

Cleveland grade schooler Kyzer Tull learned a valuable life lesson from planting a cabbage seedling. As one of nearly 14,000 Oklahoma third-graders who participated in the nationwide Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program, he not only learned what it takes to care for a plant, but also that just because youâ€™ve never won anything, it doesnâ€™t mean you canâ€™t win. â€œI learned if you keep trying, no matter how much time it takes to get big, itâ€™s worth it,â€• said Tull, who was randomly chosen by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture as the winner for the state of Oklahoma. For his efforts, Tull, now a 9-year-old fourth-grader, received a \$1,000 check for his education fund. More than 3.5 million third-graders in 48 states participate in this annual program with hopes of winning best in their state and the prize. Schools registered and their third-graders received free seedlings to take home or grow in the schoolâ€™s garden. At the end of the growing season, the students submit a photo of themselves with their cabbage, plus its weight, to their teacher. Each teacher selects the student who has grown the â€œbestâ€• cabbage, based on size and appearance. (Parents are encouraged to stay in touch with their childâ€™s teacher because the growing season lasts until after the school year has ended.) The photo and the name of the student and the teacher from each class are submitted online at [bonnieplants.com](http://bonnieplants.com), and the childâ€™s name is entered in a statewide drawing. Teachers can register at [bonniecabbageprogram.com/register/](http://bonniecabbageprogram.com/register/) before Feb. 15 for the 2016 program. Kids learn nature, nurture, responsibility, self-confidence and accomplishment through the program. For Tull and his family, the program was a whole new experience, said his mother, Casey Tull. â€œMy first thought was I donâ€™t know how to do this because I have never grown anything in my life,â€• Casey Tull said. â€œSo I was kind of scared.â€• She said they started out growing the plant inside in a pot because it was freezing outdoors. Kyzer Tullâ€™s dad, Jarrod, built a large box in the familyâ€™s front yard and transferred the growing plant outside after danger of freezing had passed, Casey Tull said. Key to its final size,

weighing in at more than five pounds, was the addition of Miracle-Gro and lots of water, she said. Little brother Slade Tull also helped out with weed pulling, she added. Once the photo was taken, the family harvested the cabbage and ate cabbage casserole for about a week, Casey Tull said. "I was surprised by the size of it," she said. "I didn't think it would get that big." The family also grew some tomatoes and strawberry plants from Bonnie Plants and "they turned out really good, too," she added. Kyzer Tull, who was 8 when he entered the contest, said growing the monster cabbage was "pretty fun." "I was surprised at how big it got. I would do it again," he said. Rita Sherrow 918-581-8360  
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