

**Box Contents:**

1 lb Asparagus  
1½ lbs Fava Beans  
1 bu Carrots  
1 bu Spring Onions  
1 hd Cauliflower  
½ lb Broccoli  
1 hd Red Leaf  
1 hd Iceberg

**Field Notes:** This has been a spring of amazing weather extremes here at Riverdog. The few but intense winter rains partially filled the reservoirs for western Yolo County but did little for our deep soil moisture. Cache Creek and the canals it feeds are running full but the reservoirs will have no hold over for next year. Starting in mid April every North Wind day brings intense dust storms because it is so dry here already. The grass in the hills turned brown this week though the chamise is in full yellow flower. Two weeks ago we reported on damaging frosts and now we're looking at surpassing 100F this coming week. The warm nights have been a blessing as the summer veg has been making up for lost time and we've had delightful days in the 80s of

late. It looks like time to put the shade cloth on the greenhouses and hunker down for the summer if the projections are correct, though we'd really love a few more weeks of mild spring, especially for the asparagus. Two weeks later we are seeing the real damage from the frost. Peas in bloom did not set fruit, but there are other plantings on the way. The Santa Rosa Plums have dropped most of their fruit while the Royal Blenheim Apricots have skin issues but are not dropping much. Peaches and nectarines look good and the almonds lost less than half their nuts so we will still see a decent harvest. Tomato plants that were damaged in the greenhouse area (under thick row cover!) have re-sprouted and will become part of a later generation. Potatoes that went down in the frost are a little behind but look fantastic and we haven't had to hoe them yet. For experiencing two rounds of late frosts, we are in great shape. Other folks who grow fewer crops that were all damaged by the freeze are in a much tougher spot. First corn and beans are up and cruising, as are the first and second rounds of summer squash.

**Box Notes:** This is our last round of Favas for 2008, so savor them if they are your fancy. We expect the heat to bring them down. Double peel them at this stage but don't overcook them – just enough to turn them bright green. Don't feel compelled to par boil, just nick'em with your thumbnail and squeeze the bean out. A quick round of Fava shelling is a great way to chat with the family. We plan on nursing the asparagus along through the heat with a little extra water and hope to have another two weeks before the season ends. The cauliflower and broccoli will only be around for a few weeks also though we should have carrots into late June. The Iceberg lettuce is crunchy wet and sweet; enjoy its crispness. The Red Leaf is there for good balance so you don't feel as if you've accidentally wound up at a salad bar. The white spring onions are putting on some size but are still juicy and sweet; store them in the fridge. This planting will soon be shutting down and setting skins and will be dry onions by mid June.

**Steamed Cauliflower with Cayenne-Dill Yogurt Sauce** from *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison

**1 cauliflower, 1½ to 2 lbs**

**1 cup yogurt**

**½ cup yogurt cheese or sour cream**

**1 large garlic clove**

**Salt**

**2 teaspoons chopped dill**

**¾ teaspoon cayenne or hot paprika**

Cut through the stems and peel the florets apart. Trim ends and dice the stems. Chop any leaves into small pieces. Steam everything over boiling water until florets are tender but still a little firm when pierced with a knife, 5 to 8 minutes. (A whole head takes 15 to 20 minutes.)

Whisk the yogurt and yogurt cheese together. In a mortar, mash the garlic to a paste with ½ teaspoon salt; measure 1 teaspoon, then add it to the yogurt with the dill and cayenne. If you have time, refrigerate for 1 hour before serving.

**Sautéed Broccoli with Olive Oil and Garlic** from *The Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking* by Marcella Hazan

**1 bunch fresh broccoli**

**Salt**

**Scant ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil**

**1 teaspoons garlic chopped  
very fine**

**1 teaspoons chopped parsley**

Cut off the end tips of the stalks. Cut the stalks in two, or if quite large, in four, without detaching the florets. Wash thoroughly.

Bring 3 quarts of water to a fast boil. Add 1 teaspoon of salt and as the water returns to a boil, drop in the broccoli. Adjust heat to maintain a moderately paced boil, and cook until the stalks can be pierced by a fork, about five minutes. Drain at once when done.

Choose a sauté pan or skillet that can accommodate all the broccoli without crowding it too tightly. Put in the olive oil and garlic, and turn on the heat to medium. Cook and stir the garlic until it becomes colored a pale gold, then add the broccoli, salt, and the chopped parsley. Turn the vegetable pieces over 2 or 3 times to coat them thoroughly. Cook for about 2 minutes, then transfer the contents of the pan to a warm platter and serve at once.

**Braised Carrots with Parmesan Cheese** from *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking* by Marcella Hazan

"I know of no other preparation in the Italian repertory, or in other cuisines, for that matter, more successful than this one in freeing the rich flavor that is locked inside the carrot." MH

**1 ½ pounds carrots**

**4 tablespoons butter**

**3 tablespoons freshly grated *parmigiano-reggiano* cheese**

**¼ teaspoon sugar**

**Salt**

Peel the carrots, wash them in cold water, and slice them into 3/8 inch disks. The thin tapered ends can be cut thicker. Choose a sauté pan that can contain the carrot rounds spread in a single snug layer, without overlapping. Put in the carrots and butter, and enough water to come ¼ inch up the sides. If you do not have a single pan large enough, use two smaller ones, dividing the carrots and butter equally between them. Turn on the heat to medium. Do not cover the pan.

Cook until the water has evaporated, then add salt and the ¼ teaspoon sugar. Continue cooking, adding from 2-3 tablespoons water as needed. Your objective is to end up with well-browned, wrinkled carrot disks, concentrated in flavor and texture. It will take about 1 hour, during which time you must watch them, even while you do other things in the kitchen. Stop adding water when they begin to reach the wrinkled, browned stage, because there must be no liquid left in the end. In about 30 minutes, the carrots will become so reduced in bulk that, if you have been using two pans, you will be able to combine them in a single pan.

When done-they should be very tender-add the grated Parmesan, turn the carrots over completely once or twice, transfer them to a warm platter, and serve at once.

**Easy Elegant Asparagus** from *Moosewood Restaurant Cooks at Home* by The Moosewood Collective

**1 pound fresh asparagus**

**2 tablespoons melted butter**

**1½ tablespoons pine nuts**

**2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar**

Wash the asparagus and snap off the tough ends. Steam the asparagus or cook them in a small amount of boiling water until bright green and just tender. While the asparagus cook, toast the pine nuts. In a small bowl, stir together the melted butter and the vinegar.

When the asparagus are ready, drain them and arrange them on a serving platter. Drizzle the butter sauce on top and sprinkle with the toasted pine nuts. Serve immediately, and offer salt and pepper at the table.