

Our State Emblems

Every state has special signs and emblems. They are chosen to represent things that are important to the people who live in the state. Here are the meanings for Colorado's signs and emblems:

THE STATE SEAL

The state seal is used on important state documents and papers. Within the triangle is the eye of God. The Latin words mean “nothing without providence.” What are the tools shown on the shield?



THE STATE SONG

The state song, “Where the Columbines Grow,” celebrates the majestic mountains, the evergreen trees, the cool summer breezes, and the plains that can be seen rolling out below the mountains.

THE STATE FLAG

The flag is divided into three equal stripes. The two blue stripes stand for Colorado's skies; the white stripe represents the mountain snows. The C is for Colorado, and its red color represents the red soil found in much of the state. The gold circle in the middle of the C is for the metal ore that was so important in the state's history.



THE STATE TREE

The Colorado blue spruce is the state tree. Although it is found wild in only part of the state, it can be planted and will grow everywhere in Colorado. Some trees are almost blue in color; others seem almost silver.



THE STATE FLOWER

The Rocky Mountain columbine has long been the state flower. Like the Colorado flag, columbines have blue for the skies, white for the snows, and gold for the metal. It is against the law to pick wild columbines.



THE STATE BIRD

Schoolchildren chose the lark bunting as the state bird. A little black-and-white bird, the lark bunting sings while it is flying. It is found mainly on the plains.



THE STATE ANIMAL

Not every state has an animal for a symbol. Colorado adopted the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep because this is one of the few places where it can be found. It is a very strong and brave animal that lives high on the mountain slopes.



THE STATE FOSSIL

In 1982, students from McElwain Elementary School in Thornton were able to get the governor to add a dinosaur fossil to the list of state emblems. The students chose a stegosaurus fossil because the first complete skeleton of the stegosaurus was found in Colorado. The stegosaurus lived in the Colorado area 150 million years ago. It is believed to have weighed ten tons, although its brain only weighed two-and-a-half ounces.

THE STATE DANCE

The square dance is Colorado's official state dance. The square dance is a folk dance that originally came from Europe. American settlers brought it with them when they moved west. Square dancing to country-western-style music is a popular form of entertainment in Colorado.



THE STATE FISH

The greenback cutthroat trout was adopted as the official state fish on May 15, 1994. Greenback cutthroat trout once lived in small creeks, streams, and rivers throughout Colorado, and steps have been taken to protect them and expand their numbers.



THE STATE INSECT

The Colorado hairstreak butterfly was adopted as the official state insect on April 17, 1996. It is two inches wide and has purple wings with black borders, orange accents in the corners, and blue on the underside. Schoolchildren lobbied to have the butterfly adopted.



THE STATE GEMSTONE

The aquamarine was designated Colorado's gemstone on April 12, 1971. Aquamarines are found in Colorado on Mount Antero, one of the state's highest mountains. Colorado has more than 480 types of minerals, more than most other states in the country.

THE STATE GRASS

Blue grama is the state grass of Colorado. This grass is native to Colorado. It was the main source of food for the bison that once roamed the plains. Grama grass grows from 6 inches to 12 inches tall. It is called blue grama because the stems end in a bluish purple spike.



THE STATE TARTAN

Colorado also has a state tartan. It is a pattern on cloth made up of stripes of different widths and colors crossed at right angles. The colors are the Colorado state colors: blue, red, and yellow.

