

Winter Sowing Tips from The Stamford Garden Club Hort. Team!

MOST IMPORTANT: Do not carry the container by its handle when planted. Carry from the base – learned by experience!!!

Make drainage holes before cutting container. You don't have to make additional holes at the top of the milk container. But do make a hole on each side about 1" from the bottom. The milk label can stay on. If using another type of container, do make airholes on the top, bottom, sides. You have to release the hot air or else it cooks.

Tape: Use shorter strips, about 6". To have more control, put one on each side going up/down to hold top of jug to bottom. Then seal the hinged opening by going around, still using short strips. Try to cover that seam completely.

After planting place the jugs wind free sunny area in your garden. Make the containers are able to drain. Another method is to tie the handles together or put a stick through several handles.

When it begins to warm up, lift the containers, **FROM THE BOTTOM** to see how heavy they are. Do they need to be watered? If so, fill a dishpan with 1" – 2" of warmish water and set the container into it. Let soak until top looks moist. Do not try to water through the top opening – you can disturb the seeds.

When the seedlings have emerged with the warmer weather, undo the tape that is encircling the container and lift the lid just a bit at first. As the days get warmer, bend the top back. You might have to put the lids back in place at night. If frost is predicted and the seedlings have emerged, close the lid if it has been lifted, & cover the containers with a blanket or towel.

The very first set of leaves to emerge are seed leaves, known as cotyledons. By the time two sets of true leaves appear, it is time to transplant, either into a pot or plant in the ground. As the milkweed seedlings have tap roots, transplanting might take place a bit earlier, after the first set of true leaves. Watch carefully

With annuals & tender perennials, one can still use this method. Just start later in the year - April. If frost is predicted, remember to throw a blanket over the containers. This applies to annuals & tender perennials whether the seeds have emerged or not. These seeds are not hardy.

Try some unusual annuals. Even vegetables can get a head start using this method. (click on link below, then click on seed lists, then on Vegetables & Herbs).

Great resource: www.wintersown.org

CARDBOARD TUBES:

Re: *Asclepias* varieties

All have tap roots. Sometimes it takes over a year for germination/flower.

The paper towel/toilet paper tube is an experiment. Please try the regular Winter Sowing method as well and make sure to scatter the seed apart from one another. It will make it easier to transplant.

Fill milk jug with 3"-3 ½" of moistened soil. Cut toilet paper tubes/paper towel tubes the same measurement. Sink 9 tubes into the milk jug, plant 2 -3 seeds in each tube. Cover lightly. Gently pat soil down. If more than one seedling germinates in the same tube, the weaker stemmed ones will be cut out – not pulled out. This will be done after the true leaves appear. (First set of leaves are cotyledon which are seed leaves.) The next set will be the true leaf of the seedling. This is an experiment. I have read of someone who used this method but only filled the tubes – not the whole container. She failed – but might be bad seed or not being sunk in a jug filled with soil.