

EASY START SPECIES:

The below will germinate without pre-treatment and just need light, moisture and heat:

many *Symphyotrichum* spp. - Asters
Helenium autumnale - Sneezeweed
Monarda fistulosa - Wild Bergamot
Pycnanthemum spp. - Mountain Mints
Oenothera biennis - Common Evening Primrose
Apocynum cannabinum - Dogbane
Andropogon gerardii - Big Bluestem
Bouteloua curtipendula - Side-oats Grama
Sorghastrum nutans - Indian Grass

BREAKING DORMANCY:

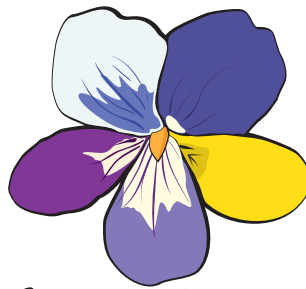
Many native seeds have built-in dormancy mechanisms that prevent them from germinating until conditions are favorable. Many species require a period of cold, moist stratification before they will sprout. This pre-treatment initiates the germination process. During stratification, seeds are mixed with a moistened inert material, such as potting soil, and stored in cold conditions for a specified period before being moved to a warmer environment for germination.

There are three main methods that you can use to give your seeds the best chance of sprouting:

Artificial Stratification - Using a refrigerator to mimic the process and start seeds at anytime.

Winter Sowing - A natural stratification process that is more controlled, but still depends on nature to do the majority of the work.

Direct Sowing - Planting seeds outside in the desired location in the fall and letting nature have full control.



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Getting Started WITH NATIVE SEEDS



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ARTIFICIAL STRATIFICATION:

Use your refrigerator to closely monitor your seeds. This method also works great for seeds that require multiple periods of stratification.

1. Choose your medium

- Use a clean, sterile material like damp sand, potting soil, plain paper towel or coffee filter.

2. Moisten

- Add water until the medium is damp but not soaking. Wring out any excess water.

3. Bag and label

- Add medium to a zip-up plastic bag and place seeds on top, pressing lightly.
- For paper towel/coffee filter loosely fold over once, allowing you to monitor them.
- Label the bag with the seed type, and start date.

4. Refrigerate

- Place the bag into the refrigerator for the time specified on the seed packet.

5. Monitor

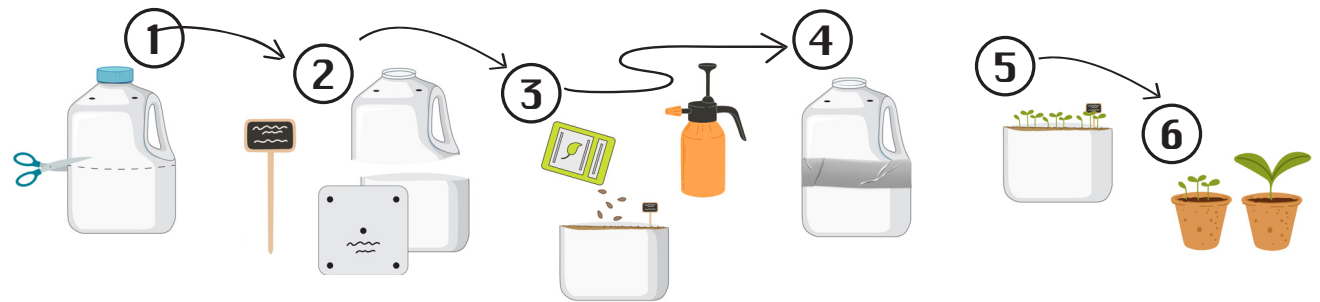
- Check seeds weekly for mold, sprouts and consistent moisture.
- Replace paper towel or coffee filter every week, remembering to not over moisten.

6. Plant

- Once recommended period has passed, or if the seeds sprout early, plant them up.

WINTER SOWING (NATURAL STRATIFICATION):

Allow nature to do the majority of the work! Best to start seeds around winter solstice.



1. Prepare the container

- Regardless of the container that you are using, it should be clean and washed.
- Next, take your drill, knife or soldering iron and create holes in the top and bottom of the container to help with watering and drainage. Remember to remove the cap for additional drainage.

2. Label!

- Add a label to your seeds, we suggest adding both an inside label as well as writing on the outside. Many markers fade in the weather, and its helpful to have two options to save later frustrations.

3. Add the soil & seeds

- Pre-moisten your soil before you add it to your container.
- For winter sowing, ideally, you want at least 3" to 4" of soil in the bottom of your container.
- Sprinkle the seeds over the surface and very lightly tamp them down with you hand.
- For larger seeds sprinkle a very thin layer of soil over the top (better too little than too much).
- Use spray bottle and add slightly more moisture to help the seeds stay in place.

4. Seal & wait

- Close up your container by taping up the seam on the milk jug.
- Place the milk jug in a sunny spot with access to the elements (but where it will not blow away).

Tip: Watch that they don't get too hot on sunny days, especially in the spring.

5. Watch them grow

- As your seedlings begin to grow and temperatures warm up, make sure to keep an eye on your seeds. They might be getting too much sun. Move them to a lightly shaded area if you think this may be the case.
- Once the seedlings are older, start opening the top of the container during the day time, to help ventilate and help with heat control. This will also harden the seedlings.
- Close the container back up at night if temperatures drop too low. Once temperatures remain above 50 degrees you should be safe to leave the container open.
- Make sure that the seedlings are not drying out - add additional water if needed.

6. Pot/plant them up!

- Once your seedlings have outgrown their container or have their second true set of leaves they are ready to pot up or plant out!