



WAY TO GROW MICHEAL!!



Bonnie Plants' 3rd Grade Cabbage Program

Growing Our Next Generation of Gardeners

Arkansas State Winner: John-Micheal Farthing

School:

**Mountain Springs Elementary 3620 Mountain Springs Road
Cabot, AR 72023 School Phone: (501) 743 3575**

Kids Grow Green: Cashing in Cabbage: Kids across America are growing, and some are earning, a lot of “green” participating in the National Bonnie Plants Third Grade Cabbage Program.

This year, more than 1 million third graders in the 48 contiguous states have gotten hands-on gardening experience, growing colossal cabbages with high hopes to win “best in state” and receive a \$1,000 scholarship towards education from Bonnie Plants.

Each year Bonnie Plants, the largest producer of vegetable and herb plants in North America, with 80 greenhouse facilities across the country, trucks free O.S. Cross, or "oversized," cabbage plants to third grade classrooms whose teachers have signed up for the program online at www.bonnieplants.com. If nurtured and cared for, kids can cultivate, nurture and grow giant cabbages, some much bigger than a basketball, tipping the scales, often over 40 pounds!

In 1996 Bonnie Plants initiated the 3rd Grade Cabbage Program in and around headquarters in Union Springs, Alabama, with a mission to inspire a love of vegetable gardening in young people and continue to “grow” our next generation of gardeners. By 2002 the Cabbage Program became a national endeavor. The program awards a \$1,000 scholarship to one student in each participating state. At the end of the season, teachers from each third grade class select the student who has grown the “best” cabbage, based on size and appearance. A digital image of the cabbage and student is submitted online at www.bonnieplants.com. That student's name is then entered in a statewide drawing. State winners are randomly selected by the office of the Commission of Agriculture, in each of 48 participating states.

“The Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program is a wonderful way to engage children’s interest in agriculture, while teaching them not only the basics of gardening, but the importance of our food systems and growing our own”, said Stan Cope, President of Bonnie Plants. This unique, innovative program exposes children to agriculture and demonstrates, through hands-on experience, where food comes from. The program also affords our youth with some valuable life lessons in nurture, nature, responsibility, self-confidence and accomplishment”.

“Over the course of the past 15 years, the Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program has proved to be an exciting, successful and worth-while experience that children, teachers, parents and grandparents across the country have embraced. We’re certainly proud of our **ARKANSAS STATE WINNER: JOHN-MICHEAL FARTHING!!** We are grateful to have the opportunity to provide

our youth with this enjoyable and enriching opportunity and engage their interest in the art and joy of gardening”, said Cope.

Getting It Growing:

Growing a colossal cabbage may seem like a giant undertaking for young kids, but it’s easier than you think. All you need to do is:

- **Let the Sunshine In:** Cabbages need at least six hours of full sunlight, more if possible.
- **Survey Your Space:** Bonnie O.S. Cross cabbages need at least three feet on each side to spread out. If you don’t have that much space, use a large container.
- **Supplement Soil:** Work some compost into the soil – cabbages love nutrient-rich soil.
- **Feed Your Food Plant:** Start your cabbage off right with an all-purpose vegetable fertilizer, then fertilize it according to label directions to keep it growing strong.
- **Water Wisely:** Your cabbage needs at least one inch of rainfall each week. If it doesn’t rain, use a watering can or garden hose to gently water your plant at soil level.
- **Tend To Trouble:** Keep weeds out of the cabbage patch – they compete for the food and water your cabbage needs. Be on the lookout for brown or white moths – these come from worms that love to munch on cabbage. If you see any, get rid of them right away. Cold weather can damage your cabbage. If the weather gets below 32° F, cover your cabbage with a bucket or cloth covering.
- **Hefty Harvest:** In just 10 to 12 weeks, you should have a huge head of cabbage you can be proud of.

Green thumbs and perseverance can pay off, providing participating children with as great sense of pride and accomplishment, a humongous cabbage, and for the lucky state winner.... the beginning of an educational fund for college.

A great way to get kids started in the garden is the National Bonnie Plants Third Grade Cabbage Program, it’s free to any third-grade classroom in the 48 contiguous states and teachers can register **NOW** at

<http://bonniecabbageprogram.com/> for the 2018 program. Bonnie Plants will truck 2" cabbage plants to every registered third grade classroom in the country, delivery will be scheduled based on geographic region.

To see the 2017 winners as they come in and learn more about the 2018 contest, please visit: www.bonnieplants.com

Why a cabbage? Coincidentally, cabbages were the first profitable plant sold by Bonnie Plants in 1918, and are known to be a hearty vegetable. The cabbages provided to the 3rd grade program are "O.S. Cross" cabbages, this variety is known for producing giant, oversized heads, making the process even more exciting for kids.

Previous Rave Reviews:

"The Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program is a wonderful way to engage children's interest in agriculture, while teaching them not only the basics of biology, but the importance of our food and fiber systems. This innovative program exposes children to agriculture and demonstrates through hand-on experience, where their food comes from. We're grateful to the people at Bonnie Plants for continuing to provide this program, nationwide, and successfully connect our youth to agriculture". (FORMER) Alabama Commissioner of Agriculture, Ron Sparks

"The Third Grade Cabbage Program provides valuable lessons to students about agriculture and the way it touches everyone's life every day. I commend Bonnie Plants for this program".

(FORMER) Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner, Richie Farmer

"The Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program is a wonderful way to engage children's interest in science. The students learn the life cycle of a plant, how to care for it and what it needs to grow: soil, sunlight, and water". Kimberly Dalton, Costner Elementary, North Carolina

"Every year Bonnie Plants sends us cabbage seedlings, the project teaches students many lessons including how to grow their own food. The biggest lesson I think they learn from this program is how fast vegetables can grow. Students were just amazed and impressed on how fast and easy it was to grow their own food. I think kids sometimes forget that they can grow food so this is a great lesson!" Jennifer Bloom, Russell Ranch Elementary, Folsom, CA

"It's good for the students to get out there and grow their own plants. It helps them learn about nature, soil composition and the parts of plants, but it also shows them where things come from," she said. So many young people take for granted the fact that we can walk into the store and buy whatever we want. It's a good history lesson for them to learn that it wasn't always like that, even in this country". Melody Witt, Alto Elementary Principal, Texas