**Winter Sowing**

Around 2003, Trudi Davidoff (Long Island, NY) developed a system she called Winter Sowing. [www.wintersown.org](http://www.wintersown.org). From January through March, seeds are set outside in mini-greenhouses made from recycled plastic containers. Seedlings sprout in the early spring and grow outdoors, becoming sturdy plants, and are ready to transplant into the garden. Winter Sowing eliminates the need for sterilized containers, special seed starter soil, grow lights, heat mats and indoor space. Many annual, perennial and biennial flowers and vegetables can be winter sown.

**Making a Mini-Greenhouse from a Plastic Bottle.**

Discard the cap. Clean the container with soapy water then rinse well. Take a small sharp knife and with a twisting motion put 5 to 8 holes in the bottom for drainage. (Fig.1). Measure 4 inches from the bottom of the container and draw a cutting line around the container. Using a small sharp knife make a hole on the line. Then use the knife or scissors and cut all the way around. (Fig. 2) With the top and bottom lined up, use a hole punch to put a hole in top and bottom in order to thread a twist tie through to make a hinge. (Fig. 3)

**Sowing the Seeds**

Fill the container with 3 inches of potting soil, water the soil and let it drain. Sow seeds. Cover with soil or leave uncovered depending on the seed packet directions. Water gently. Put a plant label in the soil or label a piece of duct tape placed on the outside of the container. Permanent Markers work well but may fade. Oil based Paint Pens will not fade in light or weather. (Fig. 4) Close the lid and tape the top and bottom closed with duct tape. Set outside in the sun, exposed to snow and rain but protected from high winds and four legged critters. (Fig. 5)

**Care of Seedlings**

Around the end of March, start checking for sprouted seedlings. (Fig. 6) Keep the seedlings moist!

Open the lid on warm days & close them up at night. After all danger of frost, remove the lid.

If there are too many seedlings, when there are two sets of leaves, trim some out or transplant into individual pots. At the recommended transplanting time put the mature seedlings into the garden.
Some Plants that can be Winter Sown in Rockland County

**Annuals:** Ageratum, Alyssum, Calendula, Cleome, Cosmos, Datura, Flowering Tobacco, Four O’Clocks, Portulaca, Sunflower, Sweet Pea.

**Perennials:** Catmint, Columbine, Coneflower, Dianthus, Foxgloves, Hellebore, Hollyhocks, Poppies, Rudbeckia, Snapdragons, Viola, Yarrow.

**Herbs:** Basil, Chives, Dill, Marjoram, Mint, Oregano, Parsley, Sage, Thyme

**Vegetables:** Beets, Broccoli, Cabbage, Chard, Kale, Carrots, Celery, Lettuce, Onions, Radish, Tomatoes*, Tomatillos*, Cucumbers*, Squash*, Melons*, Pumpkins*

Very hardy plants can be started in January, but less hardy plants (*) should be started in early March.

Neither Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell University nor any representative thereof makes any representation of any warranty, express or implied, of any particular result or application of the information contained herein or regarding any product. It is the sole responsibility of the user to read and follow all product labeling instructions and to check with the manufacturer or supplier for the most recent information. Nothing contained in this information should be interpreted as an express or implied endorsement of any particular products or criticism of unnamed products.

The information on pest management for New York State contained in this publication is dated October 2009. The user is responsible for obtaining the most up-to-date pest management information. Contact any Cornell Cooperative Extension county office or PMEP (http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/), the Cornell Cooperative Extension pesticide information website. The information herein is no substitute for pesticide labeling. The user is solely responsible for reading and following manufacturer’s labeling and instructions.

Prepared by Donna DeSousa

Hort 235 1/2021