Riverdog Farm Veggie Box News **July 1, 2008**
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Box Contents:
1 bu Dino Kale
1 bu Purple Carrots
1 bu Basil
3 hds Baby Romaine
1½ lbs Nantes Carrots
2 1/3 lbs Artic Snow Nectarines
2/3 lb Apricots

Field Notes: The smoke has cleared out of our valley and we're literally breathing easier. Thank you for your concerns and well wishes. Albeit smoky, we were never in any danger. But, it was a warm reminder that so many of you are connected to our farm. We're definitely thrilled to have our blue sky back, and the forecast for this week could not be more ideal: highs in the low 90s with clear skies and lows in the 60s. In the field we're getting ready to mow our potato plants and begin mechanical harvest of our summer potatoes. We're still waiting for the Big Harvest to begin, and in the meantime, we're busy hoeing and cultivating. Trickling into our packing shed are cucumbers, eggplants, and some early girl tomatoes, and there's also some nice gypsy peppers in the field that looks to be ready for harvest in a couple of weeks. Have a safe and fun holiday weekend!

Bulk Artic Snow Nectarines: Order a 10 lb case of sweet, white nectarines by Sunday for delivery next week. Each case is $25. Please mail your payment to our P.O. Box with your order. Thank you!

Box Notes: Our stone fruits are coming in strong. Artic Snow nectarines are an early season type that are typically smaller than other varieties, but they pack the sweetness. You'll find a mix of Tilton and Royal Blenheim apricots along with the nectarines. If the fruit is firmer than you prefer, give'em a chance to ripen on your counter. Beware, however, that the apricots will ripen from the inside, and the skin might not fully color in even when ready to eat. The bunched bumpy-leaved green is the Dino kale (also called Lacinato kale). It's a popular kale variety because of its dark color and full flavor. I usually braise the kale with garlic and chili flakes for up to eight minutes. We haven't been growing the purple carrots for too long, but it's quickly become my preferred variety. They're sweet, and really beautiful when cross-sectioned. We also have Nantes carrots this week. Sweet and delicious raw, they're also great for juicing! You'll find three baby romaine lettuces for your salad needs. Our basil makes wonderful pesto. The best tip I have received for keeping basil fresh is to trim the base of the stem, place the basil a glass of water, and store the whole apparatus in the fridge - I still say make the pesto!

Baked Goat Cheese with Garden Lettuces from *Chez Panisse Café Cookbook* by Alice Waters

½ pound fresh goat cheese
3 to 4 sprigs fresh thyme, chopped
½ sour baguette preferably a day old
1 teaspoon sherry vinegar
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, walnut oil, or a combination
1-cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 small sprig rosemary, chopped
1-tablespoon red wine vinegar
Salt and pepper
½ pound garden lettuces, washed and dried

Carefully slice the goat cheese into 8 disks about ½-inch thick. Pour the olive oil over the disks and sprinkle with the chopped herbs. Cover and store in a cool place for several hours or up to a week.

Preheat the oven to 300*F. Cut the baguette in half lengthwise and dry out in the oven for 20 minutes or so, until dry and lightly colored. Grate into fine crumbs on a box grater or in a food processor. The crumbs can be made in advance and stored until needed,

Preheat the oven to 400*F. (A toaster oven works well.) Remove the cheese disks from the marinade and roll them in the breadcrumbs coating them thoroughly. Place the cheeses on a small baking sheet and bake for about 6 minutes, until the cheese is warm.

Measure the vinegars into a small bowl and add a big pinch of salt. Whisk in the oil and a little freshly ground pepper. Taste for seasoning and adjust. Toss the lettuces lightly with the vinaigrette and arrange on salad plates. With a metal spatula, carefully place 2 disks of the baked cheese on each plate and serve.

Pesto (By the Food Processor Method) from *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking* by Marcella Hazan

For the Processor

2 cups tightly packed fresh basil leaves
2 garlic cloves, chopped fine, before putting in the processor
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons pine nuts
Salt

For Completion By Hand

½ cup freshly grated parmiggiano-reggiano cheese
3 tablespoons butter, softened, to room temperature
2 tablespoons freshly grated romano cheese

1½ pounds pasta

Briefly soak and wash the basil in cold water, and gently pat it thoroughly dry with paper towels.

Put the basil, olive oil, pine nuts, chopped garlic, and an ample pinch of salt in the processor bowl, and process to a uniform, creamy consistency.

Transfer to a bowl, and mix in the two grated cheeses by hand. It is worth the slight effort to do it by hand to obtain the notably superior texture it produces. When the cheese has been evenly amalgamated with the other ingredients, mix in the softened butter, distributing it uniformly into the sauce.

When spooning the pesto over pasta, dilute it slightly with a tablespoon or two of the hot water in which the pasta was cooked.

Freezing pesto: Make the sauce by the food processor method through to the end of Step 2, and freeze it without cheese and butter in it. Add the cheese and butter when it is thawed, just before serving.

Boiled Kale on Toast from *The Zuni Café Cookbook* by Judy Rogers

Generous 8 ounces kale
1-1 ½ cups diced yellow onions
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3-4 cups water
A pinch of dried red pepper flakes or a small dried chili (optional)
2 garlic cloves, slivered (optional)

Trim the kale of any discolored or damaged leaves, wash in several baths of cold water, and drain. Stack and roll up a few leaves at a time, then slice 1/8-inch thick.

Place the onions and oil in a 4-quart saucepan and set over low to medium heat. Cook, stirring once or twice, until the onions are translucent but still firm, about 3 minutes. Add the optional chili and garlic and kale, and stir as it wilts into a heavy mass, about 5 minutes. Add water to cover by ½ inch and bring to a simmer. Salt to taste. Cover and simmer until the kale is tender, but not mushy, about 30 minutes; add water if necessary to keep the kale just submerged. Taste for salt.

Grill or toast thick slices of crusty, chewy, peasant-style bread until golden or even slightly charred. Rub both sides with raw garlic while still hot. Float the toasts on the surface of the simmering kale, just long enough to soak up some "pot liquor," then transfer to wide soup plates. Generously garnish each slice of steamy bread with a few sloppy forkfuls of boiled kale, then finish with a drizzle of olive oil, shavings of Tuscan pecorino, or grated pecorino romano, and freshly cracked black pepper. Serve with a knife, fork, and spoon.