



# Artisans go green



**MOVING THE HOSE** to a new row, Alex makes sure all the vegetables get an equal share of water.

Linda Folkerts ■ Staff Writer

Discovering a new way to develop their artistic talents, a local couple dove into gardening. Alex and Lori Greene are finding amazing family and community benefits since embarking on the endeavor.

Lori, daughter of Marilyn and the late Bob Godwin, was raised in Savannah.

"I remember following my Daddy as he tilled our big garden. I'd step in his footsteps in the soft dirt as we went up and down rows and rows and rows," said Lori. "I developed a love for the soil as a very small girl."

When Lori graduated from Hardin County High School in 1982, she moved to Memphis to pursue college, where she studied photography and theatre.

"I played flute in high school. When I discovered night life, I stopped college, traded my flute for a Gibson guitar and sang in a band," said Lori.

Lori met Alex, who had moved from Nebraska to Memphis.

Alex said, "Music was my ticket off the farm in those days."

Lori laughed and said, "I

was your ticket back."

The couple were not farming in the 1980s however.

Alex and Lori both played in the band "Lorette Velvette," for 10 years, even traveling several times to Europe to tour.

"We were just friends during those years," said Lori.

As the reporter asked about more details about the band, Alex popped a CD in the player and a melodic jazz-styled female voice filled the air. He showed CDs with a younger version of Lori featured on the cover.

"Okay, now the secret's out," said Lori, with a smile. "I'm not just a farmer."

At that time, Alex also played in another band, "Reigning Sound," where he played organ and piano.

In the 1990s, Alex was making plans to complete his doctorate in anthropology with a journey to Belize, Central America.

"We began to see each other differently around then," said Lori. "We planted a small garden together that spring."

Their relationship grew like the vegetables, as the summer revealed they both enjoyed seeing the results of their labor from mother earth.

"I went to visit him while he was in Belize," said Lori,

"When he got back, we got married."

After their son, Henry was born seven years ago, the couple began to search for a house outside Memphis city limits.

"We wanted to live more sustainably, but we couldn't find what we were looking for," said Lori.

Their daughter, Hattie, was born five years ago. After that, the Greens searched Hardin County, where they found a 35-acre farm in the Olive Hill area. Downing Hollow Farm has its own creek and a location for a large garden. Alex and Lori met other family farmers living nearby.

"We wanted our children to have the benefits of growing up on a farm, as well as having access to city life and all it offers," said Lori.

Currently the couple homeschools their children, allowing them the opportunity to travel with their parents.

The couple records a new CD in New York once a year with the group "Kropotkins," and Alex plays regularly in Memphis with "Rolling Head Orchestra."

Music is the family's foundation of creativity. Add to their rhythm a 16-week gardening season, and you will see a

couple with talents to provide community supported agriculture (CSA).

They are growing organic vegetables and making them available to Hardin Countians so others can eat freshly picked items all season. (See article "Organic veggies available locally".)

The Greene's approach to

seed choices brings a colorful harvest of vegetables. Ordering from seed catalogs which provide heirloom seeds, lettuces may be any shade of green or burgundies; tomatoes may be yellow, red or even striped; melons may have a name never heard of in these parts.

With spunk in her personality to add surprises and beauty,

Lori puts together unique bags of food for those ordering vegetables from the CSA.

There are always possible mother nature problems, but as long as nothing catastrophic occurs, Downing Hollow will have active musicians playing out their tunes in the earth this summer, hoping for a hit song.

## Organic veggies available locally

Eating "fresh from the garden" foods can be difficult for those living in big cities. Most fresh foods in grocery stores have traveled hundreds or even thousands of miles.

At this time of year in Hardin County, people can be found planting their gardens, and will be eating from its harvest until fall's first frost.

Many health-conscious individuals desire to eat fresh veges but do not have the time or talent to grow them.

Local gardeners Alex and Lori Godwin Greene have found a way to get organically grown vegetables on the plates of those in big cities. This year they plan to branch out and deliver the quality food items in Savannah as well.

"Alex and I were both raised on farms," said Lori. "In the past few years, we've experimented with methods of gardening, using organic methods to keep insects down and for fertilization."

For several years, the couple, along with their children, Henry, 7, and Hattie, 5, have been working the land on their farm in Downing Hollow, in east Hardin County near Olive Hill.

Several other family farmers in the Olive Hill area combine their harvest with the Greene's. The produce is then delivered to Memphis Farmers' Market and a variety of restaurants weekly throughout the growing season.

It is called Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), where a purchase of produce supports local family farms. "It keeps rural farms rural and farmers on the farm," said Lori.

Alex and Lori are pleased to

be able to open the CSA opportunity to Hardin Countians.

Alex said, "Those who sign up can pick up their weekly share of organically grown produce straight from Downing Hollow Farm, only hours old, at the Uptown Restaurant, on Saturdays at noon."

For a weekly fee, and a 16-week commitment, purchasers are provided six to eight seasonal varieties of produce per week. All the produce is grown without the use of pesticides and no herbicides.

"In a time of increasingly industrialized food production, and the environmental and health problems that accompany it, it's good to know where your food is coming from," said Alex.

Seasonal produce includes such as sugar snap peas, broccoli, kale, English shelling peas, fingerling and Irish potatoes, fava beans, Italian chicory, baby beets, French breakfast radishes, Swiss

chard, heirloom lettuces, Asian greens, finocchio, heirloom tomatoes, cucumbers, Italian and French beans, wild blackberries, sweet bell peppers, hot peppers, mushrooms, corn, patty pan squash, herbs, zucchini, eggplant, okra, cantaloupe, watermelons and a surprise bonus of flowers, local honey and homemade breads and jams.

The first weekly share of local crops may include: lettuces, radishes, tomatoes, strawberries, shitake mushrooms, canned heirloom tomatoes.

"The growing season is just getting started. It'll pick up in the next few weeks," said Lori.

The season begins May 9 and runs until the end of August. Call 925-6083 or email [howdy@downinghollowfarm.com](mailto:howdy@downinghollowfarm.com) to sign up for Savannah CSA.

For more information, see [www.downinghollowfarm.com](http://www.downinghollowfarm.com).



**LOCAL FARMER**  
Lori Godwin Greene shows the many varieties of tomato seedlings she will raise using organic techniques.



**NAMING**  
the varieties of lettuce, Hattie, 5, learns about gardening from her parents, Lori and Alex Greene.

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