

## Manteca fourth-grader grows 20-pound cabbage

By Eric Louie  
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MANTECA -- When harvested, the cabbage Taylor Craig had planted as a 2-inch seedling weighed about 20 pounds, enough for a meal that fed 20 with leftovers in the freezer.

"They just looked at it and said it was so big," said Taylor, a 10-year-old fourth-grader at New Haven Elementary School in Manteca, of her friends' reactions. Though the humongous head is long gone -- turned into Portuguese sopas in August -- this week she was named the California winner in the 2010 National Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program, getting a \$1,000 saving bond for education.

Schools that sign up for the program at [www.bonnieplants.com](http://www.bonnieplants.com) get free O.S. Cross plants, a hybrid type that produces oversized heads, said Joan Casanova, a spokeswoman for Union Springs, Ala.-based Bonnie Plants.

Planting months vary across the country but they are generally in the spring and take 10 to 12 weeks to grow, with the goal to have the cool-season vegetable mature before the summer heat.

At the end of the season, teachers from each class pick a cabbage based on size and appearance. A picture is sent to the company and then entered in a statewide drawing, with the state agriculture officials randomly picking the winner. Last year, 1,031 classes with 21,618 children participated in California, with 1.5 million students in 45 states nationwide, Casanova said.

Taylor's mom, Amanda Silva, said her in-laws raised cattle, but the family does not otherwise have an agricultural background. She said when her mother cooked the cabbage, it could not be done all at once.

"She had to do it in little increments," Silva said. "I have five siblings, and it fed everyone."

Contact Eric Louie at 925-847-2123.