

As I sit here anxiously awaiting the birth of our first grandchild, due any day now, my mind wanders to the future. I look forward to lots of snuggle time with a newborn baby that shares my genes, and observing our younger daughter as she figures out this oh-so-important job of being a mother. I can only hope that I set what she feels was a good example for her, over the course of her growing-up years.

Being a gardener, I can envision sharing my passion with little Hannah, showing her how to prepare the soil, plant the seed, nurture it, then watch and wait as it grows. I know this is no guarantee that she will love gardening the way I do. My own mother has gardened her entire life, but I didn't embrace it until just seven years ago. Still, it was a part of my upbringing and even if I didn't take it up myself until later in life, I learned some very important things.

So many kids and even some adults have no idea where their food comes from. Oh, they know it grows somewhere, somehow, but they haven't been exposed to, nor taken the time to find out, just how it all works. I'll never forget the time, over 20 years ago, when one of my city-living co-workers asked as we passed a field of soybeans on the way to lunch, "Are those beans? Where are the beans? Underground?" Having grown up in a farming community surrounded by beans, as well as corn and wheat, it never occurred to me that people I knew wouldn't know the answers to the questions she asked.

I learned that gardening takes patience. Sure, you can buy plants instead of planting seeds, but even then you usually have to wait to see the fruits of your labors. Planting seeds not only requires a waiting period, it allows us to witness one of the greatest miracles of life. Just think about it – from seeds no bigger than a gnat, we get copious amounts of lettuce or spinach leaves. Cut the mature ones when they're ready and they will keep producing more.

A few years ago, I had some pink petunias come up volunteer, below my front porch railing flower boxes. Given that it had been two years since I'd grown pink petunias anywhere, and that

petunia seeds are like dust (250,000 or more seeds per ounce) and need light to germinate, it's amazing that even ONE of these miniscule little specks produced so many beautiful flowers.

These miracles go on right under our noses in gardens all over the world every single day. In fact, for those of us who have been a part of it for most of our lives, we almost take it for granted. I want Hannah to see it firsthand. So as soon as she is big enough to toddle out to the garden with Grandma, we'll play in the dirt together. I'll make sure she knows the joy of tasting freshly picked peas right out of the pod while standing in the middle of the garden. No cooking necessary.

And the flowers ... oh, the flowers. Hannah will have her own little cutting garden when she comes to Grandma's house. She can choose the ones she wants to grow and I'll show her how to care for them and cut them and make a bouquet for her momma. I'll introduce her to bugs and butterflies, earthworms and toadstools, and show her how it all works together for good. I hope she'll grow to feel like I do – that working hand-in-hand with God in the garden is one of the most satisfying and rewarding things she may ever do.

Read more at Kylee's blog, Our Little Acre, at www.ourlittleacre.com and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OurLittleAcre. Contact her at PauldingProgressGardener@gmail.com.