

Getting Ready for Winter Seed Sowingⁱ

Winter Seed Sowing starts on/after the Winter Solstice (December 21)

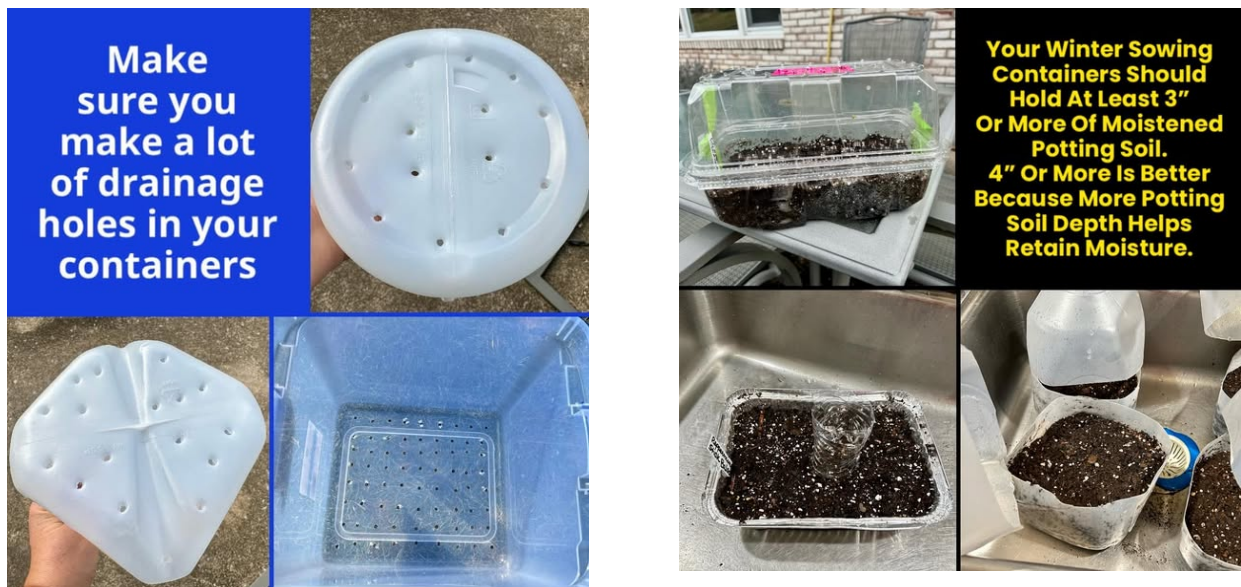
- **Start getting your containers.**

You can use any container that holds at least 3-4" of potting soil/mix and has at least 2" of headroom for the seedlings to grow.

It should be translucent enough to let light through. Milk jugs are not required.

Be sure to use a waterproof marker inside and out to identify your seeds.

Water jugs are \$1.49 at Safeway.



- **Preparing your containers**

Cut the milk jug all around about 4" from the bottom, leaving about 1" intact beneath the handle to act as a hinge for the lid.



Seed Selection

- Look at a seed catalog, most will have some sort of notation about a seed's germination requirements.
- Examples:
 - needs pre-chilling, needs stratification, will colonize, self-sows, sow outdoors in early autumn, sow outdoors in early spring while nights are still cool, sow outdoors in early spring while frosts may still occur, hardy seedlings can withstand frost,
- Your containers will be outside in snow and freezing temperatures so if you know your flower cannot withstand frost you cannot Winter sow. Instead, you can Spring Sow after the threat of frost is over.
- Some good seeds to select are - milkweed, coneflowers, daylilies, liatris, lavender, hellebores, asters, daisies, yarrow, coreopsis, catmint, baptisia.

- joe pye weed, culver's root, poppy, cosmos, lobelia, columbine, mountain mint, goldenrod, hibiscus, bluestem, salvia, lupine, and penstemon. You can google "perennials" for more suggestions. (Coneflowers, Black Eyed Susan, daisy's etc. will not bloom in the first year.)
- Fill your container with potting soil/mix and moisten well. (We use ProMix), Water well and let drain. If your container is "too wet" after watering, you don't have enough drainage holes. Remember, these are going to be outside getting rained and snowed on and melting will occur
- Sow your seeds, press small seeds into the top of the soil to make contact, and large seeds you can cover lightly.
- Tape your container shut with waterproof tape like duct tape. Mark with waterproof markers.
- With the winter sowing method, you do not move containers inside or protect containers in any way or cover as protection. If you're concerned about spring warmups followed by frost, this is how nature gives us the hardiest seedlings. Just winter sow your tender annuals/plants later in your winter a few weeks before your last frost.
- When spring arrives with warmer temps, and after germination, you'll have to add more ventilation and/or move containers to a shadier location -- or open containers and re-close at night as it's still cold.
- Winter sowing is a low maintenance/ high germination method -- it's not a "set and forget" method. The seeds will germinate, each when the conditions are right for that seed.

Preparing To Transplant Your Seedlings:

- In the Spring – You do not have to wait till the threat of frost is over.
- Transplant to garden when you have 2 sets of real leaves and/or seedlings are approx. 2" high. Seedlings are not meant to stay in their containers to grow large. This weakens them.
- Remove the top of the container (if you are still using it) and then push on the bottom of the container to remove the seedlings.
- Lay them on the ground.
- Cut the seedlings into brownie size squares and plant them into the garden.
- You can also pot them up if you prefer, but they need fresh soil and more of it to grow past the seedling stage. You can also use red solo cups for this.
- More information can be found on the Camelot Garden Club website under Resources/ Seasonal Tips.

ⁱ This information is taken from the Facebook group – Winter Seed Sowers – The Original. It is based on the germination method created by Trudi Greissle Davidoff. If you are a member of Facebook, you can join this group. There is a wealth of information on the WSS method.