

Lady Fern Farm

& The Winter Sow Method

The Winter Sow Method involves sowing seeds in modified milk jugs or other containers and setting them outside for the winter. As temperatures fluctuate, the seeds go through a natural stratification process of several freeze/thaw cycles which encourages germination. The milk jug acts as a mini-greenhouse, protects the seeds/seedlings and facilitates a robust root system.

Soil

Use organic potting mix. Do not use topsoil or garden soil - it will be too heavy and not retain enough moisture to germinate. Avoid potting mix with fertilizer as it can damage seedlings.

Light

Place your containers in an area that gets sun through the winter. Once seedlings germinate, they need part shade - under a tree for example

Water

The opening in the container should allow enough snow and rain to keep the moisture balanced. A winter with little snow or rain fall will require you to check the jugs periodically and water as needed. In the spring you will need to check and water as needed.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

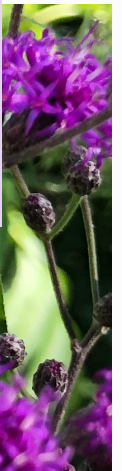
- Containers: semi transparent with a removable lid or opening and allow a minimum 3" soil depth. Milk jugs!
- Cutting Instrument: scissors or box cutter
- Tool for drainage holes: drill, box cutter, scissors, soldering iron or glue gun
- Duct tape
- Organic potting soil
- Marking pen and labels
- Water - either watering can or sink with spray nozzle

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Let's Go! Winter Sow!



- Toss the cap. Line up your supplies. Think about baby plants!
- Create drainage holes in the bottom using either a drill, box cutter or hot glue gun. You need 10 or so holes.
- Cut the milk jug around the middle. Start just below the handle, stop at the label. Go back to the handle and cut the other direction stopping at the label again. This creates a hinge for your container.
- Fill the bottom with at least 3" of potting mix and sprinkle in your seeds. Top with a light layer of soil if necessary.
- Label the container both inside and out - unless you love a challenge in the spring.
- Water! Either using the spray nozzle of your kitchen sink or a watering can. Give it a good, yet gentle drink.
- Close the container and seal with duct tape to create your mini greenhouse. Stick it out in the snow and wait until spring!



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