original bill) [Yes](#)

Bill and Sponsors Statement identical to A3344

**COMMITTEE STATEMENT:**                    **ASSEMBLY:** No

[SENATE:](#) [Yes](#)

**FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:** No

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:** No

**VETO MESSAGE:** No

[GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:](#) [Yes](#)

**FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:**

To check for circulating copies, contact New Jersey State Government Publications at the State Library (609) 278-2640 ext. 103 or <mailto:refdesk@njstatelib.org>.

**REPORTS:**

No

**HEARINGS:**

No

**NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:**

Yes

"Pupils labor bears fruit; blueberry earns sweet honor," 1-13-2004 Star Ledger, p 15.

"Fourth-graders' effort bears fruit as blueberry gains official status," 2-13-2004 Home News, p.A9

"Vaccinium corymbosum' is official state fruit," 1-13-2004 The Times, p.A8

P.L. 2003, CHAPTER 245, *approved January 12, 2004*  
Assembly, No. 3344

1 **AN ACT** designating the highbush blueberry as the New Jersey State  
2 Fruit.

3

4 **WHEREAS**, The highbush blueberry is indigenous to New Jersey,  
5 where it was first cultivated for commercial production, due to  
6 pioneering work by New Jerseyan Elizabeth White and Dr.  
7 Frederick Covile, who in the early 1900's dedicated themselves to  
8 the study, domestication, and breeding of blueberries at Whitesbog,  
9 in Browns Mills, New Jersey; and

10 **WHEREAS**, The cultivation of highbush blueberries in New Jersey  
11 served as the basis for an entirely new agricultural industry; and

12 **WHEREAS**, Blueberries taste good, are good for you, are high in fiber,  
13 vitamin C, and antioxidants, are sodium and cholesterol-free, are  
14 low in calories and may provide medical and health benefits,  
15 including the prevention of cancer and heart disease; and

16 **WHEREAS**, Blueberries are appreciated around the world, especially  
17 in the area of nutrition and the emerging field of nutraceuticals,  
18 where blueberries are known for their health benefits and medicinal  
19 properties; and

20 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey ranks second in the nation in blueberry  
21 cultivation, producing 21 percent of the nation's total, with 38  
22 million pounds grown annually on 8,000 acres, spanning seven  
23 counties in central and southern New Jersey; and

24 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey is widely recognized as the blueberry capital  
25 of the nation, and the highbush blueberry, also known as the "New  
26 Jersey blueberry," is the ideal symbol of a delicious, nutritious, and  
27 healthful fruit; now, therefore,

28

29 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
30 *of New Jersey:*

31

32 1. The highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) is designated  
33 as the New Jersey State Fruit.

34

35 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

36

37

38

STATEMENT

39

40 This bill, inspired by Mrs. Suzanne E. Kurasz's and Mrs. Gail  
41 Damiano's fourth grade classes at Veterans Memorial Elementary  
42 School, Brick, New Jersey, designates the highbush blueberry  
43 (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) as the New Jersey State Fruit. Blueberries  
44 were first cultivated for commercial production in New Jersey,

1 resulting in an entirely new agricultural industry. The highbush  
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4

5

6

7

8 Designates highbush blueberry as New Jersey State Fruit.

# ASSEMBLY, No. 3344

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 210th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2003

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman DAVID W. WOLFE**

**District 10 (Monmouth and Ocean)**

**Assemblyman JAMES W. HOLZAPFEL**

**District 10 (Monmouth and Ocean)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblymen Moran, Chivukula and Senator Ciesla**

**SYNOPSIS**

Designates highbush blueberry as New Jersey State Fruit.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/12/2003)

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46 fruit.

ASSEMBLY STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**ASSEMBLY, No. 3344**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: JUNE 5, 2003

The Assembly State Government Committee reports favorably  
Assembly, No. 3344.

This bill designates the highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) as the New Jersey State Fruit. Blueberries, a delicious, nutritious and healthful fruit, were first cultivated for commercial production in New Jersey, resulting in an entirely new agricultural industry. The designation was inspired by the fourth grade classes of Suzanne E. Kurasz and Gail Damiano at Veterans Memorial Elementary School, Brick, New Jersey.

SENATE ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE AND  
TOURISM COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**ASSEMBLY, No. 3344**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: DECEMBER 4, 2003

The Senate Economic Growth, Agriculture and Tourism Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3344.

This bill designates the highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) as the New Jersey State Fruit.



**SENATE, No. 2678**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**210th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED JUNE 16, 2003

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator ANDREW R. CIESLA**

**District 10 (Monmouth and Ocean)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Designates highbush blueberry as New Jersey State Fruit.

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As introduced.



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SENATE ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE AND  
TOURISM COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**SENATE, No. 2678**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: DECEMBER 4, 2003

The Senate Economic Growth, Agriculture and Tourism Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2678.

This bill designates the highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) as the New Jersey State Fruit.

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**Press Releases**

PO BOX 004  
TRENTON, NJ 08625

Contact: Micah Rasmussen  
609-777-2600

RELEASE: January 12, 2004

[Previous Screen](#)

### **Governor McGreevey Makes the Blueberry NJ's Official Fruit**

(BRICK)—Governor James E. McGreevey signed legislation into law today that will make the *Vaccinium corymbosum*, more commonly known as the blueberry, New Jersey's official state fruit.

The Governor signed the legislation at Veterans Memorial Elementary School in Brick, where fifth graders (then fourth-graders) were actively involved in the legislative process.

"New Jersey has a strong history as the Garden State," said McGreevey. "Naming the blueberry as our official state fruit is a fitting tribute to our culture and heritage, especially because it was first cultivated here in Whitesbog.

"If it weren't for the commitment and civic involvement of the students at Veterans Memorial, New Jersey would still be without a state fruit. I want to thank them and their teachers for proving that when you believe in something, you can make a difference through government. You're making history today."

Last year, as fourth graders in Mrs. Gail Damiano's and Mrs. Suzanne Kurasz's classes, the students learned that New Jersey lacked an official state fruit. Upon researching and debating different fruits, they ultimately decided on the blueberry. The students had their idea introduced as legislation and conducted a lobbying campaign to see its passage, including media interviews, a letter and petition drive, presentations to local governing bodies and a trip to the State's blueberry festival in Whitesbog. In addition, the classes traveled to Trenton to make presentations before Senate and Assembly Committees.

The blueberry was first cultivated in the Garden State in Whitesbog by Elizabeth C. White, whose father, J.J. White owned a cranberry plantation. Wild blueberries grew in their cranberry bogs, but it was generally accepted that it was not possible to cultivate blueberries. In 1911, she read about Dr. Frederick V. Coville's work in blueberry cultivation, and began working with him to cultivate blueberries for sale. In 1916, their first blueberry was produced.

"With New Jersey being the birthplace of the cultivated blueberry, it is very fitting that the

blueberry be named the official state fruit," said Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus. "I am pleased that these students from Veterans Memorial recognized the importance of the blueberry to the proud agricultural heritage of the Garden State and worked so diligently to secure this honor."

New Jersey produces 22 percent of the nation's blueberries, ranking second in production among all berry-producing states. A total of 42 million pounds of blueberries were harvested in New Jersey in 2002, generating cash receipts of \$46.8 million. Blueberries are grown on 8,000 acres in seven counties spanning central and southern New Jersey. Blueberries are typically in season from mid-June to late August.

The legislation, Assembly Bill 3344, was sponsored by Senator Andrew Ciesla, and Assemblymen David Wolfe and James Holzapfel.

Senator Ciesla said, "I couldn't be happier for our young students. They learned a great lesson in government, they found out they could make a difference, and they created history. Their parents and teachers rightly deserve to be very proud of these future leaders."

Assemblyman Wolfe said, "New Jersey is widely known as the blueberry capital of the nation, so the students had a great idea in proposing that it be named our official state fruit."

The blueberry now joins a host of other official state symbols: the violet (flower), Eastern Goldfinch (bird), red oak (tree), honey bee (insect), horse (animal), square dance (dance), Hadrosaurus Foulkii (dinosaur), knobbed whelk (shell), brook trout (fish) and the A. J. Meerwald (tall ship).



State of New Jersey Governor's Office

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