

Box Contents:

1 bu Asparagus
1 pt Strawberries
1 bu Spring Onions
2 lbs English Peas
1 hd Lettuce
1 bu Red Beets

Field Notes: All of the first rounds of Eggplant and Peppers are in the ground as well as the second round of tomatoes. By Tuesday we will be staking and setting drip lines in the first round of tomatoes, which look fantastic. While the Favas gave us one unexpected gift we will have to wait for 2008 for another round of Favas in the boxes. The peas are doing their best to make up for the shortage and our onion crop is sizing up well. We still have two plantings of peas in flower, so we hope to be picking peas until June. The weather has been great for working!

Event Announcements:

Riverdog Farm is a proud sponsor of the **Bring Back the Natives Garden Tour**, held Sunday May 6, 2007 from 10am to 5pm in Contra Costa and Alameda County gardens. The event is a free, self-guided tour of gardens featuring native plants. Registration is required. For more information, go to www.Bringingbackthenatives.net.

The Capay Valley Country Garden Tour, another garden theme event, will be held on Sunday May 13, 2007 from 11am to 4pm. This is also a self-guided tour. The admission fee is \$10.00. All proceeds benefit the Will Baker Native Plant Garden, an educational and enjoyable display of plants native to the Capay Valley region in the Nichols Park in Guinda. For more information about this tour, please call 530-796-3464.

Box Notes: The strawberries are courtesy of Terra Firma Farm (certified organic by CCOF), good friends of ours in Winters. Our English peas are doing very well; plump and packed with sweetness! Enjoy handfuls of these springtime favorites this week. The beautiful head of lettuce is the Batavian Crisp: the sweet, crispy heart of the lettuce is a treat. We at Riverdog Farm do our best to help you enjoy the grilling season. Our asparagus and spring onions always deserve room on your grill. Need an eye-catching bowl of salad for your table? Check out the awesome beet salad recipe below; it's a must! As always, don't forget to eat your beet greens, they are from the same family as chard and spinach. Our Beet supply should be strong for the next two months.

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

2 cups cooked beets, sliced in small, thin rounds **1/3 cup vinegar**
2 tablespoons bread crumbs, unseasoned **1 1/2 teaspoons mashed garlic**
2 tablespoons lemon juice **1/3 cup olive oil**
1/4-teaspoon red pepper flakes **1/2-teaspoon salt**
Garnish: 1/4 cup minced parsley and 1/4 cup minced scallions

- 1.) Place beets in a bowl and add half the vinegar to them. Stir gently and set aside, covered a few hours.
- 2.) Mix together remaining vinegar, breadcrumbs, garlic, lemon juice, oil and seasonings to make a thick mixture.
- 3.) Turn beets into a serving dish and spoon sauce on top. Refrigerate at least two hours. Then garnish and serve.

*Note: 1.) 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. 2.) 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.

Bright Green Spinach and Pea Soup from *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison

2 tablespoons olive oil, butter, or a mix
2 bunches scallions, including half of the Greens, coarsely chopped
1 small onion, thinly sliced
3 carrots, thinly sliced
1 celery rib, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon chopped marjoram or Basil or 1 teaspoon dried

Salt and freshly milled pepper
10 parsley sprigs
1 large bunch spinach, stems removed
1 cup shelled peas
Lemon Juice to taste
For garnish: crème fraiche, small toasted croutons, and calendula petals

Warm the oil in a soup pot and add the scallion, onion, carrots, celery, herbs, 1-teaspoon salt, and ½-cup water. Cover and stew for 5 minutes, then add 5 ½ cups water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Add the spinach and peas. Poke the spinach leaves into the soup and cook until they turn bright green, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and blend the soup in two batches until perfectly smooth. Taste for salt, season with pepper, and stir in enough lemon juice, starting with ½ teaspoon, to bring up the flavors. Serve immediately with a swirl of crème fraiche, the croutons, and the blossoms floating on top.

*Brief cooking preserves this utterly simple soup's vivid green. The color only lasts about ten minutes so organize yourself to serve the soup right away. Edible flowers, such as yellow calendula petals, make a cheerful garnish.

Gratineed Asparagus with Parmesan from *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking* by Marcella Hazan

1 lb fresh Asparagus

1/3 cup freshly grated

Salt

parmigiano-reggiano cheese

An oven-to-table baking dish

Butter for smearing and dotting the dish

Preheat oven to 450*.

1.) Trim the Asparagus and boil as follows:

Choose any pan that can later contain the trimmed spears lying flat. Fill with water and bring to a boil. Add 1-tablespoon salt for every pound of asparagus, and as the water starts boiling rapidly again, put in the asparagus. Cover the pan to hasten the water's return to a boil. When it does so, you can uncover the pan. After 5 minutes, you can begin testing the asparagus by prodding the thickest part of the stalk with a fork. It is done when easily pierced. Drain completely when done.

2.) Smear the bottom of a rectangular or oval baking dish with butter. Place the drained asparagus in the dish, laying them down side by side in partly overlapping rows, with all buds pointing in the same direction. Sprinkle each row with salt and grated cheese, and dot with butter, before laying another row on top of it.

3.) Bake in the uppermost rack of the preheated oven until a light, golden crust forms on top. Check after 15 minutes' baking. After taking it out of the oven, allow to settle for a few minutes before serving.

For the Strawberries...

If you are looking for a simple accompaniment, I would suggest making your own whipped cream. For this you will need a pint of heavy whipping cream, vanilla, and a touch of sugar. Pour the amount of cream you wish to whip into a mixer. Add vanilla and sugar as desired. Mix on low speed until fluffy. Avoid mixing too long, or you will end up with butter! Enjoy!!