

# Cream of the Crop

a harvest of  
ideas for educators

CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION FOR AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

## Happy Holidays! In this issue...

- [1. Teacher Feature - Kristina Beltz](#)
  - [2. Imagine this... Story Writing Contest- Regional Winners](#)
  - [3. Literacy for Life and DIG-IT Grants: 2016-2017 Recipients Announced](#)
  - [4. New: Extra! Extra! Classroom Extensions](#)
  - [5. Plant Science Tote Bags](#)
  - [6. Grant Feature: Youth Gardening Grants](#)
  - [7. Statewide/Nationwide Opportunities](#)
  - [8. County Ag Activities](#)
  - [9. More Ag Opportunities](#)
- [Support AITC](#)



### 1. Teacher Feature: Kristina Beltz

**Teaches:** Fifth Grade

**School:** Edward M. Downer Elementary School in San Pablo, California

Kristina Beltz has been teaching for 12 years. She has helped create Ag in the Classroom teaching resources, including the *Steer Toward STEM* and *Fruits and Vegetables for Health* units, the *Stop the Invasion* fact and activity sheets and three editions of *What's Growin' On?* In 2014, Kristina was awarded a Literacy for Life grant, which she used to introduce students to healthy, affordable foods and to teach students where food comes from. She recently helped write and pilot a new fact and activity sheet about bees, which will become available in 2017.



California Foundation for  
Agriculture in the Classroom

#### DID YOU KNOW?!

Cauliflower grows best  
at 65-68 degrees F.

[Source: UC Vegetable  
Research and Information  
Center](#)

### What inspires you to teach about agriculture?

I teach in an urban area of Northern California, and it's shocking how many of these students do not know where their food comes from. They don't have access to fresh produce because there aren't grocery stores or farmers markets nearby, just liquor stores and fast food restaurants. Working with CFAITC has encouraged me to bring agriculture into my classroom. The little projects and lesson plans are easy to include with my other lessons. I enjoy seeing students get excited about topics like healthy food or benefits of bees.

### What do you enjoy about helping to create new teaching resources?

I like being part of a collaborative process to benefit many students. I learn as I create the lesson plans, and then many others are able to learn when the resources are published. I especially enjoy working as a team with other teachers and the CFAITC staff. It's a very positive experience for everyone!

### Tell us about your recent adventures teaching about agriculture.

I recently piloted the bee fact and activity sheet. My class and I read through the sheet, looked up pictures and information about the most common bees, and conducted an art lesson connected with the hexagonal shape of a honeycomb. It was very cool because at first my students didn't understand how bees could be interesting. But, as we started to explore, they began to ask questions and conduct their own research. We all learned a lot.

## 2. Imagine this... Story Writing Contest - Regional Winners Announced!

46 California students have recently been named as Regional Winners of the 2016 *Imagine this...* Story Writing Contest. See the [list of winners from across the state!](#) Six students will be named state winners on January 1, 2017.



## 3. Literacy for Life Grant: 2016-2017 Recipients Announced

26 California educators were selected to receive a 2016-2017 Literacy for Life grant. Recipients' names are [now listed on our website](#). Thank you to all who applied. We are glad to see so many teachers interested in making agricultural education a hands-on experience!

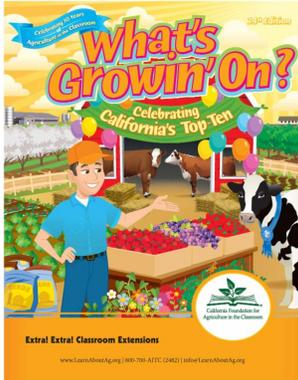


## DIG-IT Grant Recipients Announced

44 California teachers were selected for the DIG-IT school garden grant program. Recipients will receive \$500 gift cards to Tractor Supply Company, along with curriculum to help grow their school gardens. Thank you to all who applied.



## 4. New: Extra! Extra! Classroom Extensions to *What's Growin' On?*



Extend the learning! Our Extra! Extra! Classroom Extensions is a supplemental resource for the 14th edition of *What's Growin' On?* All [requests for free print copies](#) of the student newspaper now include a copy of Extra! Extra! If you already have the newspaper, but need the supplement, download it [here](#) or email [info@learnaboutag.org](mailto:info@learnaboutag.org) to request a print copy.

## 5. Get Your Hands On Plant Science: Free Tote Bags While Supplies Last!

Receive a free tote bag when you request your free print copy of a Plant Science lesson plan unit. The units are geared for grades K-3, 2-4, 5-8 and 8-12. [Request yours today!](#)



## 6. Grant Feature: Youth Gardening Grants



**KidsGardening.org** provides Youth Gardening Grants of up to \$750. Schools, non-profit organizations and youth programs throughout the United States are eligible to apply. [The deadline is December 15, 2016.](#)

See [other grants](#) and upcoming deadlines on our website. This list includes the [California Fertilizer Foundation garden grant](#) of up to \$1,200, due January 15, 2017.

## 7. Statewide/Nationwide Events, Competitions, & More!

### CA Farm to School and Garden Conference

- **March 27-29, 2017**
- **Modesto, CA**
- Explore workshops, panels and discussions geared to connect the garden, cafeteria and classroom.

- The event is organized by the California Farm to School Network.
- Registration starts at \$295.
- [Learn more and register online.](#)

### On the Farm STEM Event

- **March 27-29, 2017**
- **Los Angeles, CA**
- This event is designed for formal and informal educators who train or coach STEM teachers or who design STEM learning experiences.
- Discover science brought to life by American beef cattle ranchers, researchers, nutritionists and veterinarians.
- Selected participants will attend at no cost.
- The event is funded by the Beef Checkoff and coordinated by the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.
- [Learn more and apply now.](#) Space is limited.

### National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Conference

- **March 30 - April 2, 2017**
- **Los Angeles, CA**
- Discover the latest in science content, teaching strategy, and research to enhance your teaching.
- Registration starts at \$275.
- Explore [7 ways to get funding](#) to an NSTA conference!
- [Learn more and register online.](#)

### NGSS and Common Core in the Garden Workshops

- **March 2017**
- **Santa Cruz, CA**
- Learn to use a garden to engage students in NGSS and Common Core standards.
- Registration fees vary.
- Graduate education credit is available.
- Events are offered by Life Lab Science Program.
- [Learn more and register online.](#)

### Winter Field Trips at the UC Santa Cruz Farm - Life Lab

- **January through March, Tuesdays and Thursdays**
- **Santa Cruz, CA**
- Plan a field trip for students in grades 3-5.
- Participating teachers receive a packet of pre- and post-visit lessons to extend the learning into the classroom.
- Events are offered by Life Lab Science Program.
- [Make a reservation.](#)

### Carton 2 Garden Contest

- **Entries are due April 12, 2017**
- **All US schools are eligible to apply in this contest offered by KidsGardening.org.**
- Re-purpose milk and juice cartons to build or enhance your school garden.
- Schools who best use cartons will win one of 14 prizes.
- The grand prize is valued at \$5,000.
- [Learn more.](#)



## 8. County Ag Activities

January 18, 2017 - **San Joaquin County's [Ag Venture in Stockton](#)** - Ag Venture is a program for San Joaquin County third grade students.

February 28, 2017 - **San Joaquin County's [Ag Venture in Lodi](#)** - Ag Venture is a program for San Joaquin County third grade students.

March 21-22, 2017 - **Kern County's [Farm Day in the City](#)** - The program is open to children in grades 2-4.

May 9, 2017 - **El Dorado County's [Farm Day](#)** - The program is open to third grade students. Registration opens January 1, 2017. El Dorado Ag in the Classroom also offers [Discover Field Trips](#) for preschool and kindergarten students.

## **[9. More Ways to Learn About Ag](#)**

### **Sacramento, Placer and El Dorado counties and the City of West Sacramento -**

The 2017 Water Spots Video Contest is open to all middle and high school students in the area. Judging will be based on creativity, entertainment value, accuracy, originality and incorporation of the water efficiency topic. [Learn more and register.](#)

### **Ag Careers Virtual Field Trip -**

Did you miss the field trip? [Watch it here.](#) Go behind-the-scenes at Ford Motor Company to learn about producing vehicles for agriculture. More virtual field trips will be joining the collection at [AgExplorer.com](#).

### **New Book: Asa and the Holstein Queen -**

This new book is based on the real-life adventures of Asa W. Morris, who traveled to California in 1879 to become a prominent dairy cattle breeder in Yolo County California. [Check it out!](#)



## **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.](#)

## **Stay Connected**

