Maryland Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 4877, Silver Spring, MD 20914 • www.mdflora.org
Appreciation • Education • Conservation

Testimony: SB74, State Designations – State Fruit – Persimmon
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Hearing Date: March 8, 2024
Position: FWA

The Maryland Native Plant Society (MNPS) urges a favorable report with amendment for Senate Bill 74, State Designations – State Fruit – Persimmon. We respectfully request that the bill be amended to read as follows on page 2 line 1:

AMERICAN persimmon (DIOSPYROS VIRGINIANA) is the State fruit.

This change clarifies that the bill refers to the persimmon that is native to the state of Maryland. With this amendment, MNPS fully supports SB74.

MNPS's mission is to promote awareness, appreciation, and conservation of Maryland's native plants and their habitats. We pursue our mission through education, research, advocacy, and service activities.

Native plants are the cornerstone of our ecosystems, having naturally grown and evolved in specific locations and conditions. For our state symbols, we believe it is important to promote species that have an important role in the ecological health of the State. The American persimmon is a host plant for our beautiful luna moth, and the fruit is eaten by songbirds and other native wildlife. Furthermore, the American persimmon has a long history in Maryland. Indigenous peoples ate the fruit, and both fruit and bark were used in traditional medicine.

Without adding the scientific name, *Diospyros virginiana*, the bill as it stands could pertain to any species of persimmon, regardless of its connection to and importance to the State. We believe SB74 will be strengthened with this addition and help further the understanding of the history and importance of the American persimmon to Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration of this amendment. Please feel free to contact me for more information or with any questions.

Sincerely,

Lauren Hubbard
President
Maryland Native Plant Society