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A Sweet New Spelling

North Carolina's state vegetable has a new spelling – the correct one, if you ask the experts. In fact, changing "sweet potato" to "sweetpotato" has been a long time coming.

In 1989, the National Sweetpotato Collaborators Group changed their spelling to one word and advocated for those in academia to do the same. In 2019, the North Carolina SweetPotato Commission encouraged the state general assembly to take action to officially change the traditional spelling of "sweet potato" to "sweetpotato," and it passed. Since then, the state officially spells sweetpotato as one word, but you probably often still see it as two.

The North Carolina SweetPotato Commission went on a mission to spread the message of the spelling as a way to celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2021, making sure the beloved orange root vegetable gets its proper name.

Why one word instead of two? Simply put, to avoid confusion so that growers and consumers alike recognize the veggie as its own individual variety rather than a type of other potatoes or yams. (Yams, by the way, are a white-fleshed, starchy edible root typically imported from Africa, and what you've been calling "yams" are likely sweetpotatoes.) Other countries have been using the one-word spelling for many years, and the commission believes it's time for the U.S. and especially North Carolina to adopt the correct spelling.

Sweetpotatoes are an important crop in the state, which ranks No. 1 in production nationally and sells more than $350 million worth each year.

Learn more about the North Carolina SweetPotato Commission and the Sweetpotato is One Word campaign by visiting **ncsweetpotatoes.com**.