



How to Winter Sow

In January, when the weather is typically consistently cold, winter sowing is an easy and fun way to germinate seeds that grow into seedlings ready for planting in the spring. Some seeds require cold, damp conditions to soften hard shells. By planting native seeds in modified jugs and containers, and placing them outside in the winter, you will create miniature greenhouses where the seeds are exposed to the elements, temperatures, and differing amounts of winter sunlight. The jug or container protection, helps produce seedlings ready for planting in spring.

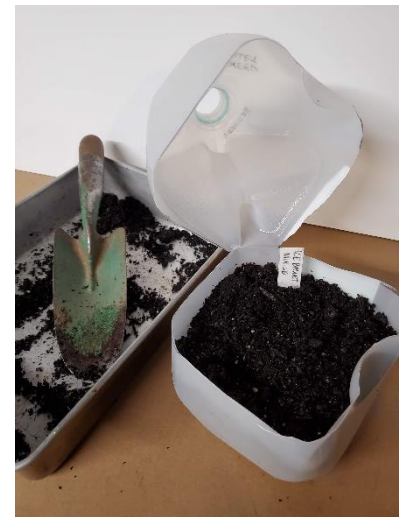
Look for helpful winter sowing videos on You Tube.

Materials you will need:

- Translucent plastic milk jug, clear or translucent drink container, clear plastic salad container etc.
- Potting mix: Do not use anything with added fertilizers or water retaining polymers. Do not use garden soil. If you have any questions about what to buy, ask your local nursery for help.
- Permanent Black Marker or Grease pencil
- Popsicle stick or plastic tag to use as labels to identify container contents
- Razor or Scissors
- Duct Tape or Clear Packing Tape
- Seeds



1. Discard plastic cap from milk jug. Make drainage holes in the bottom of the container for water to come into and out of the container. If you are using salad containers or candy containers, remove the flap lids from 2 containers. You will use 2 of the containers by 'sandwiching' them together. Make holes in both the top and then bottom of the 'sandwiched' container to allow water to come in, drain out and heat to be released from the top holes.
2. Draw a line around the milk jug right below from the handle, leaving about 1-1.5" space at the handle that will remain in place like a hinge. Then, using a razor or scissors, cut the milk jug at the line. PLEASE BE CAREFUL.



3. Fill the milk jug with 3-4" of moistened potting mix, that will sit right below the cut opening.
4. Plant the seeds & add a label in the inside of the container to identify the contents in the spring. Refer to the seed packet for planting depth. For milkweed, plant 7 seeds. For all other large seeds plant 2" apart. Small seeds, scatter. Rule of thumb – the larger the seed, the deeper it needs to be planted. PPS put together a short 'Native Seed to Winter Sow' list for common seeds that may be germinated by winter sowing that includes planting depths. For plants/seeds not on the list, investigate to see if cold stratification is required and what the recommended planting depth is.
5. Tape milk jug shut at the seam using duct tape or clear packing tape. Label Milk jug and place outside. **DO NOT** pick the milk jug up by the handle.
6. Place the containers outside in an area that receives morning to noon sun. **DO NOT** place them under any type of shelter because they need the moisture and sun from the environment. If there is a dry spell without rain or snow, check the containers to see if the soil is dry. Dry containers will feel lightweight. If so, place a cookie sheet on the ground and then fill it with water. Place the dry containers on the cookie sheet to absorb the water. Repeat.
7. Check back in the spring to find instructions on when to open the containers and how to transplant the seedlings. Until then, **HAPPY WINTER SOWING!**

