



In this issue...

[Teacher Feature - 2015 Outstanding Educator - Suzanne Squires](#)

[1. National Agriculture Week Events](#)

[2. YOLO Outdoor Expo](#)

[3. A Garden in Every School Symposium](#)

[4. County of Los Angeles, Smart Gardening Workshop / Backyard Composting & Worm Composting](#)

[5. 36th Annual Los Angeles Environmental Education Fair](#)

[6. California Agriculture Day](#)

[7. Imagine this... Story Writing Contest Awards Ceremony](#)

[8. CA Farm to School Conference](#)

[9. National School Breakfast Month](#)

[10. Spring Seeds for School Gardens](#)

[Resources](#)

[County - Local Events](#)

[Support AITC](#)

Teacher Feature - Suzanne Squires

We are excited to introduce our 2015 Outstanding Educator, Suzanne Squires! Sue is a 7th and 8th grade science, health, agriculture and multimedia teacher at Los Olivos Elementary in Santa Barbara County. Read below about what she does to

DID YOU KNOW?!

California produces 99 percent of the nation's commercially grown table grapes.



California Foundation for
Agriculture in the Classroom

How and when did you first learn of Ag in the Classroom?

About six or seven years ago I was introduced to AITC by a colleague, but became more involved when I was nominated for a Literacy for Life Award. I presented at the conference and became even more excited about the enriching opportunities that AITC provides.

How long have you taught students and why did you choose to become an educator?

I fell into teaching by accident. I was working for the County of Santa Barbara's Agricultural Commissioner's Office and the department was going through severe budget cuts. I decided to get my credential in case my position was cut. Once I started student teaching, I enjoyed teaching so much that I switched careers. I have been teaching for 17 years and I have never looked back.

What is your favorite AITC program/resource/event and why?

AITC conferences are fun, meaningful, and well-planned events. The field trips, presentations, and hands-on materials get me excited about returning to my classroom with all of the valuable knowledge and activities I was able to learn in just a few days. The collaboration and connection with other teachers from around the state is also a plus.

What is the most profound impact that agriculture education/awareness has had on you and how did that impact the way you educated students?

Growing up I listened to stories about my grandfather's orange groves and smudge pots, and in the summer enjoyed traveling to my cousin's cattle ranch. I actually grew up in a city, however, and rode my horse on the riverbed because there was little open land left.

Watching the transformation of farmland to city has enabled me to understand how important it is for students to understand all aspects of agriculture.

Tell us about one person who has most influenced

your own education and educational career.

I can't name one specific teacher that has influenced my teaching because my curriculum and teaching style have evolved from several teachers that have touched my life as a student and teacher. Majoring in animal science at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and my previous careers as a zookeeper and plant quarantine inspector made it easy for me to teach science/agriculture and add some real-life experiences to my classroom. I do have to say that my mother realized early on that teaching would be my profession and gently nudged me in that direction.

Tell us about a golden teaching moment.

Teaching both of my own kids was a golden teaching moment for me. I became even more aware of how important it is for teachers to identify and address the different learning styles in the classroom. This awareness encouraged me to seek and develop more effective curriculum and study programs for my students. Agriculture is the perfect vehicle for an evolving learning environment.

Do you have any advice for other teachers on implementing agriculture into the classroom?

Choose topics that relate to your hometown landscape and that are interesting to you as a teacher. For instance, our valley is made up of vineyards, horse ranches, and farms, so I try to use these topics so that I can support the classroom activities with field trips and hands-on activities. Agriculture is so broad and incorporates so many topics that it makes it easy to develop meaningful lessons.

Why do you believe it is important for our students to be agriculturally literate and aware in today's society?

I have to say that as a student I thought agriculture was all about livestock. As a teacher I make it a point to pick agricultural topics that are different, such as plant nurseries and quarantine insects. Both topics allow me to show my students how they affect landscaping around their house and the food on their table. It is important to make students aware that agriculture

incorporates all areas of our lives. Technology opens a whole new level of learning that can expose students to a variety of agricultural topics.

1. National Agriculture Week Events

National Agriculture Week is right around the corner! Join us as we celebrate agriculture!

- Thursday, March 19: Join us for an exclusive sneak preview of Sacramento's future arena at the Sacramento Kings Experience Center in downtown Sacramento. Enjoy gourmet wine and hors d'oeuvres featuring renowned Chef Tuohy.
- Thursday, April 2: Join us on the Queen Mary in Long Beach for a Glory Days Historical Tour followed by a special luncheon in Royal Salon/King's View Room.
- At each event, meet a student winner of our Imagine this... Story Writing Contest and receive an autographed copy of our Imagine this... Stories Inspired by Agriculture book.

For more information, visit [National Agriculture Week!](#)

2. YOLO Outdoor Expo

March 14 - 15

You only live once-get out and explore! The Heidrick Ag History Museum and Event Center brings the outdoors in to one place with this 70+ vendor recreational event highlighting businesses, organizations, products, and more inside their 45,000 square foot indoor event center. For more information visit, www.yolooutdoorexpo.com.

3. A Garden in Every School

Symposium

March 14 - 15

Network with like-minded teachers, parents, garden designers, community leaders, school garden coordinators, and others involved with helping kids make the connection between food, health, and the environment. By encouraging and supporting a garden in every school, Soil Born Farms creates opportunities for children to discover fresh food, to make healthier food choices, and to become better nourished. The event will include; workshops, success stories, best practices, panel discussions, information booths, and delicious food. For more information, visit [Garden in Every School Symposium](#).

4. County of Los Angeles, Smart Gardening Workshop / Backyard Composting & Worm Composting

March 14

Backyard composting is an attractive, simple method of managing organic waste at home. It adapts to fit

individual lifestyles, incomes, yard sizes, and ambitions. This workshop will be presented by Curtis B. Thomsen. For additional classes and information visit, <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/sg/bc.cfm>.

5. 36th Annual Los Angeles Environmental Education Fair

March 14

The Los Angeles Environmental Education Fair is a fun and festive celebration of environmental education resources, opportunities, and success. Students from all over Los Angeles County will share their service learning and environmental education projects. Nature Centers, Environmental Education Providers, and both public and private stakeholder partners showcase their work and resources. Entertainment and workshops are all open to the public. For more information visit, [LA Environmental Education Fair](#).

6. California Agriculture Day

March 18

California Agriculture: Breaking New Ground! The state capitol will be bustling with excitement as California agriculture comes together to educate legislators and the general public about the various crops grown in the state. The event goes takes place 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. for elected officials and staff and will be open to the public from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. A stage program will begin at noon. For more information, visit [California Agriculture Day](#).

7. Imagine this... Story Writing Contest Awards Ceremony

March 18

CFAITC will host an awards ceremony to honor six elementary and middle school state-winning Imagine this... authors and high school illustrators from five Northern California high schools. After a morning full of interviews and autographing of books at California Agriculture Day, the student authors will meet the high school illustrators for the first time, receive their awards, and read their stories in the Governor's Council Room at 2:00 p.m. The Imagine this... Stories Inspired by Agriculture book, featuring tractors, cattle, strawberries, and more, will be available for purchase at the event. For more information visit www.LearnAboutAg.org/imaginethis.

8. CA Farm to School Conference 2015

Connecting. Growing. Leading.

May 4 - 6

The California Farm to School Conference will be held May 4 to 6, 2015 at Asilomar in Pacific Grove, CA. The conference will offer a series of workshops, panels and discussions that will be of significant educational and networking value to attendees who will represent all facets of the farm to school movement, including farmers, distributors, government representatives, procurement officers, educators, and food program administrators. \$375 registration rate ends 3/31.

Register today at

<http://www.cafarmtoschoolconference.org/>

9. National School Breakfast Month

It's National Nutrition Month, which is the perfect time to focus on giving students the fuel they need to help them succeed. #FuelGreatness in the classroom, on the field and everywhere in between-it all starts with school breakfast. Fuel Up to Play 60 is helping kids reach their full potential, and you can get involved. Learn more at [Fuel Up to Play 60](#).

10. Spring Seeds for School Gardens

The USDA Farm Service Agency is distributing seeds for use in school gardens in support of the People's Garden Initiative. Seeds available this year are: Small ornamental gourds, dill, mixed lettuce, Kentucky wonder pole beans, Blue Lake green beans, sweet corn, popcorn, Chinese eggplant, radishes, spaghetti squash, scallop squash, crookneck squash and golden Hubbard squash. The seeds are available free of charge to schools. Requests for seeds should include the school name, the mailing address and the contact information for the school garden coordinator. Email requests to Beverlee.block@ca.usda.gov.



Lesson Plan: From Genes to Jeans II

This unit was designed for grades 6-12 utilizing themes in the Next Generation Science Standards as well as real world applications to the agricultural industry. The lessons may be used independently or as a self-contained unit which covers in-depth the concepts of genetics including an introduction to human inheritance, genetic breeding, Punnett squares, the importance of genetic diversity, biotechnology, gene marker selection, and the use of biotechnology for sustainable agriculture. Available to download at [LearnAboutAg/FromGenestoJeansII](#)

Resource: Garden in a Glove

This resource will help students have a better understanding of the life cycle of crops and plants, and better appreciate the importance of maintaining a clean and healthy environment so that plants have all the ingredients they need to grow.

<http://www.kfb.org>

Website: GardenABCs

Use this website to find books for children and all the resources needed to support school, community or home garden projects.

<http://www.gardenabcs.com/>



Local Events

Mar. 17-18, 2015 Sonoma County Ag Day

[Sonoma County Farm Bureau](#)

Mar. 17, 2015 San Benito County Ag Day

[San Benito County Farm Bureau](#)

Mar. 25, 2015 Explore El Dorado County's Unique Agriculture

[El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom](#)

Apr. 25, 2015 San Benito EATs Workshop

[San Benito County Farm Bureau](#)

May 12, 2015 El Dorado County Farm Day
[El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom](#)

May 15, 2015 Napa County Meadow Muffin Golf
Tournament
[Napa County Farm Bureau](#)



Show Your Support for Agricultural Literacy

Help us continue to provide programs and materials to create an awareness and understanding of agriculture among California's educators and students.

Make a one-time or recurring donation.



**BECOME A FAN
ON FACEBOOK**



**FOLLOW US
ON TWITTER**