



## Winter Sowing of Milkweed Seeds

Keep your seeds in the refrigerator until you are ready to plant.

### Supplies:

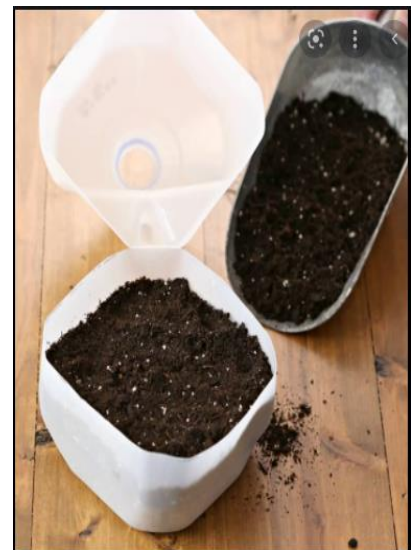
- Gallon plastic jug – as in milk jug, water jug – clean and dry – no cap
- Something sharp to poke holes – drill bit, scissors, pick
- Sharp scissors or box cutter to cut jug
- Moistened potting soil – extra vermiculite/perlite a plus!
- Milkweed seeds
- Spray bottle with water
- Shipping tape or duct tape



Image by Gardening Know How, via Liz Balesder

### Steps:

1. In the bottom of the jug, poke 20 small drainage holes of about 1/8" diameter
2. Cut through jug on 3 sides just below the handle, leaving the side with the handle attached to bottom, with lots of height for long healthy roots to grow
3. Add moistened potting soil to the bottom of the jug to just shy of the height of the cut – if you have extra vermiculite or perlite around, add some.
4. Sow all the seeds evenly on top. It is okay if the seeds are close together. Most native plants do better when planted thickly.
5. Press seeds into the soil, but don't cover them. They need light.
6. Mist with water to moisten seeds.
7. Tape the container back together with duct tape or shipping tape.
8. Place outside along a south facing wall. Make sure there is no roof overhang that would prevent snow and rain from getting in the bottle top. The area must drain well. Do not let the pots sit in water or the plants will rot.
9. In spring, when there are 4-6 sets of leaves on the plants, take the top off of the jug. If it is dry outside, your young plants will need to be watered, both when they are still in the jug and after they are planted in the garden.
10. In early summer, you can transplant your young plants into your flower garden!





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The milk jugs protect the seeds and young plants from predators. They allow the seeds to germinate naturally. Milkweed seeds need light and freezing and thawing to germinate.

Growing milkweed this way will help the plants be strong and hardy. They will probably not flower their first year if grown this way, but they will be healthy and ready to flower next year and for many years to come.



### Butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Perennial flower, about 2' tall, blooms most of the summer, while it prefers sandy soils and doesn't like too much moisture, it is easy to grow in good garden soil.

**Benefits:**

**Attracts:** Butterflies & Hummingbirds

**Larval Host:** Grey Hairstreak, Monarch, Queens – this means that these 3 butterflies need milkweed to survive

Nectar source for all pollinators, and designated of special value to Native Bees, especially Bumble Bees. Bumble bees have disappeared from the New England states and their numbers have fallen drastically in New York state. They need all the help we can give them.

Once established, it lasts for years, becoming thicker each year.

### Links to basic how-to videos:

Part 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YyqqtR0174>

Part 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VMLrbqBauU>

