



## Windom Neighborhood Environment and Land Use Committee Winter Seed Sowing Information Sheet

---

### **What is winter seed sowing and how does it work?**

Many native seeds need cold stratification to sprout. This is a built-in mechanism that allows native seeds to survive and flourish. Winter sowing allows the cold weather to jump-start these seeds in an environment that acts like a green house. Each container should have a hole or multiple small holes on the top and the bottom of the container, allowing for snow & rain to add moisture and drain if necessary. Containers should be placed outside in the snow, partial sun. When spring approaches, the lids can be opened during warm days and closed for cold evenings.

Plant the sprouts after the last frost, usually mid-May. You may consider covering the planted sprouts with a mesh cover, inverted metal basket, etc., as the critters love these new sprouts! Typically, native plants need time to really establish themselves. Depending on the plant, it can be three years or so to reach maturity. As the old adage goes, at first they sleep, then they creep, then they leap.

### **Steps**

Preparing the container:

Poke drainage holes in the bottom with an opening near the top. For milk jugs, remove & discard the cap, cut jug in half horizontally. Leaving a small connector near the handle.

Sowing the seeds:

Add 3-4 inches of moist potting soil and plant your seeds according to their recommended depth and spacing needs. Remember to label your containers with the type of plant seeds. If using a milk jug, tape the container shut on the horizontal cut. Keep the soil moist.

Transplanting in spring:

When daytime temperatures reach about 50-60 degrees, remove the tops during the day and replace the tops at night. Once the seedlings have two sets of true leaves, move them to the straight to the garden. Or they can be transplanted into small pots to grow larger and stronger before planting in the yard.

For more information and resources, go to [www.windommpls.org](http://www.windommpls.org) to download the Native Plants: Why and How to Grow Them Information Sheet.