

# Show-Me Symbols



Missouri was named for an Algonquian Indian word that means "river of the big canoes." The state nickname is the Show-Me State and there are many natural symbols that "show us" about Missouri.

The official animal of Missouri is the Missouri Mule. The mule is a hybrid between a horse (the mom) and a donkey (the dad). The mule possesses the sobriety, patience, endurance and sure-footedness of the donkey, and the vigor, strength and courage of the horse. One of the first mule breeders in the United States was George Washington. Mules are still part of the modern world; teams were used to string fiber optic cable in Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky and Tennessee.



Missouri is a mining state and we have both a state rock and a state mineral. The rock is Mozarkite, a type of jasper used for building and for jewelry. Galena, the

state mineral, is the major source of lead ore. Mining of galena has flourished since the first settlers arrived and our state produces most of the nation's lead.



The American Bullfrog is the largest frog native to Missouri and is found all across the state. You can hear its deep, resonant 'jug-of-rum' call on warm, rainy nights between mid-May and early July. The idea for the bullfrog designation came from a fourth grade class at Chinn Elementary School in Kansas City.

A group of Lee's Summit school students worked through the legislative process to make the crinoid the state fossil of Missouri. Related to the starfish and the silver dollar, the crinoid lived in the huge inland ocean that covered Missouri for millions of years. There are about 600 living species of crinoids.

Missouri even has an official dinosaur. *Hypsibema missouriensis* was a duck-billed dinosaur, an herbivore with over 1,000 teeth specialized to handle tough fibrous vegetation. Discovered in 1942, it lived in Missouri during the Late Cretaceous Period (about 100 million years ago).

The Eastern Bluebird is honored as the official bird of Missouri. Because people build and place bluebird nest boxes in rural areas, the numbers of Bluebirds in Missouri are increasing. The Bluebird is the symbol of happiness.



Our official insect is the honey bee, which pollinates the fruit trees all across the state. The official fish, the channel catfish, swims in most of the rivers, lakes and ponds across Missouri. The state nut tree, the black walnut, provides nuts and timber. One of the prettiest flowering trees is the dogwood, which is Missouri's official tree. Our state aquatic animal is the paddlefish, a primitive fish with a cartilage skeleton, rather than bone. They commonly exceed five feet, can weigh up to 60 pounds and live as long as 30 years. Missouri's official reptile is the box turtle.

How many symbols of Missouri have you seen?