

Watermelon Festivals, Hertford and Fair Bluff ^[1]

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State Watermelon Festivals: Hertford County Watermelon Festival and Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival

By Amy Kemp
Government and Heritage Library, 2017

See also: [North Carolina State Symbols and Official Adoptions main page](#) ^[2]



2011 North Carolina Watermelon Queen at the Hertford County Watermelon Festival. Photo by Flickr user Sheryl Long

^[3]

In 1993, the General Assembly adopted the [Hertford County Watermelon Festival](#) ^[4] as the official Northeastern North Carolina Watermelon Festival (*Session Laws, 1993, c. 212* ^[5]).

In 1993, the General Assembly also designated the [Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival](#) ^[6] as the official Southeastern North Carolina Watermelon Festival (*Session Laws, 1993, c. 212* ^[5]).

About the Hertford County Watermelon Festival

The Hertford County Watermelon Festival (also called the North Carolina Watermelon Festival,) began in 1985 and takes place in the town of Murfreesboro, North Carolina. Events held include a parade, a 5K race, a festival market with food and craft vendors, entertainment from local bands, amusement rides, and Little Farmers/Princess beauty pageants.

About the Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival

The Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival (also called the North Carolina Watermelon Festival) officially started in 1986, but can trace its roots back to a simple competition between friends in 1979. Monroe Enzor and AJ Worley were semi-retired best friends who, as a hobby, began competing to see who could grow the largest watermelon. In the summer they would truck their prized watermelons into town to weigh them, and every year the crowd watching the weighing would grow. Seeing that there was an interest, the two men started the Fair Bluff Watermelon Grower's Association and created a festival around the competition. Both Enzor and Worley died in 1991, but the festival continues to this day with arts and crafts, festival beauty pageants, a dance, a parade, a duck race, and other assorted games and contests.

North Carolina Session Laws

Exerpt from CHAPTER 212

HOUSE BILL 318

AN ACT TO ADOPT THE HERTFORD COUNTY WATERMELON FESTIVAL AND THE FAIR BLUFF WATERMELON FESTIVAL AS THE OFFICIAL NORTH CAROLINA WATERMELON FESTIVALS.

Whereas, watermelon farming has been a successful vocation of many farmers in eastern North Carolina, especially the

Counties of Columbus and Hertford, for generations; and

Whereas, the watermelon industry has been and continues to be an important part of the State's economy; and

Whereas, there are as many as 700 to 1,000 acres of watermelons grown in northeastern North Carolina each year and as many as 1,500 acres of watermelons grown in southeastern North Carolina each year; and

Whereas, the Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival in Columbus County held since 1980, and the Hertford County Watermelon Festival held since 1986, are two very popular watermelon festivals held annually in North Carolina; and

Whereas, the Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival is held in mid-July for four to five days and the Hertford County Watermelon Festival is held in early August for four days; and

Whereas, both festivals have attracted at least 12,000 visitors; and

Whereas, the festivals provide participants of all ages with a wide variety of entertainment including parades, amusement rides, historic tours, dances, and contests; and

Whereas, the festivals allow local crafters and vendors the chance to promote their goods to a large number of people; and

Whereas, adopting the Hertford County Watermelon Festival and the Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival as the official North Carolina Watermelon Festivals will help to promote agriculture, tourism, and economic growth, and the exchange of cultural ideas; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. Chapter 145 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 145-16. State Watermelon Festivals.

(a) The Hertford County Watermelon Festival is adopted as the official Northeastern North Carolina Watermelon Festival. The Hertford County Watermelon Festival shall be observed annually during the last four days of the first week in August.

(b) The Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival in Columbus County is adopted as the official Southeastern North Carolina Watermelon Festival. The Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival shall be observed annually during mid-July.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 24th day of June, 1993.

Subjects:

State Symbols ^[7]

Authors:

Kemp, Amy ^[8]

Origin - location:

Coastal Plain ^[9]

From:

Government & Heritage Library, State Library of North Carolina.^[10]

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[2] <https://ncpedia.org/symbols>

[3] <https://www.flickr.com/photos/srl4908/5992860476/in/photolist-a8yYCC-5ftRWt-a8yNRN-a8vMTr-5ftSuM-a8w62V-5ftQPF-a8vPve-aaun8Z-a8yQRf-a8vUMe-a8vRmT-5ftUTP-okxvG9-B9Rim3-a8w3tD-a8w58P-a8yKVm-a8yKj3-a8yGjy-a8yEzq-5ftVyr-5ftP5x-a8vXCB-a8yXKE-a8vVTg-dpa6KZ-a8vVkv-a8yJBm-a8vS1P-5ftTaR-cYpK1u-5fydEw-Bc9Cd4-cPdNtm-5ftUyg-geRVj-oYdhtd-dqcs2R-5fybAW-a8yV9G-5ftR12-5fyd1A-5fyfMy-5ftQJi-5ftVgT-a8yShw-5ftT5t-a8yRyJ-5ftPnr>

[4] <https://www.ncwatermelonfest.com/>

[5] <https://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/SessionLaws/HTML/1993-1994/SL1993-212.html>

[6] <https://www.ncwatermelonfestival.org/history>

[7] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/state-symbol>

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