

Sponsored by Sen. Ellis

Committee—Education, Energy, and Environment

Dear Sen. Feldman (Chair), Sen. Kagan (Vice Chair), and Committee Members,

I oppose this bill unless it is amended to specify the American persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) as the Maryland state fruit. From this article in the Baltimore Banner, it appears that this bill aims to promote an Asian persimmon

<https://www.thebaltimorebanner.com/politics-power/state-government/the-persimmon-may-become-marylands-state-fruit-P3PA3KVBKVF7FA5U6HC66EQHY4/>

Native plants are the foundation of the healthy ecosystems that support native wildlife and a thriving economy, as well as having their own intrinsic value.

([https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/plants\\_wildlife/Native-Plants.aspx#:~:text=Native%20plants%20are%20the%20foundation,having%20their%20own%20intrinsic%20value.](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/plants_wildlife/Native-Plants.aspx#:~:text=Native%20plants%20are%20the%20foundation,having%20their%20own%20intrinsic%20value.))

Our state bird is the Baltimore oriole, our state insect the Baltimore checkerspot, and the black-eyed Susan is our state flower. The idea that we would have a state fruit that is not native to our state seems inappropriate. All of the above "official" state designations are of species that support biodiversity, that are mutually sustaining, that have evolved together over the ages. Our MD native **American persimmon** (*Diospyros virginiana*) is a host plant for more than 45 butterfly and moth species, and attracts many species of native bees. The Asian persimmon, on the other hand, provides none of those services because it did not evolve with the insects native to our state. The fruit from the American persimmon should be our MD state fruit, not the non-native Asian persimmon

Thank you,  
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