

Winter Sowing

PLANT SELECTION

When searching for good winter sowing candidates, watch for these keywords: Reseeds, Self-sows, Hardy seeds, Requires stratification, Seedlings can withstand frost, Sow outdoors in late autumn or early spring, Plant as soon as the soil can be worked. Consider the following.

- **Vegetables** (Beets, Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Cauliflower, Cabbage, Carrots, Lettuce, Onions, Leeks, Scallions, Parsnips, Peas, Radish, Spinach)
- **Herbs** (cilantro, mint, parsley, thyme)
- **Annual Flowers** (Bachelor's button, Breadseed Poppies, Calendula, Forget-me-not, Pansy, Snapdragon, Stock, Sweet Alyssum, Viola)
- **Annual Foliage** (Bells of Ireland, Dusty Miller, Flowering Kale, Giant Mustard, Ornamental Cress, Swiss chard)
- **Perennial Plants** (Baptisia, Butterfly Weed, Black-eyed Susan, Delphinium, Garden Phlox, Gentian, Helianthus, Heliopsis, Heuchera)
- **Native Plants** (Anise Hyssop, Blazing Star, Blue Vervain, Cardinal Flower, Joe Pye Weed, Milkweed, Penstemon, Prairie Clover, Yellow Coneflower)

STEPS

Start your winter sowing project between February and March for most seeds. Some native and perennial plants may need to start sooner in December or January.

- Clean & sterilize container
- Cut container 4-6 inches from bottom; only go around $\frac{3}{4}$
- Create drainage holes in the bottom & air vents in the top if necessary
- Fill with potting soil 1-2 inches below rim
- Plant seeds & pat gently to increase soil contact
- Close container, remove cap (if applicable) & tape shut
- Label container

Put containers outside in a full to partly sunny location that is protected from wind. Make sure the containers are anchored and won't blow away or tip over. The seedlings are ready to divide and transplant into the garden when the soil in the garden is ready to be worked and the seedlings have at least 4 true leaves.

LEARN MORE WITH THESE RESOURCES

PRO-TIP: Google "site:edu **Winter Sowing**" (or site:gov) for research-based advice

- ❖ **University of Minnesota Extension** <https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/extending-growing-season>
- ❖ **University of Illinois Extension** <https://extension.illinois.edu/news-releases/winter-seed-sowing>
- ❖ **Penn State Extension** <https://extension.psu.edu/starting-seeds-in-winter>

CLASS NOTES

APPLYING THE KNOWLEDGE

What kinds of plants would you grow using Winter Sowing?

What kinds of containers are available to you?

Where would you put your Winter Sowing containers while the plants grow?