

ASSEMBLY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3392

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 1, 2026

The Assembly State and Local Government Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3392.

As reported, this bill designates the hazelnut as the State nut.

Hazelnuts are part of a growing multi-billion-dollar industry and hazelnut products include nut butters, baked goods, and candy. The United States accounts for five percent of hazelnut production worldwide. Hazelnuts grown in the U.S. come almost exclusively from the Willamette Valley in Oregon.

The eastern filbert blight is a fungal disease that can be lethal to commercially grown hazelnuts. The disease has prevented New Jersey and other states outside of the Pacific Northwest from growing hazelnuts commercially.

In 1996, Rutgers University started a program to develop hazelnuts resistant to the disease. In 2020, Rutgers University released to growers its first hazelnut varieties that are resistant to the eastern filbert blight. The new varieties are named “Raritan,” in honor of the river whose banks upon which Rutgers University’s New Brunswick campus lies, as well as “Somerset,” “Monmouth,” and “Hunterdon,” in honor of some of the first New Jersey counties where the trees are being grown. New Jersey is the first state on the East Coast to grow this cash crop.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2026-2027 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.