

Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



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OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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Notes: Michael Pollan has written two bestselling books about food, farming and eating: *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* and *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. Thomas Jefferson had a mockingbird; James Buchanan, a herd of elephants; George Washington, nine horses and 17 dogs, including a hound named "Sweetlips." William Taft, William Harrison and Rutherford Hayes had cows. Theodore Roosevelt had a lion, five bears and too many others to list here. There's a book on the topic, *Wackiest White House Pets*, and a Web site: <http://www.presidentialpetmuseum.com/whitehousepets-1.htm>.

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Q. Dear Twig: You said I can maybe raise chickens in my own backyard. What about the President? Can he raise chickens in his backyard, too?

A. Yes. If President Obama wants to raise chickens on the White House lawn, he can. Or his daughters can, maybe as a 4-H project. Or the White House chefs can, to always have fresh eggs.

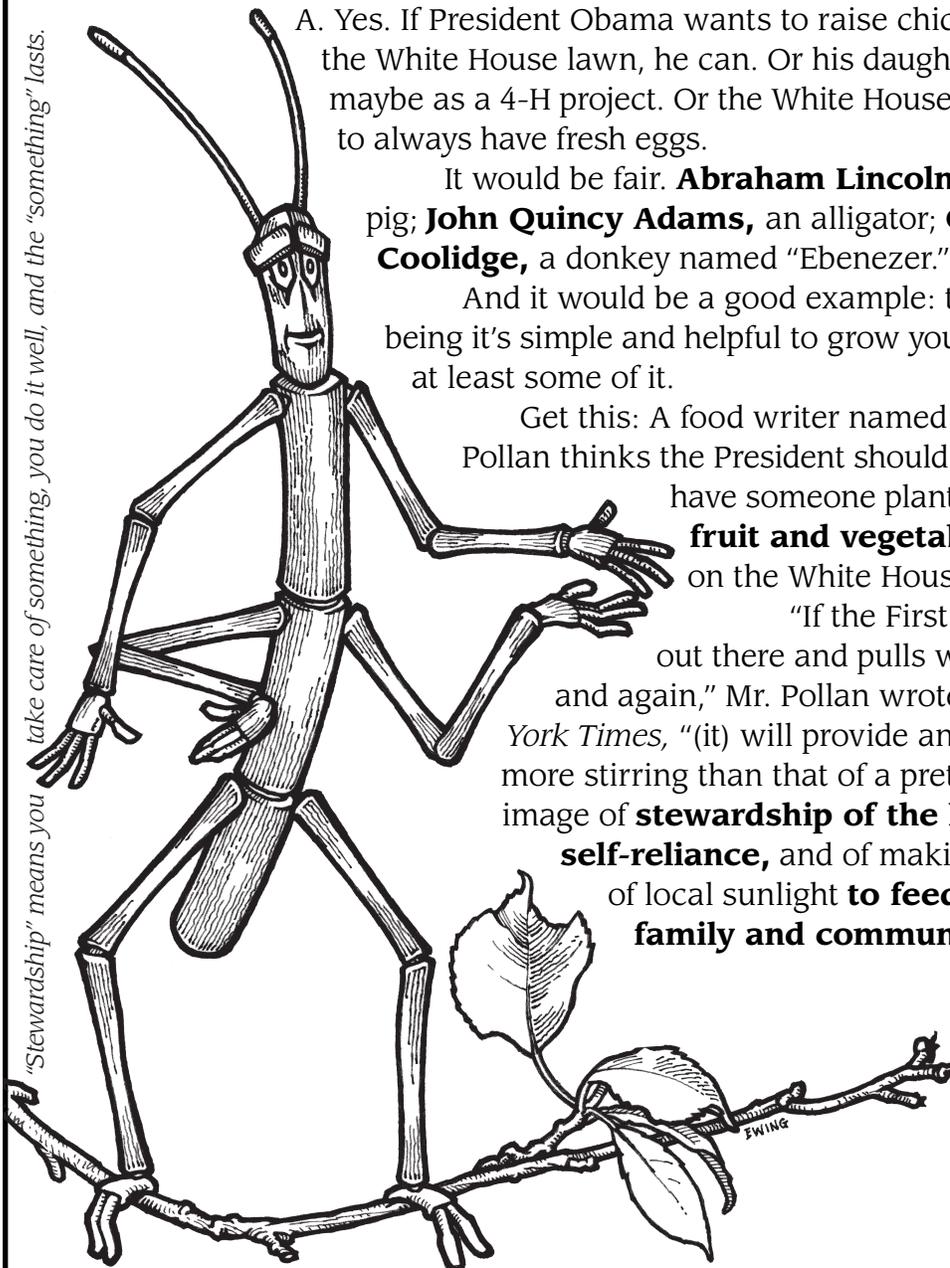
It would be fair. **Abraham Lincoln** had a pig; **John Quincy Adams**, an alligator; **Calvin Coolidge**, a donkey named "Ebenezer."

And it would be a good example: the example being it's simple and helpful to grow your own food, at least some of it.

Get this: A food writer named Michael Pollan thinks the President should plant, or have someone plant, **a huge fruit and vegetable garden** on the White House lawn.

"If the First Family gets out there and pulls weeds now and again," Mr. Pollan wrote in the *New York Times*, "(it) will provide an image even more stirring than that of a pretty lawn: the image of **stewardship of the land**, of **self-reliance**, and of making the most of local sunlight **to feed one's family and community.**"

"Stewardship" means you take care of something, you do it well, and the "something" lasts.



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