

# Winter Sowing

Have you ever wanted to garden during the winter? Winter Sowing is an easy and resourceful way to grow seedlings! You only need a few supplies and a small space outdoors. Here is some information to help you get started: a supply list, 10 steps to winter sowing, and a timeline for sowing different types of seeds.

## 10 Steps to Winter Sowing

**1//**Collect containers and wash them well.



**2//**If you're using a milk or water jug, use scissors or knife to cut the container in half along the middle section. This cut will be under the bottom of the handle (this will leave a depth of approximately 4 inches from the bottom of the container to the cut). Cut around the container, except for about an inch of plastic to leave the handle attached. This little piece of plastic will create a hinge between the bottom and top of the growing container.



*Livingstone Daisy seedlings in open milk jug, ready to be transplanted to the garden.*

### Supplies:

- Clear container(s) – reused plastic containers such as milk or water jugs (without lids), to-go containers from restaurants or even deep aluminum pans with plastic lids
- Potting mix (designed for container gardening)
- Optional: newspaper or coffee filters to line the bottom of the container
- Equipment for cutting a milk jug like scissors or hobby knife, and equipment for drainage holes like a drill, hot screwdriver, etc.
- Heavy Tape like duct tape
- Paint pen, grease pencil, or wax pencil for weather-proof labeling
- Seeds
- Location to set them outside. They need sun, rain and snow, as well as protection from wind and animals.

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## 10 Steps to Winter Sowing (continued)

**3//** Cut small holes in the bottom of container for drainage. (5-8 small holes). If it is a container like a milk or water jug, you will leave off the lid for air and venting. If it is a food container with a plastic lid, you will also need to add holes in the top for air and venting.



**4//** Optional: Add a coffee filter or piece of newspaper to bottom of container if you want to avoid slugs or if your drainage holes are large.

**5//** Add approx. 3-4 inches of potting mix (important to use “potting mix”) and water thoroughly.

**6//** Sow one type of seed at a time making sure to place the seed apart to give enough room to grow. Add about 20 –25 seeds to container. While the container should also be labeled on the outside, consider using a wooden stick or label on the inside to name the plants.

**7//** Once seeds are planted, use tape to connect the container back together. Use a weather-proof marker to label what seeds are in the container on top and bottom of container along with date of planting.

**8//** Place containers without their caps in a sunny or part sun/shade location. Check on them for moisture level. If they get too dry, open and spray with water, then seal back up. If they get too wet open and dry out, then tape back up.

**9//** As spring approaches, watch for the tiny seedlings to emerge! As the weather warms, you can open the container during the day and then close again during cool nights. Once they continue growing and you see two sets of leaves appear, leave in container to acclimate for 1 –2 days.



**10//** Transplant to garden, raised beds, or containers for the gardening season. Enjoy the efforts of your early gardening!



### Seed Sowing Timeline

#### December through February

- **Vegetables:** spinach, kale, other greens
- **Herbs:** thyme, oregano, parsley, catmint
- **Annuals:** pansies, ornamental kale, sweet pea
- **Perennial:** coneflower

#### March and April

- **Vegetables:** beets, broccoli, carrots, snow peas, lettuce
- **Herbs:** basil, cilantro
- **Annuals:** cosmos, zinnia, marigolds, tithonia

#### April

- **Vegetables:** tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, pumpkin and squash

This handout was created in partnership between AmeriCorps member Danae Losey and Extension Educator, FCS Patrice Powers-Barker. Amy Stone, Extension Educator, ANR reviewed the content. For list and links to references please visit [go.osu.edu/WinterSowing](http://go.osu.edu/WinterSowing)