



Sacramento, California

California First Lady Maria Shriver is a long-time champion of edible school gardens and has led the effort to create school and community gardens across that state. Last May, she joined students, organizers and celebrities in unveiling the WE Garden in Capital Park in Sacramento.

The goal of the WE Garden, located on the grounds of the Capital building, is to educate and inspire Californians about the important lessons gardens teach students, children and people of all ages. These include lessons rooted in nutrition, healthy living, agriculture, science, history and service.



To help educators and parents make these connections, the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom developed a comprehensive WE Garden lesson packet, featuring activities from Seed Match to Eat Your Plants to Bug Sweep. The Foundation also has downloadable fact sheets, planting plan, resource and state teaching standards guides. The lessons are geared to students in first through sixth grades and focus on English-language Arts, Science, Mathematics, Health Education, Visual and Performing Arts, and English Language Development.



Vegetable, herb and flower seedlings for the 800-square-foot demonstration garden were grown and donated by local school and community gardens. Students from Galt High School and Skycrest Elementary School transplanted the first crops into the garden.

Produce harvested at the garden is donated to the Sacramento Loaves and Fishes program,

which provides services to those in need.

Since Shriver's involvement, the number of edible school gardens in California doubled from 3,000 to 6,000. "I am a big believer that everything you need to know in life, you can learn in the garden," said Shriver in an interview with *California Country* magazine.

WE Garden in Capitol Park was made possible through public and private partnerships with organizations dedicated to the value gardens have in communities.

Visit these web sites for more information:

<http://www.firstlady.ca.gov/index.php/projects/school-gardens/>

<http://www.firstlady.ca.gov/index.php/news/582/>

<http://www.cfaitc.org/wegarden/>

<http://californiacountry.org/features/article.aspx?arID=602>



