

CHAPTER 245

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

C.52:9A-9 Highbush blueberry designated State fruit.

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

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 12, 2004.