

Riverdog Farm Veggie Box News

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Box Contents:

1 bu Asparagus
½ lb Artichokes
½ lb Snow peas
3 hds Baby Lettuces
2/3 lb Mei Qing Choi
1 bu Spring Onions
1 bu Chard
1 bu Oregano

Field Notes: A week of filtered sunlight and mild temperatures without rain gave the farm an opportunity to complete a lot of weed control and field prep work. This optimal farming weather made me wonder how Community Supported Agriculture, CSAs across the country are fairing. My Iowan sister told me that her family recently looked into becoming a member of a CSA. Their farm of choice, the farm closest to Des Moines where they live, required potential members to write an essay about why they wanted to become a CSA member. Unfortunately, her family didn't get a spot with that farm because they had limited space and I guess their reasons for wanting to be a CSA member of the farm didn't suit the farmers. She'll look

into other CSA options but they are limited in states with short growing season. The essay requirement seemed too restrictive to me. But, I guess some farms opt to do this when they can't provide all interested members with the weekly produce and when they want to ensure that a CSA subscriber is a good match for the farm. In California, where the long growing season allows farms to offer a steady stream of crop availability, more consumers have access to direct farm connections. The temperate climate, so conducive to agricultural productivity, is a reminder of why we came to California from the mid-west in 1990, over 20 years ago. Thank you for your commitment to Riverdog Farm, for supporting the employees who reliably and proudly do the daily work, and for helping the farm prosper for all these years!

Box Notes: This week's box is as green as the valley's surrounding hillsides. It represents spring at its finest. Sauté the spring onions and add the snow peas when the onions are almost done. Or sear the asparagus in a skillet and top with the sautéed onions. One of our daughter's first table foods was steamed chard ground up in a food mill. She loved it and has continued to be an enthusiastic greens eater. Asparagus tip: To maximize the use of the whole spear, try peeling with a carrot peeler the non-tip end of the asparagus. Remove the outer later of the spear taking off about 1-2 inches of the skin working from the cut end. This technique will make the whole spear more tender and works best on the fatter spears. Some of the snow peas are cosmetically challenged because of the series of super frosty nights that they recently withstood. You may notice some peas with small black spots; they are a result of the exposure to frost and are merely surface blemishes.

A reminder to return Riverdog Farm's cardboard boxes & coolers: We reuse the cardboard boxes and coolers used to deliver your produce and meats. Timely return of the boxes and coolers to the pickup locations helps us to keep from purchasing and using new boxes and coolers. Thank you for your cooperation.

Webpage Notes: For new subscribers, please note that the Riverdog Farm newsletters are archived back to 2007 on our website, www.riverdogfarm.com. You may find the recipes and field notes from past years. The current week's newsletter should be up by Wednesday morning. You may check the box contents there for your meal planning purposes. The veggie box contents listed on the website are subject to change depending on actual crop availability and produce numbers.

Almond Butter Available: We are now offering two 1-pound jar cases of Almond Butter. Each case is \$24. A full case of 12 jars is \$120.00. The almond butter is certified organic by CCOF. Please place your order by Friday prior to your delivery day. Send payment when you place your order. The almond butter is made with the 2009 nut crop. The jars have a beautiful new, pale yellow label designed by longtime Berkeley CSA site host Wilma Wyss. Almond butter will be delivered in small coolers, labeled with a sticker with your last name on it, to your CSA drop site.

Payment Reminder: The veggie box price is \$20 per week. Payment for May deliveries is due April 30, 2010.

Monthly payment for four weeks of deliveries in May is \$80.

If you have any questions about your account status, please email us at csa@riverdogfarm.com or call (530) 796-3802.

Please check the "Ordered-Through" column on the sign-out sheet. If the printed date in the column is earlier than the end of the month, your payment for the remainder of the current month is due by the printed date. Without timely receipt of payment, deliveries might be interrupted.

Riverdog Farm Meats: We deliver frozen pastured pork or chicken to your pickup location.

Pork Shares: 15 to 20 lb cases of assorted cuts at \$7 per pound

Smoked Ham: 2 to 5 lb steak-cut smoked ham at \$10 per pound

Smoked Bacon: 5 lbs of bacon is \$50

Pork Sausages: 10 lbs of assorted styles is \$65

Whole Broilers: Will be available again in May

Email csa@riverdogfarm.com for more information or to request a list of pork shares or whole chickens. Visit our *Hog Blog* (riverdoghog.blogspot.com) to view photos of our pigs.

Puree of Asparagus Soup by Martha Rose Schulman

From: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/04/health/nutrition/04recipehealth.html>

For the broth:

1 medium onion, chopped

4 garlic cloves, halved

Green of 1 large leek (optional)

Salt to taste

¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

2 quarts water

Trimmed stems from 1 pound asparagus, cut in 1-inch lengths

For the soup:

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

1½ quart asparagus broth (above)

2 medium-size russet potatoes, peeled and diced

1 leek, white and light green parts only, sliced and cleaned (optional)

1 medium onion, chopped

2 garlic cloves, peeled and halved

Salt, preferably kosher salt, to taste

Freshly ground pepper

A bouquet garni made with a bay leaf and a few sprigs each parsley and thyme

1 pound asparagus, woody ends snapped off, sliced about 1 inch thick, plus 12 whole stalks

Chopped fresh tarragon for garnish

2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice

Make the broth. Combine all of the ingredients for the broth, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer 30 minutes. Strain and set aside. Make the soup. Heat the oil in a large, heavy soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat, and add the leek, onion and ½ teaspoon salt. Cook gently for five minutes, stirring often, until the onion and leek have softened. Add the garlic, stir together for a minute, then add the potatoes, broth, bouquet garni and salt to taste. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, cover and simmer 30 minutes. Add the chopped asparagus (not the 12 spears), and simmer 10 minutes. Remove from the heat, and remove the bouquet garni. Puree the soup with a hand blender or, working in 1½ cup batches, ladle the soup into a blender. Place a towel over the blender, and pull it down tightly to prevent splashing. Blend each batch, then (whether you pureed the soup in the pot or in a blender) put through a medium strainer, pushing it through with the bottom of your ladle or with a spatula. Return to the pot. Heat through, and add the lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste. Meanwhile, steam the 12 asparagus spears for four minutes, until just tender. Refresh with cold water, then slice about ¾ inch thick. Ladle the soup into bowls, garnish each serving with a handful of sliced asparagus, sprinkle with tarragon and serve. Yield: Serves six