By Kylee Baumle

I love new beginnings. Whether it's a fresh sheet of paper just waiting for me to make a list on it, a new grandchild just starting to make her way in this world, or another season in the garden, it's like a breath of fresh air. Right now, it's that brisk, refreshing winter air that's filling me up with thoughts of the new year and what it will bring.

There's always the anticipation and wonder of the unknown – those unexpected delights that you didn't count on. (And some not so delightful, but we won't think about those just now.) Take 2012, for instance. At the beginning of the year, I didn't know that before 2013 arrived, there would be a little girl that would capture her grandma and grandpa's hearts like only grandchildren can do.

Nor would I know that by year's end, I would be putting the finishing touches on a book that will list me as one of its two authors.

The garden is one of the highlights of my life too, in spite of this past year being a challenge in many ways, no thanks to the weather.

It tested my mettle and patience to be sure and as the long, hot, dry summer wore on, I told myself that next year would be different. I vowed to garden smarter, not harder, no matter what the weather. I've said that for several years now and can't seem to do it.

Old habits are hard to break. Maybe if I make my resolutions public, I'll be held accountable and do a better job of keeping them. So here we go, here's how I intend to do it better in 2013:

• I will not buy any plant that has me catering to its unquenchable thirst, no matter how lovely or unique it is. I'm sick and tired of dragging hoses around day after day. Not only that, I pledge to

compost plants I already have that are more trouble than they're worth. (Ligularia, I'm talking to you!)

• I will get the mulch spread in the spring in a timely manner, so that I don't have a pile of it in my driveway for half the summer, even if I have to work after dark wearing a headlamp to do it. This is akin to the vacuum cleaner never being put away, giving the impression that I am in the middle of cleaning the house.

• I will keep my tradition of growing one new edible each year. I haven't yet decided what it will be in 2013 and I'm open to suggestions. In 2012, it was edamame and I know that I'll be growing that one for many years to come. It's easy and delicious.

• I will forgive myself for having the garden design skills of a non-gardener. My garden will never look like my mother's, which always looks like it belongs in the pages of Better Homes & Gardens. And that's okay, because I'm betting I get just as much enjoyment out of mine as she does hers.

• I will feed my plants. No one is worse than I am at keeping up with fertilizing the garden. I'm really, really bad at this. It's no wonder that my beets, onions, and carrots are punier than they should be. They can't feed me if I don't feed them.

• I will take more time to enjoy the garden instead of being a slave to it. Even though I enjoy weeding and deadheading, these don't count. If I somehow manage to keep Resolution #1, that should help me keep this one.

Here's to a good growing year for my fellow gardeners and me in 2013!

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