

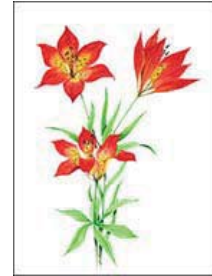
Backgrounder

PROVINCIAL EMBLEMS

The province of Saskatchewan is represented by many symbols and emblems including:

The provincial flower: Western Red Lily

The provincial floral emblem, selected in 1941, is the western red lily, known botanically as *Lilium philadelphicum* L. var. *andinum*. It grows in moist meadows and semi-wooded areas and stands out brilliantly with its flaming red blossoms against a natural green background. The western red lily is a protected species.



The provincial tree: White Birch

The white birch (*Betula papyrifera*) was adopted as the official tree of the province in 1988. A fast-growing deciduous hardwood tree, the white birch is a frequently planted ornamental species, easily recognized by its chalk-white papery bark.



The provincial grass: Needle-and-Thread Grass

The provincial grass emblem was selected by a coalition of environmental, wildlife and agricultural organizations through the Prairie Conservation Action Plan, seeking to sustain the native prairie ecosystem in a healthy state. Needle-and-thread grass (*Hesperostipa comata*) was chosen because it is the dominant grass of Saskatchewan's mixed grassland eco-region and is also common in the moist mixed grassland and aspen parkland eco-regions. Needle-and-thread grass was officially adopted as the provincial grass emblem in 2001.



The provincial fruit: Saskatoon Berry

The Saskatoon berry or Juneberry, is botanically known as *Amelanchier alnifolia*. This small, edible fruit is sweet in taste and has long been eaten by Canada's native peoples. The name derives from the Cree noun *misâskwatômina*. The city of Saskatoon is named after this plant. In 2005, it was recommended that the Saskatoon berry be named as one of the provincial emblems.



The provincial bird: Sharp-tailed Grouse

The sharp-tailed grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*) was selected as the province's bird emblem in 1945. It is one of Saskatchewan's most popular game birds.



The provincial animal: White-tailed Deer

The white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) is one of Saskatchewan's most popular game animals, found throughout much of the province. The deer, commonly called the whitetail, is recognizable by the characteristic white underside to its tail. The white-tailed deer first appeared in Saskatchewan emblems as an element of the armorial bearings proclaimed in 1986. It was adopted as the official animal emblem in 2001.



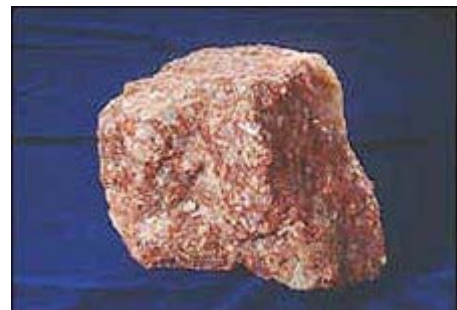
The provincial fish: Walleye

Saskatchewan's fish emblem is the walleye (*Sander vitreus*). Saskatchewan is known for its world-class fresh water fishing and during the province's centennial in 2005, Saskatchewan Environment held a Provincial Fish Emblem Contest. Ten thousand people voted and the walleye was the overwhelming choice. On January 4, 2005, a walleye measuring 36.5" in length, 22.5" in girth and 18.3 pounds was caught in the frozen waters of Tobin Lake. In 2014, a 13.3lb Walleye was caught spearfishing on the South Saskatchewan River north of Lake Diefenbaker, which has been recognized by the International Underwater Spearfishing Association as a record.



The provincial mineral: Potash (Sylvite)

Sylvite is the mineral name for the chemical compound KCl, potassium chloride, commonly called potash. Potash ore is a mixture of sylvite, with lesser amounts of carnallite, halite and traces of hematite oxide (responsible for the characteristic pink to reddish-brown colour) and clay. Potash was chosen as the provincial mineral following a province-wide competition open to Grade 8 school students, and was announced by the Minister of Energy and Mines in February 1996. It was made the official mineral emblem in 1997.



The provincial sport: Curling

Curling has been played in what is now Saskatchewan since the 1880s. The predecessor of **CURLSASK** was established in 1904, the year before Saskatchewan became a province.

Saskatchewan has been home to some of the best curlers in the world, including winners of Canadian championships, world championships, the first women's world championships and the first Olympic gold medal in curling. In recognition of the significance of curling for Saskatchewan and the international contribution of Saskatchewan curlers to the sport, the Legislature adopted curling as the province's official sport in 2001. The status of official sport entitles **CURLSASK** to use the provincial shield of arms on its emblems.



Soon, Saskatchewan's rich paleontological history will also be represented with a provincial fossil. This symbol will be chosen through a public vote and will be announced in spring 2016.

PROVINCIAL FOSSIL CANDIDATES

Saskatchewan has a rich and diverse fossil history that covers much of the southern part of the province. The seven Provincial Fossil candidates represent fossils found in communities across the Saskatchewan including Eastend, Herschel, Carrot River, Kyle, and Ponteix. The final list of potential candidates includes:

1. **“Mo” Ponteix Long-necked Plesiosaur** (giant marine reptile) - *Terminonatator ponteixiensis* is unique to Saskatchewan and known from a single skeleton. As the name suggests, it was found near Ponteix, Saskatchewan. This animal lived 78 million years ago when the province was a shallow inland sea.
2. **“Scotty” The *Tyrannosaurus rex*** – Saskatchewan's “Scotty” is one of the largest *T. rex* specimens ever found – and *T. rex* is not an emblem for any other Canadian province or U.S. state. In 1991, “Scotty” was found in the Frenchman River Valley near the town of Eastend, Saskatchewan.
3. **“Kyle Mammoth” Woolly Mammoth** – *Mammuthus* sp. (species unknown) the Kyle Mammoth is a 12,000 year old elephant-like giant that has been the pride of the region since the 1960's.
4. **Herschel Short-necked Plesiosaur** - *Dolichorhynchops herschelensis* is only known from the one specimen collected near Herschel, Saskatchewan. It is truly one of a kind. The genus *Dolichorhynchops*, however, is known from other specimens throughout North America.
5. **Brontothere** – *Megacerops* sp. a rhino-like mammal from 35 million years ago, found in southwest Saskatchewan – an area that is known to provide the best record of animal life in Canada during that time period. In Saskatchewan: *Megacerops* has been found mostly

around the eastern flanks of the Cypress Hills. This particular specimen was found northwest of Eastend, Saskatchewan in 1971.

6. **“Big Bert”** - *Terminonaris robusta* – the most complete and best-preserved specimen of this 92 million-year-old crocodile was discovered along the bank of the Carrot River in 1991.
7. **Thescelosaur** - *Thescelosaurus assiniboiensis* – this plant eating dinosaur is known from the Frenchman River Valley and was first discovered in 1968. *Thescelosaurus assiniboiensis* was recognized recently as a new species that is unique to Saskatchewan.

More detailed information on each candidate, in both English and French, can be found at:

<http://www.royalsaskmuseum.ca/education/inquiry-project/fossil-candidates>