

Start seed using the Winter Sowing Method

Resource Page, Winter 2019

Winter sowing is an alternative method to indoor seed starting. The concept behind winter sowing is that the process allows for slower growth while toughening plants to harden up by spring. While not a method for everyone,

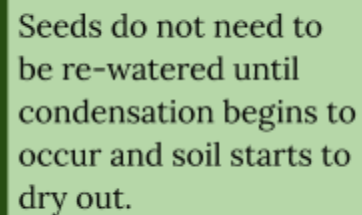


this seed starting method is ideal for those with limited indoor space and perfect for busy households that need a “leave and forget it” method of growing seeds. Using recycled containers which act as greenhouses, seeds are started outdoors with a layer of protection, and allow for a slower germination rate. Favorably, the containers act as a direct sow to ground method, and rain and melting snow keep the soil moist until spring.

Winter sowing is a great way to reuse and reclaim old materials (water bottles, milk jugs, and plastic containers) for a fun, winter hobby! Best of all, this hobby doesn't take up extra space inside your home, and it gives new life to ordinary trash!

Steps to get started:

1. Prepare the containers. Find clear plastic containers, such as 2 liter bottles and milk jugs. Throw away the caps from the jugs and bottles and remove labels. Wash the containers in hot soapy water, rinse and drain. Cut the container in half horizontally, but leave a 1" hinge. Use a pointed object to puncture 3/4-inch diameter holes in the bottom of each container for drainage.
2. Add the soil. Use packaged potting soil marked as "soil-less". Do not use soil mixes that are prone to harden, states "weed-free", contains fertilizer or water crystals. Pre-moisten with warm water until the soil is slightly damp so the soil will wick up the water.
3. Plant seeds as directed on seed packets. Seal containers with a strip of packing tape, and place in a secure, wind-proof location outside on the ground. Be sure to label each container correctly with seed type and quantity planted.
4. Now the fun begins! Bring containers outside in a sunny, but wind-proof location. Don't worry if your pots are covered in snow - the snow acts as an insulator and will provide the protection necessary for a successful start!
5. Transplant seedlings in spring as you would for any other seedlings you start indoors!



Seeds do not need to be re-watered until condensation begins to occur and soil starts to dry out.

To learn more, visit www.gardenworksproject.org