

Senate Bill 222

By: Senators Summers of the 13th, Walker III of the 20th, Sims of the 12th, Harper of the 7th, Goodman of the 8th and others

AS PASSED SENATE

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 state symbols, so as to designate the pecan as the official state nut; to provide for
3 related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

5 SECTION 1.

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

8 "50-3-91.

9 (a)(1) The pecan is the only edible nut native to North America and is this country's most
10 successful homegrown tree nut crop. It is known for its health benefits; scientists have
11 discovered that pecans' golden kernels are good for the heart, with antioxidants and
12 cholesterol lowering effects. The pecan traces its origins back to the 16th century, and
13 the name 'pecan' is derived from the Native American word 'pacane' that translates as 'nut
14 requiring a stone to crack.'

15 (2) The domestication of the pecan is attributed in large part to a Louisiana plantation
16 slave known as Antoine, a master gardener who developed a method of grafting that led

17 to the birth of the commercial pecan industry. By 1920, Georgia was producing 2.5
18 million pounds of pecans; half a century later, the Georgia nut had grown so iconic that
19 organizers for the 1996 Olympics crafted Muhammad Ali's torch handle out of pecan
20 wood. Pecan wood is also used for barbecuing, which is a Southern tradition. Pecans
21 remained a local commodity for a long time, enjoyed mainly in the South, but global
22 demand for them has skyrocketed in the last decade, including the emerging marketplace
23 in China where nuts are considered a delicacy. In 2015, Georgia farmers produced 37
24 percent of pecans grown in the United States and, despite hurricanes and tariffs, Georgia
25 continues to be regarded as the top pecan producing state, with over 170,000 acres
26 planted and many more acres being planted every year.

27 (3) Pecans can be enjoyed raw, roasted, or flavored and can be incorporated into gourmet
28 cooking through countless recipes, such as pecan pie, pralines, brittle, and candies.
29 Public recognition and demand for Georgia Grown branded products have increased
30 significantly due in large part to the many Georgia Grown pecan growers and processors
31 who promote this state's homegrown products and agritourism sites. People throughout
32 the nation and world associate Georgia with the pecan, and appropriate Georgia
33 recognition of pecans will help promote tourism in the state.

34 (b) The pecan is designated as the official Georgia state nut."

35

SECTION 2.

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