**Video: Michelle Obama's White House Garden**

First Lady Michelle Obama tours her organic vegetable garden and discusses her goal of educating young children about healthy eating. [Plant your own organic garden](http://www.thedailygreen.com/green-homes/latest/organic-gardening-tips-460309).

**The You Tube clip:** [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVpEr3kfWjc**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVpEr3kfWjc)



First Lady Michelle Obama, White House Chef Sam Kass and students from the Bancroft School planting the new White House Vegetable Garden.

Photo: Official White House

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By Dan Shapley

After breaking ground on a garden bed in the South Lawn of the White House in March, and planting with a group of fifth graders from Bancroft Elementary School in April, Michelle Obama is ready to reap what she's sown: not only food, but also public education.

The same school kids who helped plant have returned at the intervals throughout the growing season to harvest and to learn to cook with the [fresh-grown organic veggies](http://www.ghchealth.com/natural-health/white-house-organic-garden/). In the meantime, White House staff -- and a colony of honey bees -- have been tending to the garden.

The White House garden -- the first garden on the grounds since Eleanor Roosevelt's victory garden -- quickly became the nation's most high-profile plot. The education, in other words, went far beyond the school children who got their hands dirty.

That's exactly what food advocates hoped for when they encouraged the First Family to plant the garden. There's been a popular movement, led by Roger Doiron of [Eat the View](http://www.eattheview.org/), to promote that kind of healthy local eating. (Doiron won one of The Daily Green's [2009 Heart of Green Awards](http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/latest/heart-of-green-awards-47042302) for his efforts.) Why now? Because the local food movement -- which has always prized tasty fresh and healthy locally grown fruits and vegetables -- is being bolstered by the recession. More and more Americans are planning gardens to save money, as well as to eat healthy.

What effect with Michelle Obama's garden have on the country? It's too early to say -- but there's good reason to believe her words and actions will have an outsize impact on her children's generation. As a recent White House video shows, that's exactly what Michelle Obama hopes to achieve.

Her decision to start a garden follows the First Lady's positive statements about community gardening to USDA staff in late February, when she praised Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's People's Garden Project. Here's what she [had to say](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/%21ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB/.cmd/ad/.ar/sa.retrievecontent/.c/6_2_1UH/.ce/7_2_5JM/.p/5_2_4TQ/_th/J_2_9D/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?PC_7_2_5JM_contentidonly=true&PC_7_2_5JM_contentid=2009%2F02%2F0043.xml) about his plan to develop community gardens at USDA facilities in order to demonstrate sustainable gardening techniques:

"I'm a big believer in community gardens, both because of their beauty and for their access to providing fresh fruits and vegetables to so many communities across this nation and the world."

**White House Garden Bees**

As The Daily Green's own Beekeeper, Kim Flottum, [previously reported](http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/blogs/bees/bees-white-house-garden-88032302), the new White House garden will be pollinated by colonies of two types of parasite-resistant honey bees. As colony collapse disorder continues to defy easy definition, scientists and beekeepers have nonetheless identified a variety of threats -- nutritional, parasitic and toxic -- that threaten the health of the nation's most important pollinator. (How important? They pollinate about one-third of U.S. crops, and add about $15 billion in value annually to farm value.)

Resistance to *Varroa* mites should help these bees thrive. The USDA developed these bees specifically to resist the mite. One type have a trait called "varroa-sensitive hygiene" which prompts the worker bees to detect and remove infested bees from the nest, eliminating the need for chemical help to control the mites. The second type of mite-resistant honey bees is based on a strain of honey bees from Russia which are naturally resistant not only to varroa mites, but also to tracheal mites, which infest the breathing tubes of the bees.

So the garden has many important lessons for the school children and the public at large: Honey bees are friendly and important, and as [easy to care for](http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/latest/diy-backyard-beekeeping-47031701) as it is to [grow your own garden](http://www.thedailygreen.com/green-homes/latest/organic-gardening-tips-460309).

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