

# OUR EMBLEMS

Educational Resource

October 2019

## The Emblems of Alberta

What does the wild rose have in common with the lodgepole pine? How are they both related to great horned owls and petrified wood?

All are emblems of Alberta. They symbolize the history, people, places, natural features and even values that together make Alberta what it is. From the lodgepole pine to the Alberta tartan each emblem signifies an important aspect of Alberta's identity.

### Tips for a Successful School Visit

- Review the Confirmation of Visit to ensure that all information is correct.
- Discuss expectations with students and volunteers. Teachers and parents are asked to turn off their cellphones, model good listening, supervise and remain with the students at all times.
- Ensure the bus driver is aware of the current drop off and pick up location (effective September 2018).

### What's Happening at the Legislature this Month?

03– Thursdays to be Discovered (TBD): EIFF Short Films

08– Fall Session Opens

10– TBD: Murder Mystery

17– Opening of Cattle Call Exhibit (Borealis Gallery)

24– TBD: Alberta Branded Workshop

31– TBD: Movie Magic



Alberta Legislature (courtesy of the Legislative Assembly Office)

### In This Issue

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## Alberta Tartan

Alberta's tartan pays tribute to the Scottish component of our heritage. The colours represent our abundant natural resources: green for forests, gold for wheat fields, blue for clear skies and lakes, pink for wild roses and black for coal and petroleum. The tartan was designed by the Edmonton Rehabilitation Society for the Handicapped (now Goodwill Industries) and was officially recognized in 1961.



## Official Flower

The wild rose, or prickly rose (*Rosa acicularis*), was designated the floral emblem of Alberta in 1930. Its bright pink blossoms enhance the countryside in all parts of the province. The wild rose is also useful; its colourful red berries, or hips, feed many species of birds and add a unique flavour to teas and jellies.



## Official Bird

A King assigned Alberta its first coat of arms, but it was the province's citizens, primarily schoolchildren, who chose the official bird. They voted in 1974 for the great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), a year-round resident of the province. The Legislature approved their choice in 1977. A resourceful and resilient bird, the great horned owl exemplifies the best traits of Alberta's people from both the past and present.



## Official Tree

The lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*) is a western tree prevalent in the Rocky Mountains. It became Alberta's official tree in 1984, a culmination of four years' effort by the Junior Forest Wardens of Alberta. Lodgepole pine was an important source of railroad ties during Alberta's settlement and has since played an important role in Alberta's economic development. It has even been suggested that the lodgepole pine may have been used by certain First Nations to make teepee poles, hence its name. Even today the long, straight lodgepole pine is in great demand in the lumber industry.

## Official Stone

In 1977 the Legislative Assembly adopted petrified wood as the official stone of Alberta. The petrification of wood involves the replacement of original wood tissues from trees of the Cretaceous and Paleocene periods, over 60 million years ago, with microcrystalline quartz deposits. Petrified wood is commonly found in gravel pits throughout Alberta.



## Official Mammal

After canvassing Alberta schools to gauge their support, in 1989 the Assembly designated the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) Alberta's official mammal. The bighorn sheep is commonly seen in the Rocky Mountains and was given its scientific name in 1804 by botanist George Shaw, who observed the species near Exshaw. With its proud carriage, crowned by magnificent horns, the bighorn sheep is a majestic inhabitant of our province.



## Official Fish

In 1995 the bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) became the provincial fish of Alberta. The bull trout is actually a char and closely related to other members of the char family such as the lake and brook trouts. The bull trout generally has light coloured spots on its body and does not have any dark spots or markings on its dorsal fins. Depending on its environment and food supply it can weigh up to 20 pounds (approximately 9 kilograms) or more and can live up to 20 years.



## Official Grass

Rough fescue (*Fescue scabrella*) is a perennial bunchgrass with stiff, narrow leaves that are rough to the touch. Alberta has the largest area of rough fescue grasslands in the world and is the only place in North America where all three types – plains, foothills and northern fescue – occur. Fescue grasslands provide vital food for wildlife and livestock year-round. On May 7, 2003, due to the efforts of the Prairie Conservation Forum, rough fescue was adopted as an Albertan Emblem.



Images courtesy of the Legislative Assembly Office



## Resource Links

[Ask an Expert](#)

[Citizen's Guide](#)

[Mock Legislature Resources](#)

[Bill 208: Alberta Official Song Act \(Pg. 741\)](#)

[Bill 201: Emblems of Alberta \(Grass Emblem \(Pg. 79\)](#)

[Emblems of Alberta](#)

[Alberta Gets a Provincial Tartan](#)

[Official Symbols of Canada](#)

[Symbols of Canada Publication](#)

[Provincial and Territorial Symbols](#)

[Provincial Emblems Quiz](#)

## Resource Videos

[Alberta's Official Song](#)

[Great Horned Owl Documentary](#)

[Fire and the Lodgepole Pine](#)



**Legislature Heritage Interpreters wearing Alberta tartan**  
(Courtesy of the Legislative Assembly Office)

## Activities

These three suggested activities ask students to consider how the symbols associated with Alberta reflect the people who live in this province. Refer to the resource links and videos for more activities and background information.

### Research

Spend some time examining the official emblems of other provinces and territories in Canada. As a class discuss the most significant similarities and differences you noticed. How has each province found ways to represent the unique history and story of their people through the symbols they chose?

### Survey

Did you know that some provinces, like Nova Scotia, have a provincial dog? Talk to your families, community members and classmates before deciding, as a class, what kind of dog best represents the people of Alberta. What criteria will you use to decide which dog to choose? What kind of characteristics make this a good symbol of Alberta? Who could help you turn your proposed choice into an official emblem?

### Consider

Some people feel that the official emblems of both Alberta and Canada, such as tartans and crowns, are symbols of colonialism and aren't an accurate reflection of our history. Do you agree or disagree? What evidence do you have to support your position, and what would you say to try to convince someone who disagrees with you?



# SYMBOLS OF ALBERTA

What does the wild rose have in common with the  
**GREAT HORNED OWL** OR  
**PETRIFIED WOOD**?  
They are all symbols of Alberta. See if you can find  
the hidden symbols in the Alberta scene below.



GREAT  
HORNED  
OWL



BULL  
TROUT



WILD  
ROSE



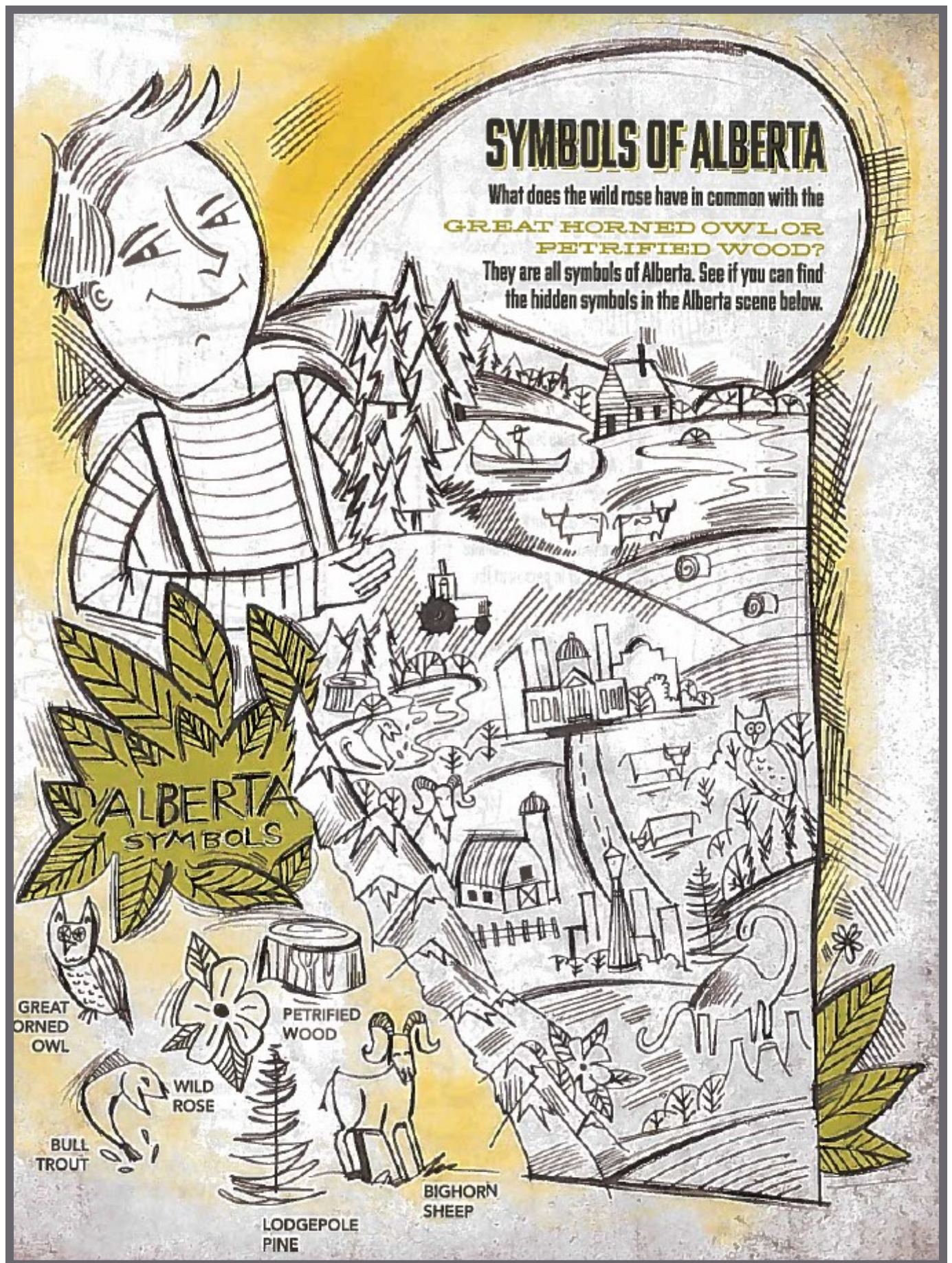
PETRIFIED  
WOOD



LODGEPOLE  
PINE



BIGHORN  
SHEEP





# Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Honour and value the traditions, concepts and symbols that are the expression of Canadian identity (Social Studies, Values and Attitudes)
- Conduct research ethically using varied methods and sources; organize, interpret and present their findings; and defend their opinions (Social Studies, Skills and Processes)
- Use skills of informal debate to persuasively express differing viewpoints regarding an issue (Social Studies, 6.S.8)
- Appreciate how an understanding of Alberta's history, peoples and stories contributes to their own sense of belonging and identity (Social Studies, 4.2.1)
- Examine what helps us to recognize different groups or communities (e.g. landmarks, symbols, colours, logos, clothing) (Social Studies, 1.1.3)
- Listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences. (English Language Arts, General Outcome 1)

Alberta Education Program of Studies

## Contact Us

Please let us know if you enjoyed this resource and if there are any other topics you would like to see covered.

Also, if you tried any of the suggested activities, we would love to see examples of your students' work!

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Unless indicated otherwise, the included information has been taken directly from the Legislative Assembly Office's *The Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature* (9th edition, 2016) or from the Legislative Assembly Office's Agora Interpretive Centre.

