

**Box Contents:**

2/3 lb Sugar Snap Peas  
 1 bu Asparagus  
 1 bu Carrots  
 1 bu Red Beets  
 1 bu Fennel  
 4-6 Baby Artichokes  
 2 hds Lettuce

**Field Notes:** Last Monday morning brought us 28F, this morning we had a balmy 58F! It must be April in the Capay Valley. So far all the fruit and nuts are looking good, with the walnuts just flowering now. We've had a little frost nip on some row crops (you can see some white blotches on your pea pods) but not enough to cry about. If the early morning lows don't drop through this week we will start transplanting peppers at the end of this week. Rossy, our greenhouse manager will be thrilled to open up some table space as we keep pushing along with additional plantings of melons and tomatoes. Our first of two summer plantings of onions will go in next

week even as our overwintered onions are just starting to swell to size. Leeks are nearing their end, but expect them at least two more times before we bid them farewell until November.

**Sunday, May 4, 2008 Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour**

Registration for the 2008 Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour, which will take place on Sunday, May 4, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., is now open. This free, self-guided tour showcases 60 pesticide-free, water-conserving Alameda and Contra Costa County gardens that provide habitat for wildlife and contain 50% or more native plants. Visit <http://www.BringingBackTheNatives.net> to register or volunteer. Questions? Contact Kathy Kramer at [Kathy@KathyKramerConsulting.net](mailto:Kathy@KathyKramerConsulting.net) or (510) 236-9558 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.

**Sunday, May 11, 2008 Capay Valley Country Garden Tour**

Another self-guided garden tour will be held on Sunday, May 11, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The admission fee is \$10.00 (children are free) and tickets are available at the Capay Valley Vision office in Esparto. This is a fund raiser for several community non-profits in Esparto and the Capay Valley. For more information about this tour, please call 530-796-3464.

**Box Notes:** We are making our way into spring bounty! A couple of items making their seasonal debut are sugar snap peas and artichokes. You can eat the pods of sugar snap peas and you guessed it - they are delicious raw! Sugar snap peas are also great stir-fried in a hot wok. Baby artichokes can be eaten whole. For farm dinners, Trini trims the top quarter (to remove the spines), peels away some of the leathery outer leaves near the base, and steams whole for at least 30 minutes. It comes to a tender, delicious finish. Thank you for all the wonderful feedback about our asparagus. We think our asparagus is one of the tastiest around. Fennel bulbs are soothingly aromatic and sweet. Braise or steam slices with carrots and other veggies. Don't forget to eat your beet tops, and check out the beet salad recipe below. Good eats, everyone!

**Beet Salad II** from *Classic Armenian Recipes*, by Alice Antreassian and Mariam Jebejian

|                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>2 cups cooked beets, sliced</b>  | <b>1/3 cup vinegar</b>            |
| <b>2 tablespoons bread crumbs,</b>  | <b>1½ teaspoons mashed garlic</b> |
| <b>2 tablespoons lemon juice</b>    | <b>1/3 cup olive oil</b>          |
| <b>¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes</b> | <b>½ teaspoon salt</b>            |

**Garnish: ¼ cup minced parsley and ¼ cup minced scallions**

Place beets in a bowl and add half the vinegar to them. Stir gently and set aside, covered a few hours.

Mix together remaining vinegar, breadcrumbs, garlic, lemon juice, oil and seasonings to make a thick mixture.

Turn beets into a serving dish and spoon sauce on top. Refrigerate at least two hours. Then garnish and serve.

\*Note: This is a very simple salad to prepare in advance and is colorful with the contrast of deep red and the green and white garnish. An alternate method, and one with a more intense flavor, is to refrigerate the beets in the vinegar for 2 days, then spoon them into a serving dish, add sauce, garnish and serve.

### **Sugar Snap Boats** from *The Zuni Café Cookbook* by Judy Rogers

**12 ounces sugar snap peas**

**1-2 tablespoons unsalted butter or extra virgin olive oil as needed**

**A fresh basil leaf, a few fresh tarragon leaves, or a sprig of fresh chervil, chopped (optional)**

**Water**

**Salt**

String both edges of the snap peas-the inside curve will yield a real filament, the outside one may be less bothersome, but check for it anyway. Cut lengthwise in half, not along the seam, but across the rounded face: one piece will be a half-almond shape, and the peas and half peas inside will easily fall out. The other piece will look like a canoe with the bottom shaved off; its half-peas will stay attached to the pod.

Place the peas in a shallow pan that holds them in a single layer. Add the butter or oil and water to come to a depth of ¼ inch. Turn the heat to high, cover, and bring to a boil. Check every 15-20 seconds and add a little more water, but not enough to come to more than 1/8 inch deep now, whenever the pan gets close to dry. After a minute or so, taste a pea pod. They are best when they have just lost their grassy raw taste but still have crunch - depending on the peas, your burner, and the pan, plan on 2 to 4 minutes. Do not overcook.

Uncover, add the optional basil, chervil, or tarragon, and boil off nearly all of the water. Add an extra nut of butter or splash of oil if you like. Salt to taste.

### **Linguine with Asparagus, (Peas), Lemon, and Spring Herbs** from *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison

“A minimal but true pasta primavera. Should they come your way, stew a handful of peas or fava beans with the scallions as well. This dish can be made with butter or olive oil, or a mixture.” DM

**2 tablespoons olive oil**

**2 lbs asparagus, tough ends trimmed**

**1 large bunch scallions, including half of the greens, thinly sliced**

**Salt and freshly milled pepper**

**4 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted in a small skillet**

**2 tablespoons snipped chives, plus blossoms if available**

**1 lb linguine**

**2 tablespoons butter**

**3 tablespoons chopped parsley**

**2½ teaspoons grated lemon zest**

**Freshly grated Parmesan, optional**

**1 tablespoon finely chopped sage, thyme, or tarragon**

While water is heating for the pasta, heat half the oil and butter in a wide skillet over low heat. Add the scallions, lemon zest, thyme, and a few pinches salt and cook slowly, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, slice 3-inch tips off the asparagus, then slice the remaining stalks diagonally. When the water boils, salt it, add the asparagus, and cook until partially tender, 3-4 minutes. Scoop it out, add it to the scallions, and continue cooking.

Cook the pasta, then add it to the pan with some of the water clinging to the strands. Raise the heat and stir in the remaining oil, the pine nuts, parsley, chives, pepper to taste, and a few tablespoons cheese.

Divide among pasta plates, grate a little cheese over each portion, and garnish with a chive blossom.