

FAST ★ FACTS

We know you'll love Tennessee. In fact, you probably won't want to leave once you're here. So, if you decide to make Tennessee your home or you just want to fake your Tennessee heritage, here are a few facts about our state to keep you in the know.

THE STATE SEAL

Tennessee's state seal is a representation of the meaningful symbols of its history. Roman numerals XVI signify Tennessee as the 16th state to enter the Union. A plow, sheaf of wheat and a cotton stalk indicate agriculture's importance in Tennessee industry. The riverboat depiction shows the development of river traffic commerce.



THE STATE FLAG

Adopted in 1905, the flag features three stars representing the grand divisions of the state: East, Middle and West. The stars are bound together in unity by the circular white band.



THE STATE BIRD

In 1933, the Tennessee Ornithological Society initiated an election to adopt an official state bird. The mockingbird is known as one of the finest singers among North American birds and is especially noted for its skill in mimicking the songs of other birds.



THE STATE CAPITAL

Nashville was chosen as the permanent capital city in 1843. Completed in 1859, the Tennessee State Capitol is one of the oldest working capitols in the country.



THE STATE TREE

In 1947, the State Legislature adopted the tulip poplar as the state tree because Tennessee pioneers used it extensively to construct their houses, barns and other buildings.

THE STATE FLOWER

The State Legislature designated the iris as the state cultivated flower in 1933. While there are several different colors among the iris, the purple iris is commonly accepted as the state flower.



THE STATE WILDFLOWER

Declared the state wildflower in 1973, the passion flower received its name from early Christian missionaries to South America, who saw in the flower's various parts symbols of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

THE STATE INSECTS

The firefly and the ladybug are Tennessee's official state insects. Fireflies, luminescent beetles, generally come out on warm late spring and summer nights. The ladybug or ladybeetle is the most beneficial insect for Tennessee's agriculture.



THE STATE ROCKS

Limestone was declared the official state rock in 1979. In 1969, the General Assembly had given similar status to agate, cryptocrystalline quartz, a semiprecious gemstone found only in a few areas of the state.

THE STATE SONGS

Music is such an integral part of Tennessee's heritage that we have not one, but five official state songs: "My Homeland, Tennessee", "When It's Iris Time in Tennessee", "My Tennessee", "Tennessee Waltz" and "Rocky Top".

THE STATE GEM

Adopted in 1979, the freshwater pearl is the Tennessee official state gem. Tennessee's river pearls are taken from mussels in the state's freshwater rivers.



OTHER STATE SYMBOLS

Other state symbols include the Tennessee cave salamander as the official state amphibian, the box turtle the official state reptile, the Zebra Swallowtail as the state butterfly, the Bobwhite Quail as the state game bird, the Channel Catfish as the state commercial fish, the Largemouth Bass as the state game fish, the raccoon as the state animal, the yellowwood as the state bicentennial tree, and the honeybee as the state agricultural insect.

