

# WINTER SOWING

## What is Winter Sowing

- Planting seeds in the winter to use the cycles of the cold season that native plants need to grow

**Native Plants** (especially straight species) **provide the most benefit to wildlife and our ecosystem**

## Where to find native seeds

Audubon Society  
OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA  
Native Plant Nursery at Beechwood



PRAIRIE NURSERY



- Local and online Nurseries like Audubon Society at Beechwood, Prairie Moon Nursery, Prairie Nursery, Native American Seed
- Find **FREE** Seeds though Facebook groups and local native seed swaps
  - Pittsburgh Area Native Plant Group
  - Native Plants on a Dime
- Gather from gardens or private land where you have permission
  - Gathering seeds from public lands and parks is generally not allowed
- Here is a list of companies that sell native seeds
  - [www.westernpa.wildones.org/western-pa-native-plants/](http://www.westernpa.wildones.org/western-pa-native-plants/)

See handout from


**Sandia.com for Steps to  
Make Mini Greenhouses for  
Winter Sowing.**






## How to care for baby plants when they grow in the Jug

- Seedlings often germinate around April and May
  - Open the container in warm weather so they don't roast and check their moisture level often
  - If cold returns, recover and retape
- Make sure the jug is in the sun or shade when they start to grow based on the plant's preference

## How to plant seedlings (baby plants) in your garden

- Plants are ready for transplanting when:
  - they are 2-3 inches tall or have 3-4 true leaves
- You can replant into larger pots so their roots can grow stronger before you plant them in the ground or you can plant them directly into an area of ground that has been prepped to grow new plants (loosen soil and remove weeds and grass around the plant)
- Make sure the location of pots or plants are in proper sun/shade and moist/dry conditions 

- Step 1:** Remove plants from the jug and gently detangle the roots from other plants.
- Step 2:** Dig a hole where you want to place the plant. 
- Step 3:** Work the soil around the hole to make it loose and fluffy so the roots can easily grow into it.
- Step 4:** Gently hold the baby plant with the same amount of stem above the soil as it grew in the jug.
- Step 5:** While gently holding the plant, add loose soil back into the hole, until the hole is filled.
- Step 6:** Gently press the soil around the plant. 
- Step 7:** Make sure that the baby plant gets rain or gently water the baby plant every day for 2 weeks.
- Step 8:** After 2 weeks, the roots will be stronger and the plant will only need to be watered once a week until it is about a foot tall, then normal rainfall should be enough. 
- Step 9:** You can gently water the plant at any time when the weather is especially dry or if the plant starts to look droopy.



# WINTER SOWING



1

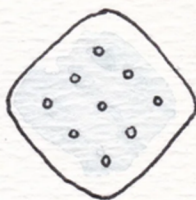
RECYCLE JUGS OR CONTAINERS

CLEAN, REMOVE CAP

KEEP CAP FOR LABELS!



ADD 1/4" HOLES TO BOTTOM OF JUG OR CONTAINER



Keep SOIL MOIST



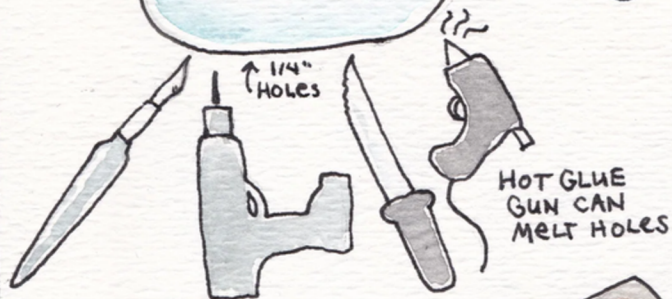
SPRAY BOTTLE TO MIST JUGS IF THEY START TO DRY OUT

2

SLICE JUG IN HALF

## WINTER SOWING

- vegetable seeds
- NATIVE PLANT SEEDS GOOD FOR STRATIFICATION



HOT GLUE GUN CAN MELT HOLES

1/4" HOLES



ADD WATER + MIX

POTTING SOIL

4-5" OF SOIL

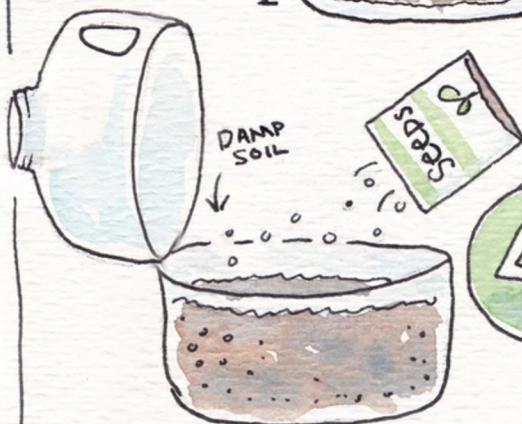
4"

3



4-5" OF SOIL SPACE

4



DAMP SOIL

ADD SEEDS, DON'T OVERSOW!  
PLANT AT DEPTH LISTED ON SEED PACKET

ADD LABELS INSIDE



TUCK TOP INTO BOTTOM OR USE DUCT TAPE

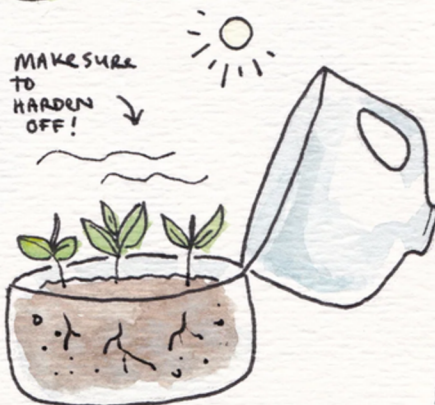


LEAVE OPEN

5

Mini GREENHOUSE PUT IN FULL SUN OUTSIDE

MAKESURE TO HARDEN OFF!



6

OPEN IN SPRING TO HARDEN OFF SEEDLINGS FOR SEVERAL DAYS TO A WEEK. THEN GENTLY SEPARATE + TRANSPLANT IN GARDEN