

Box Contents:

0.75 lb Mei Qing Choi
1 Butternut Squash
1 .5 lbs Leeks
0.5 Brussels Sprouts
0.5 lb Spinach
2.5 lbs Oranges
1 hd Romanesco

Field Notes: The leafy greens debate is still far from focused, so I will limit my discussion here until the regulators become rational. Good examples of this early in the debate irrationality are a few elements of Senator Flores' well-intentioned bill that prohibits portable toilets in agricultural fields (required by separate state and federal laws) and prohibits the use of surface water for irrigation. Likewise, the Western Growers Association has proposed eradicating all wildlife and habitat from agricultural areas. This idea runs counter to everything that we learned from the Dust Bowl and the decades of successful re-

development of habitats, especially in riparian zones, that the USDA has pushed since the 1970s. Furthermore, wildlife is not suspected of being infected with E. coli 0157 systemically but of carrying contaminated fecal material out of feedlots and into vegetable fields. The culprit that is sickening people is the E. coli O157, a strain of E. coli that thrives in the stomachs of grain fed beef and dairy cattle. The real solution that everyone seems to be dancing around is the containment of this particular strain to the facilities in which it thrives and breeds. Nobody is addressing the source of the pollution or even looking at the O157 as a pollutant. Rather than accepting E. coli O157 as a dominant force in our environment, let's look to its source and stop it there. Fortunately for all of us, there are no feedlots here in the Capay Valley. All of our local cattle are primarily grass fed and therefore not susceptible to O157 infection. It will probably take months before we have concrete regulations regarding the production of leafy greens. We'll keep you posted as they develop. Hopefully these discussions will be less fear driven and more ecologically focused.

Box Notes: With February comes the brassica family's urge to set seed. If you are lucky enough to have a flower pushing up from the center of your Mei Qing Choi (aka baby Bok Choi) be sure to include it in your meal. When we harvest just the flower stalks we sell it as Bok Choi Rabe and double the price. Our Brussels' Sprouts are finally pouring in after much delay and some damage from the cold. We hope to have enough of these sweet gems for another round in the next two weeks. The oranges as ever are from Blue Heron (certified organic by CCOF). There will be no Alpaca oranges this year due in equal parts to last years hot spell (they are dry farmed) and this winters freeze which did in the survivors of the summer. Remember to eat your greens!

Navel Oranges from Blue Heron Farm (certified organic by CCOF) are still available. Please place orders by Sunday evening of the week in which you would like delivery. They are now **\$25.00** for 20 lbs. Please note the price change due to the freeze. Not available to Nevada County / Mountain Bounty subscribers at this time.

Roasted Brussels Sprouts in Orange Sauce from *The Gardeners' Community Cookbook*, by Victoria Wise

Serves 4

1 pound Brussels Sprouts	1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon salt
3 1/2 tablespoons olive oil	1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon cracked black pepper
2 teaspoons butter	3 tablespoons orange juice concentrate
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar	1 tablespoon finely slivered orange zest

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

Pull off any yellowing outer leaves, trim the stem ends, and cut a shallow X in the bottom of each of the Brussels sprouts. Place the sprouts in a baking dish, add 2 tablespoons of the oil, and turn to coat well. Bake for 15 minutes, turning once. Transfer to a serving bowl.

