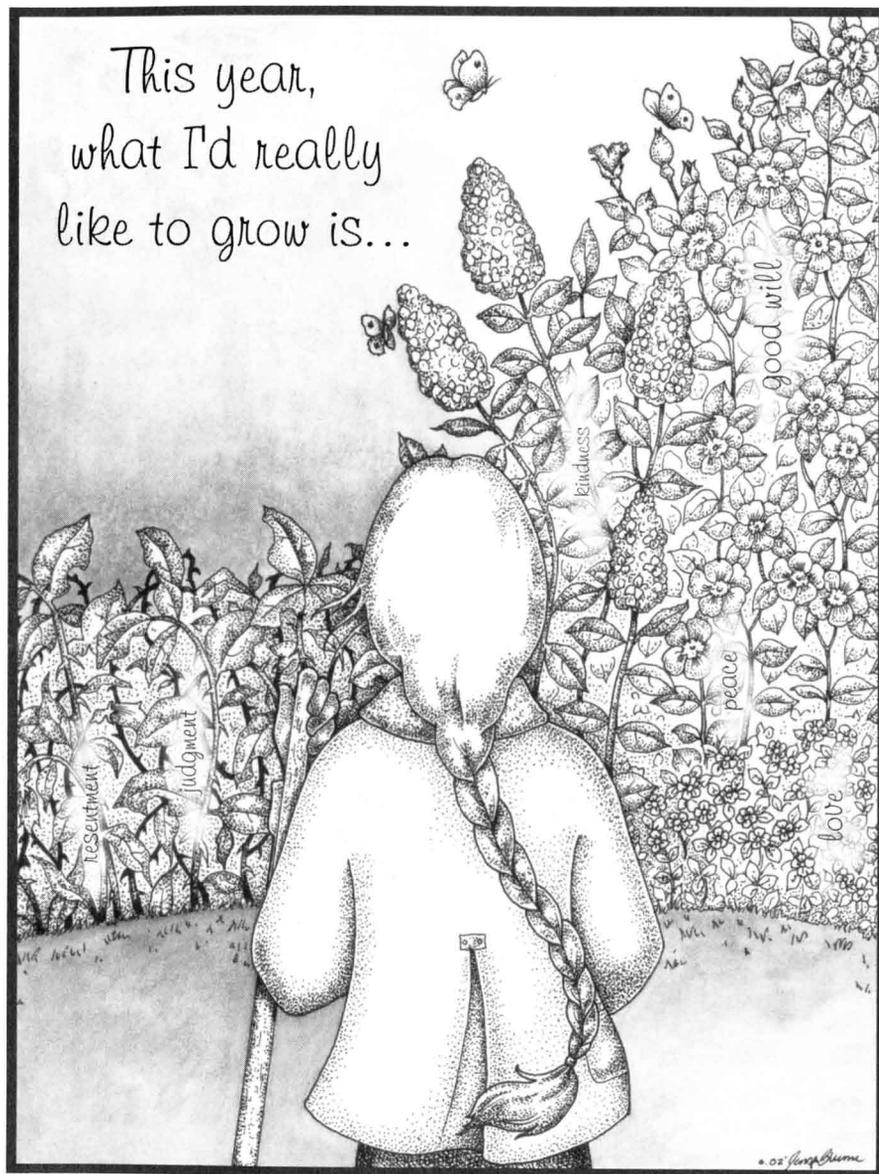


My New Year's Garden



By Lisbeth Ann Williams

s we grow older, New Year's Resolutions are apt to become more important to us. The accumulating years begin to press down upon us, bringing acute awareness of our mortality. So we reflect on the previous year's disappointments, consider those things that we have put off, and contemplate new possibilities—especially if we're gardeners. Indeed, once the Christmas decorations have been stored away and the seed catalogs start to arrive, I find myself starting to ponder . . .

I planted too much *anger* and *resentment* last year, so this year I will replace them with some *tolerance* and *patience*. I really could have used some more *enthusiasm*, too, so I will add a little extra this time and plant it next to the *hope*. I have always wanted to cultivate *laughter*, and I have the perfect spot right next to the *lighthearted expressions*.

Perhaps I should thin out the *tears*. I really don't need very many of those. And, you know, I never really liked the *frustration*—it's so invasive. I think I will replace it with *harmony*. I didn't care for that variety of *judgment*, either. It's casting a shadow over the *kindness*. It does complement the *blame*, but the other plants that are near it are not doing well. I will move them both to that far corner, and be sure to keep them pruned back. I should probably move the *criticism* back there, as well.

A person could never have too much *peace*, so I will order twice as much this year. I will add a couple more varieties of *love* and put them right here in the front, so that I can smell their fragrance whenever I walk past them.

There. Now I can place my orders. This catalog says that if I place an order of \$20 or more, they will send me a free *good will* bush. It would look so pretty, tucked in between the *peace* and the *harmony*. Now if spring will just hurry up and arrive.

I'd better not wait, though. I will start these seeds right away. I'll begin them inside, to give them—and myself—a good start on the New Year. ❖

I planted too much anger and resentment last year. This year I will replace them.