

Box Contents:

2.5 lbs Navel Oranges
2 bu. Carrots
1 Butternut Squash
1 bu. Red Beets
1 bu. Green Dandelion
0.75 lbs broccoli
1.5 lbs Leeks

Field Notes: The ground is just drying out after last weeks gentle soaking. Our seasonal creeks are just barely flowing and Cache Creek is still well below its normal winter roar. It is even well below its normal summer flow. While we are scrambling to transplant, hoe, cultivate and trellis as much as we can ahead of the next storm, we really hope it doesn't pass us by. If we could order up a gentle inch of rain every two weeks, that would be perfect, even though our trees are blooming. Our plums and almonds are in full and glorious bloom with the apricots at 25% and the peaches and nectarines just starting to push a few

blossoms out. Spring bloom and planting season bring out the optimism that lies in the soul of all farmers, no matter how curmudgeonly they like to appear.

Spring is also bringing on our egg production. We are at three dozen a day this week and hope to see nine dozen a day within a month. When we start offering eggs we hope to find families that will commit to a dozen (or two) per week, in the same way you commit to your veggies. Our current flock of hens is not certified organic because they did not start out on organic feed. They are and will continue to be on organic feed, as well as our pasture. We have roughly two hundred hens. Our future flocks (laying eggs in the fall) will be certified now that we have our feed supply figured out. Three quarters are just coming of age while the remaining fifty have been our ever-renewing backyard flock for years. We have one old banty hen that hops up on our shoulders for food. They are in a mobile coop in a one-acre pasture, happily grazing on a young vetch covercrop and remnants of last years wintersquash crop. We will let you know when we've surpassed our neighbors' demand for eggs – which is coming soon! Pictures to follow.

Box Notes: These are the last of Blue Herons' (certified organic by CCOF) Navels for this winter. We are grateful for how many survived the freeze and hope everyone has enjoyed them. This is also our last round of Butternut Squash. We beg of you to forgive a few wrinkles (we'll all get them sooner or later) and enjoy their mature sweetness. The carrots are so sweet and we are eating so many that we figured you should be able to too. Besides, we need to make way for the first tomato planting in two weeks, weather permitting. If you're still staring at some of the winters roots its time to roast them and put some leeks in the roast too. The Green Dandelion is a little racy for our boxes but it is so pretty we couldn't resist it.

Bunched Carrots are available for \$24.00 / 12 bunches. Please place orders by Sunday evening. Not available to Nevada County / Mountain Bounty subscribers at this time

Dandelion Salad with Mustard Vinaigrette, from *Chez Panisse Café Cookbook*, by Alice Waters

Serves 6

6 handfuls young dandelion greens, washed
1 1/2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice
3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 or 2 garlic cloves, peeled
Salt
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
Pepper

Crisp bacon, shavings of Gruyere cheese, and chopped egg (optional, for garnish)

Pound the garlic to a paste with a pinch of salt in a mortar. In a small bowl, combine the garlic, mustard, lemon juice and red wine vinegar, and a generous pinch of salt. Whisk in the olive oil and taste the dressing with a dandelion leaf. The flavor of the vinaigrette must be assertive enough to balance the bitterness of the dandelion. You may want to add more mustard or acid if the dandelion is particularly bitter. Just before serving, put the dandelion greens in a large bowl, season with salt and freshly milled pepper, and gently toss with just enough vinaigrette to coat the greens lightly. Serve immediately.

If you want, garnish with crisp bacon, shavings of Gruyere cheese, and chopped egg.

Butternut Squash and Ginger Soup from *A Taste of Heaven and Earth*, by Bettina Vitell

Serves 4

3 tablespoons olive oil
1 1/2 cups chopped yellow onion
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 cups water
1 5-inch piece of fresh ginger
Salt, Freshly ground pepper

4 garlic cloves, chopped
1 teaspoon ground coriander
4 cups peeled and thinly sliced butternut squash (about a 2 pound squash)
1 tablespoon tamari
Fresh chopped cilantro, for garnish

Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed soup pot. Add the garlic and onions and cook over high heat for 3 or 4 minutes, stirring frequently, until the onions become translucent. Add the coriander, cinnamon, and the squash. Continue to cook for 5 minutes over high heat. Add the water, cover with a lid, reduce the heat, and simmer for 1 hour.

Peel the fresh ginger. Finely grate it, and then either in a towel or using your fingers, squeeze the ginger into a small cup until you have 4 tablespoons of juice.

In a food processor, blend the soup, ginger, and tamari until completely smooth. Return to the pot and cook another 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground pepper. A garnish of fresh cilantro really adds the final touch, and brings out all the flavors of this soup.

Flageolet Bean and Leek Soup from *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*, by Deborah Madison

1 1/2 cups dried flageolet beans, soaked
3 tablespoons butter
4 medium leeks, including an inch of the greens, chopped
Chopped tarragon or chervil
6 cups vegetable stock or water

Salt and freshly milled white pepper
2 to 3 tablespoons crème fraîche or cream
1/3 cup white wine
Aromatics: 2 bay leaves, 6 parsley branches, 4 sprigs of thyme

Drain the beans. Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter in a soup pot over medium heat. Add two-thirds of the leeks, the aromatics, and 1/2 cup of the stock and stew covered for 5 minutes. Add the beans and the rest of the stock and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer, partially covered, for 45 minutes. Add 1 teaspoon salt and continue cooking until the beans are completely tender, another 15 to 30 minutes. Remove the aromatics, puree 1/2 cup of the beans in some of the broth, then stir the puree back into the soup. Stir in the crème fraîche. Taste the soup for salt.

Melt the rest of the butter in a small skillet and add the remaining leeks and the wine. Stew covered over medium heat until tender, about 15 minutes. Season with salt and white pepper. Ladle the soup into soup plates, add a spoonful of leeks to each bowl, and garnish with the tarragon.

Serves 4 to 6

Red Root Salad from *The Gardeners' Community Cookbook*, by Victoria Wise

3 medium carrots, scrubbed & thinly sliced
1 tablespoon shredded orange zest
1/3 cup chicken or vegetable broth, or water
Whole lettuce leaves, washed and spun dry
2 medium beets, cooked, peeled, halved, and sliced thin

1 1/2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
3 cloves garlic, smashed
1 teaspoon peanut oil
Salt and pepper
4 green onions (scallions), trimmed & thinly sliced on the diagonal

Place the carrots, garlic, orange zest, and broth in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer until the carrots are wilted but still crunchy, about 4 minutes. Drain, discarding the garlic and zest, and chill the carrots.

Just before serving, combine the carrots, beets, vinegar, and peanut oil in a bowl and gently toss to mix. Season to taste with salt and pepper and toss again.

Make a bed of lettuce leaves on a large serving platter and spoon the root mixture on top of the lettuce. Sprinkle the green onion slices over all and serve. **Serves 4 to 6**