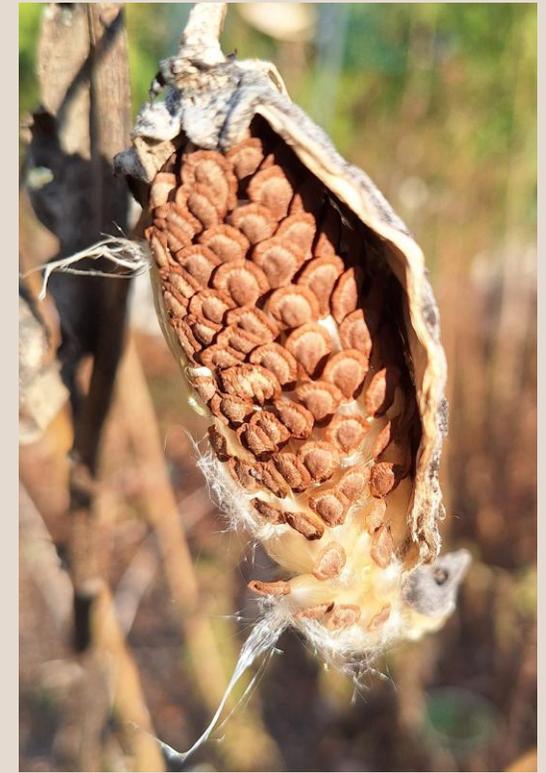


HEALTHY YARDS

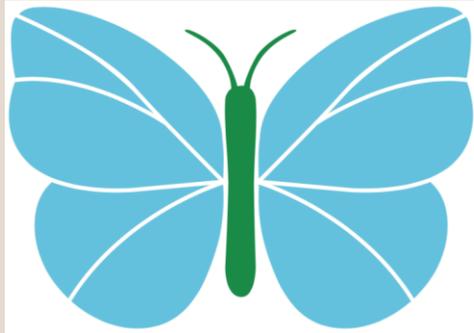
New Rochelle



SEED STARTING

A Basic Guide to Success

Bob Finkelstein and Stefanie DuBois



HEALTHY YARDS

New Rochelle

Our mission

Support healthy, sustainable yards in New Rochelle for both new and experienced gardeners.

Promote restoring nature while enjoying beautiful outdoor spaces through pollinator-friendly practices, pesticide alternatives, smarter planting, and native landscaping.

Planning Meetings are held virtually the first half of each month (First or second Wednesday).

Seed Starting

- Vegetable and Native Seeds
- Packets and Labels
- Growing Medium

Vegetable Seeds

- Indoor Starting Methods
- Snail Rolls
- Thinning and Transplanting
- Garden Bed Prep
- Fertilizing and Disease Prevention
- Succession Planting

Native Plant Seeds

- Key Aspects of Native Plants
- Self Seeding vs Spreading
- Reason to Start Native Seeds Early
- Sources
- Ground Sowing
- Container Method

Growing Vegetable and Native Plant Gardens Together

Vegetable and Native Plant Seeds

Benefits

Extended Growing Season

- Begin planting earlier
- Prolonging the growing season
- Maximizing harvest potential
- Stronger, healthier root systems
- Easier to protect bigger plant than seedlings from critters

Diverse Plant Selection

- Wider variety of plant species, many of which are not available at local garden centers

Timing

Plant-Specific Timelines

- Each plant has an optimal starting time based on its growth requirements and regional climate.

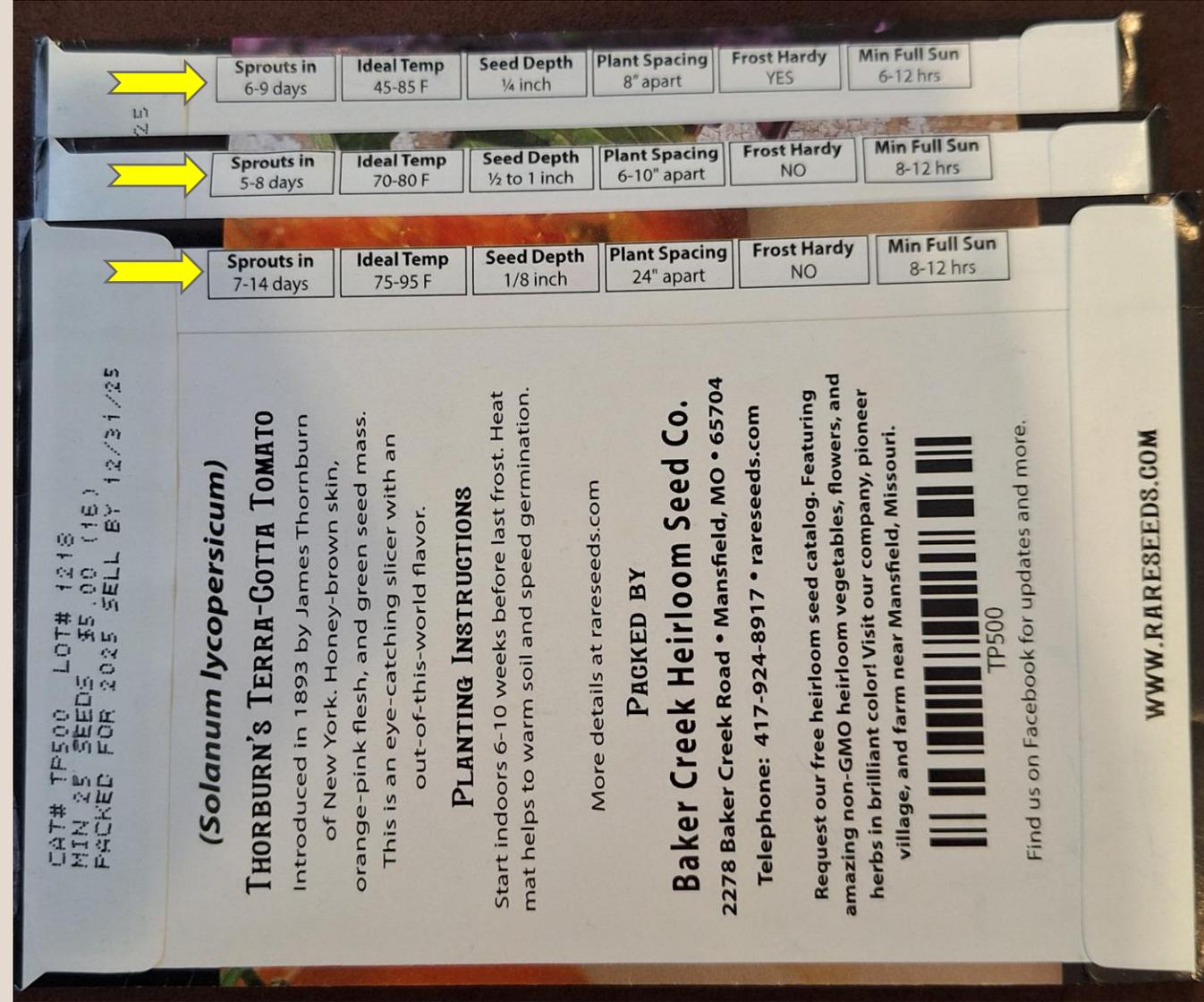
Last Frost Date

- The last frost date is a key factor that determines when to start seeds. [The last frost date for New Rochelle is around April 27.](#)

Seed Packets and Labels

Seed Packets

- Includes essential details
- Check expiration dates
- Specific growing instructions on cultivation. Some seeds may be started indoors while others must be directly sown in the ground
- Understanding germination times is important planning planting schedules
- Ensure seed swap packages are properly labeled. Instructions and growing conditions should be available





W. Atlee Burpee Co., 300 Park Ave., Warminster, PA 18974

51490A



30 Seeds

TOMATO Sungold Hybrid

Flavorful, golden-orange, cherry-sized fruits are borne in large clusters. Excellent served whole in salads, on the veggie tray or as a stand-alone snack. Indeterminate. Harvest about 65 days after transplanting.

START INDOORS in a warm, well-lighted area 6-8 weeks before planting outdoors. Sow seeds 1/4" deep into individual containers filled with seed starting formula. Keep moist. Seedlings emerge in 7-10 days at 70-75°F. Before transplanting, move to a sheltered area outside for a week.

SET PLANTS 3-4' apart in a sunny location after last frost in spring.

BURPEE.COM • 800-888-1447

CAT# KA116 LOT# L1264A
MIN 250 SEEDS \$3.50 (16)
PACKED FOR → SELL BY 12/31/25

(*Brassica oleracea var. sabellica*) SCARLET KALE

Curled red-purple kale produces lots of delicious, frilly leaves that deepen in purple color as the temperature drops! Very cold tolerant and fairly heat tolerant.

PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

Best grown in frosts of spring or fall. Direct seed or transplant 2-4 weeks in spring or 6 weeks in fall before frosts dates. Prefers rich soil.

More details at rareseeds.com

PACKED BY
Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co.
2278 Baker Creek Road • Mansfield, MO • 65704
Telephone: 417-924-8917 • rareseeds.com

Request our free heirloom seed catalog. Featuring amazing non-GMO heirloom vegetables, flowers, and herbs in brilliant color! Visit our company, pioneer village, and farm near Mansfield, Missouri.



KA116

Find us on Facebook for updates and more.

WWW.RARESEEDS.COM

Sprouts in 6-9 days
Ideal Temp 45-85°F
Seed Depth 1/4 inch
Plant Spacing 8" apart
Frost Hardy YES
Min Full Sun 6-12 hrs

CAT# BN165 LOT# L765A
MIN 40 SEEDS \$3.50 (16)
PACKED FOR 2025 SELL BY 12/31/25

(*Phaseolus vulgaris*) BLAUHILDE BEANS

Spectacular purple pods stay tender even when huge. Flavorful German heirloom. Tolerant to mosaic virus.

PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

Vigorous, long vines need support. Soak seeds overnight and direct-seed after last frost. Harvest frequently to keep plants productive.

More details at rareseeds.com

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BN165

Find us on Facebook for updates and more.

WWW.RARESEEDS.COM

Sprouts in 5-8 days
Ideal Temp 70-80°F
Seed Depth 1/2 to 1 inch
Plant Spacing 6-10" apart
Frost Hardy NO
Min Full Sun 8-12 hrs

CAT# TPS00 LOT# I216
MIN 25 SEEDS \$5.00 (16)
PACKED FOR 2025 SELL BY 12/31/25

(*Solanum lycopersicum*) THORBURN'S TERRA-COTTA TOMATO

Introduced in 1893 by James Thornburn of New York. Honey-brown skin, orange-pink flesh, and green seed mass. This is an eye-catching slicer with an out-of-this-world flavor.

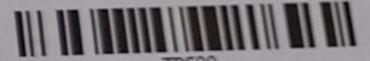
PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

Start indoors 6-10 weeks before last frost. Heat mat helps to warm soil and speed germination.

More details at rareseeds.com

PACKED BY
Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co.
2278 Baker Creek Road • Mansfield, MO • 65704
Telephone: 417-924-8917 • rareseeds.com

Request our free heirloom seed catalog. Featuring amazing non-GMO heirloom vegetables, flowers, and herbs in brilliant color! Visit our company, pioneer village, and farm near Mansfield, Missouri.



TPS00

Find us on Facebook for updates and more.

WWW.RARESEEDS.COM

Sprouts in 7-14 days
Ideal Temp 75-95°F
Seed Depth 1/8 inch
Plant Spacing 24" apart
Frost Hardy NO
Min Full Sun 8-12 hrs



Growing Medium

- Quality medium is crucial for efficient root development
- A lightweight seed starting mix promotes healthy roots and optimizes water retention
- Seed starting mix can be purchased online, in local garden stores or you can make your own
- Potting soils are dense and may have fertilizers, manure, clay, organic debris, fungi, and bacteria that may hinder root growth.



Growing Medium

Top DIY Seed Starting Mix Recipes

- Simple and Effective: 4 parts coco coir, 2 parts organic compost, 1 part vermiculite, 1 part perlite
 - Well-Draining Mix: 3 parts peat moss or coco coir, 1 part sand (builders sand promotes drainage)
 - Nutrient-Rich Mix: 4 parts compost, 1 part perlite, 2 parts peat moss
 - Wild Seed Project Mix: 3 parts compost, 1 part vermiculite, 1 part sand
 - Peat moss generally more effective, but not as eco-friendly as coco coir
- Avoid medium provided by others unless you know it is clean and contaminant free
 - Drainage is Key: seeds struggle in wet, heavy soil. Use materials that ensure drainage and provide aeration
 - Properly moistening the soil mix creates favorable conditions for germination
 - Mix well to ensure the growing medium is free of clumps

Vegetable Seed Sources



- Catalogs, Local Seed Swaps, library events, garden clubs
- Reputable Sources: Find seed companies that cater to your growing region
- Check for Local Ecotypes: seeds sourced from your specific region for best results
- Avoid big box stores: Mislabeled, treated, old stock, improper storage, limited selected, not regional
- Avoid seeds treated with neonicotinoids and other chemicals
- Organic and non-GMO does not always indicate pesticide free

Vegetable Seeds

Indoor Starts

- **Long-Season Heat Lovers:** Start 8-10 weeks before last frost Peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, celery
- **Cole Crops & Brassicas:** Start 6-8 weeks before last frost - Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale
- **Alliums & Greens:** Start 6-8 weeks early - onions, leeks, spinach, lettuce, chard, and herbs like basil, parsley, and chives
- **Others:** Cucumbers, melons, and summer squash can be started early as well
- **Ornamentals:** In general follows vegetable seed starting steps

Outdoor Starts

- **Timing:** Follow instructions on seed packet
- **Direct sow or use container method :** will discuss with native plant seeds
- **Leafy Greens:** Lettuce, spinach, kale, arugula, Swiss chard
- **Root Vegetables:** Radishes, carrots, beets, turnips, parsnips
- **Legumes:** Peas (sugar snap, shelling).
- **Alliums & Others:** Onion sets, leeks, parsley, cabbage, broccoli (can be seeded or transplanted). Squash, corn, tomato's

Indoor Equipment

Containers and Trays

- Multi celled plastic with drip trays, peat pots, recycled / biodegradable containers
- Keep moist. Proper drainage prevents root rot. Do not use drip trays as a water source.

Lighting

- Grow lights provide the necessary spectrum for optimal growth. LED lights might be pricier, but worth the investment.
- Seedlings require minimum 8 hours of light to promote growth and prevent leggy stems. **Our lights are on all the time**

Heat Mats

- Maintain consistent temperatures that encourages faster germination.
- Providing sufficient light and warmth helps prevent leggy growth. Sometimes with a small system, this is difficult. Plants will still do fine if they get leggy.



Snail Roll Method

- Use a strip of thick paper, cardboard, plastic, flexible plastic packaging, or cut-up foam sheets, approximately 3–6 inches wide and 12 to 18 inches long to fit .
- Spread moist planting mix evenly across the strip to a depth of about 1.5 to 2 inches, leaving a small "header" area at the start if desired for a tighter center
- Roll the material tightly like a cinnamon roll. Secure the end with tape or rubber bands or put in a container
- Place seeds on the top surface of the soil. Small seeds can be scattered, while larger seeds should be spaced out
- Stand the rolls upright in a tray. Water from the top or allow the rolls to soak up water from the tray
- Once seedlings are ready, unroll the material to separate the plants and transplant them directly into the garden or larger containers

- Roots grow downwards, making it easier to separate plants.
- The method is highly effective for, and often eliminates, the need for, initial pot-up stages.
- Do not press the soil too hard to ensure proper aeration.





Does it work?

You Betcha!

**Use snail roll for indoor and
outdoor starts**

Thinning and Transplanting

Thinning: Crucial to prevent overcrowding and ensure each plant has adequate space and resources for healthy growth

Transplanting: Into larger containers allows for continued growth and development, as roots require more space as they expand



Hardening Off: Essential for acclimating seedlings to their new environment

Gradual Exposure: Exposing seedlings to sunlight and outdoor temperatures 7 to 14 days minimizes stress and helps prevent transplant shock

Transplant Shock Prevention: Proper hardening off techniques help seedlings adapt smoothly, reducing the risk of transplant shock for healthier plants

Temperature: When nights are above 55 degrees, critical for tomato's

Vegetable Garden Bed Preparation

- Tilling the soil helps to aerate and loosen the ground, making it easier for roots to grow
- Remove weeds to keep them from strangling plants
- Use a good compost to help your garden. We add several bags or compost to each bed at the start of and during the growing season
- Any good organic compost will work. We make our own compost and amend with lobster compost



Fertilizing and Disease Prevention

Balanced Fertilizer Application

Applying a balanced, organic fertilizer provides essential nutrients that promote strong seedling growth and overall plant health. [We like the Tomato Tone and Vegetable Tone products](#)

Monitoring for Diseases and Pests

Regularly checking enables early intervention, preventing the spread and ensuring plant vitality.

Air Circulation

Proper air circulation around plants helps to reduce humidity and prevents conditions that lead to disease development.

Crop Rotation

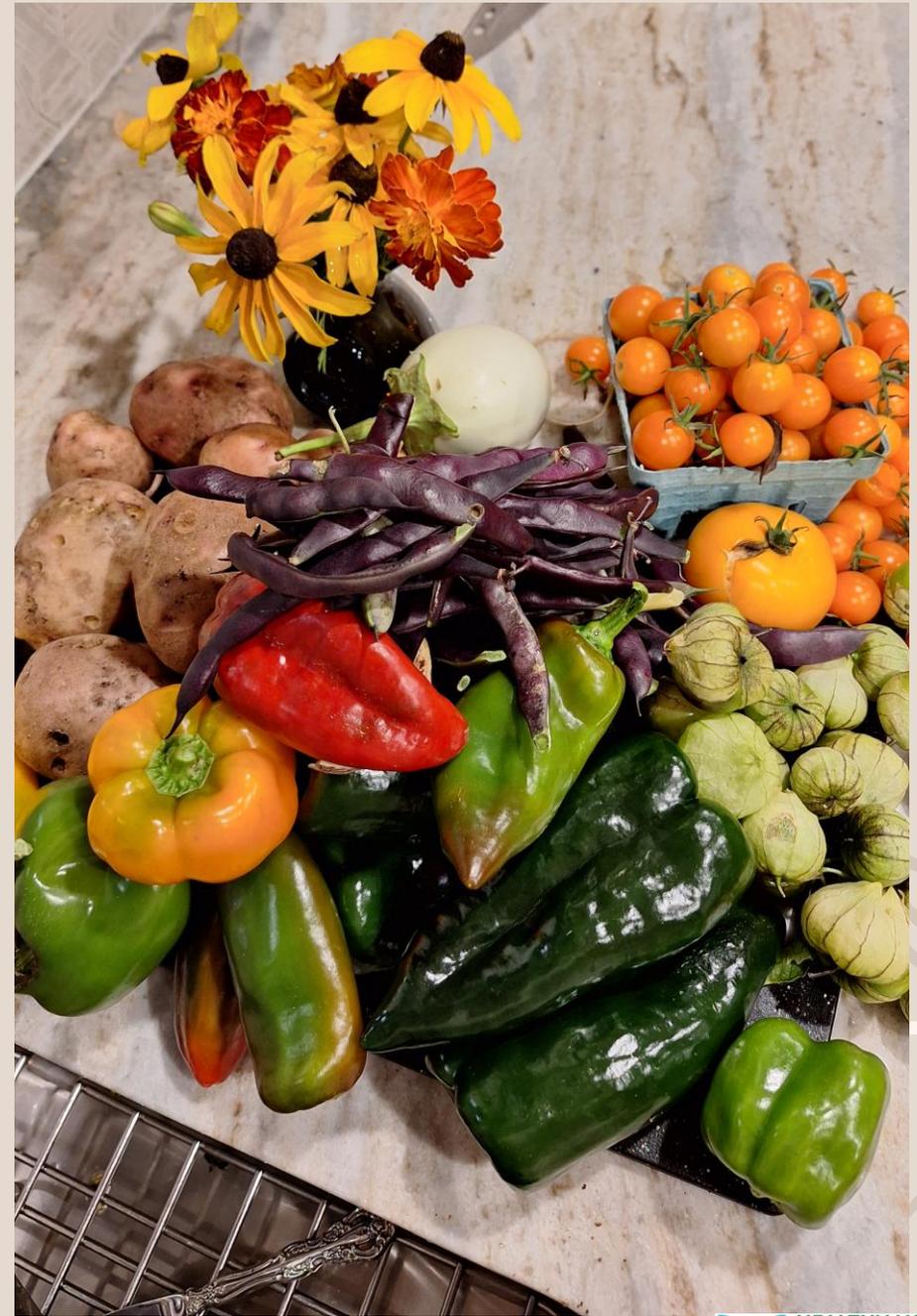
If possible, rotate your plants to different areas. I have 4 beds, and I rotate the veggies to different beds every year.

Succession Planting

First Seed Start: Start the cold season veggies - Lettuce, Spinach, Kale, peas, Asparagus and Alliums (onions and leeks) in late Feb to mid March. I transplant these in April. Can be directly sewn but it takes much longer to harvest. Asparagus is a perennial, overwinter seed start only once

Second Seed Start: The second set of starts are warm season veggies – Tomatoes, Peppers, Eggplant. Start these in early April for transplanting to the garden in mid to late May to avoid cold nights. With our short season suggest do not direct sewing these. Direct sew Cukes, Squash, Melons and beans. When the lettuce starts bolting in hot summer, plant beans

Third seed start: Outdoors in late summer to fall. In August start lettuce, spinach, kale in seed starting trays for a last cool weather crop before winter. These go in the ground when the beans die. In November, plant garlic for a spring crop. Direct sew garlic cloves deep enough to avoid any soil freeze. They will overwinter. Plant garlic in the fall



Native Plants

Key Aspects of Native Plants

Definition & Timeframe: Native plants are indigenous to the region, having developed complex relationships with local insects, birds, and animals. They are generally defined as being present before European settlement.

Adaptation: Because they evolved locally, they are resilient, requiring minimal, if any, pesticides, fertilizers, or supplemental watering once established.

Ecological Role: They provide critical habitat and food sources for local pollinators and wildlife, supporting higher biodiversity compared to non-native plants.

Distinctions: They are different from exotic/non-native plants (introduced from other areas) and naturalized plants (exotics that now spread on their own).



Cardinal flower in our garden

Native Plants

Self-Seeding vs. Spreading

Self-Seeding Plants: These plants produce seeds that drop at the end of the season, germinating and growing on their own, allowing them to return annually without replanting. Examples include many native wildflowers.

Spreading Plants: These often use underground structures like rhizomes or stolons to colonize new ground, sometimes becoming aggressive, particularly in garden settings.

Aggressive Natives: While native plants cannot be "invasive" (which refers to non-native, destructive species), they can be aggressive colonizers, quickly spreading to dominate an area.



Self-Seeding NY Native Perennials

- Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
- Joe-Pye Weed (*Eutrochium* spp)
- Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
- Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
- *Golden Ragwort (Packera aurea)*
- Foxglove Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)
- Asters (*Symphotrichum* spp)
- Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)

Native NY Groundcovers with Runners

- Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)
- Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)
- Pennsylvania Sedge (*Carex pennsylvanica*)
- Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*)
- *Golden Ragwort (Packera aurea)*
- Woodland Sunflower (*Helianthus divaricatus*)

“Nature will plan your garden over time” - Doug Tallamy

Reason To Start Native Seeds Early

- **Cost Savings & Abundance:** A \$3-\$5 seed packet can yield 25-100+ plants, allowing for large-scale planting without the high cost of buying individual pots
- **Environmental & Ecosystem Benefits:** Native plants are adapted to local soil and climate, making them low-maintenance, drought-tolerant, and excellent for preventing erosion
- **Wildlife Support:** They provide essential food (nectar, pollen, seeds) and shelter for native bees, butterflies, and birds, fostering a balanced, healthy ecosystem
- **Greater Genetic Diversity:** Unlike cloned nursery plants, seeds produce genetically diverse, resilient plants that can better adapt to changing conditions

Access to More Species: Many unique, local native plant species are not available for purchase as plants, making seed starting the only way to propagate them

Winter Sowing Technique: Using "winter sowing" (e.g., in milk jugs) mimics nature's cycle, allowing seeds to germinate at their own pace in early spring, often with better results than indoor starting

It's Fun and Educational: A great way for children and adults to learn about native plants

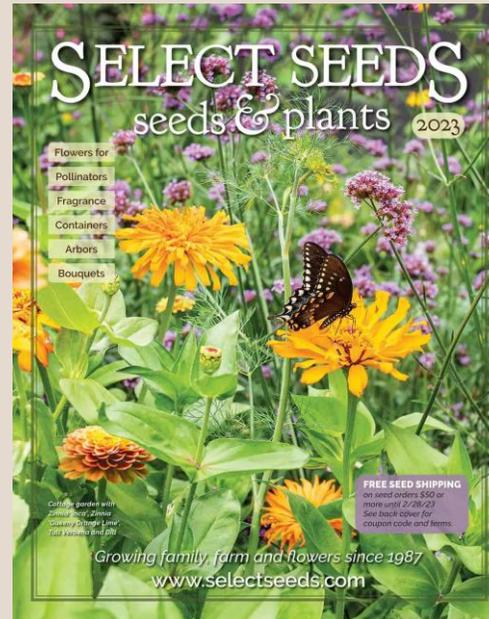
Native Plant Seeds

- In general, the basic principles on growing medium and steps are similar for many plants
- The key for successful seed starts, indoor or outdoor, is to follow directions: [information is knowledge](#)
- Read seed packet instructions or research appropriate planting method
- Check the date of the last frost and plan up to 6 to 8 weeks before that date
- For outdoor starts cold stratification is a process that involves exposing seeds to cold temperatures to break down the seed coat and encourage
- Start indoors or outdoors per instructions
- Our experience indicates sowing outdoors native seeds is generally more productive

Native Seed Sources

- Hilltop Hanover Farm and Environmental Center - Native and Vegetable Seeds
- Select Seeds - Native and Ornamentals
- Lasdon Public Gardens and Veterans Memorial

- Facebook:
 - ✓ Westchester Pollinators
 - ✓ Pollinators of White Plains
 - ✓ Pollinator Pathway Mamaroneck Larchmont



SEED SWAP!
Sunday, Jan. 25,
11am - 12:30
@[Westchester Land Trust](#)
403 Harris Rd., Bedford Hills, NY



Seed sharing: The most economical way to propagate our beautiful and incredibly important native plant species



Winter sowing native seeds in New York is best done from December through February, allowing cold-hardy perennials to undergo necessary cold stratification in containers or in ground. These species thrive when exposed to freezing temperatures and moisture. First column can also be started indoors as well but may need to refrigerate seeds.

- Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
- Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)
- Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
- Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta* or *triloba*)
- Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium purpureum/maculatum*)
- New England Aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)
- Smooth Blue Aster (*Symphyotrichum laeve*)
- Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
- Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
- Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*)
- Blue Wild Indigo (*Baptisia australis*)
- New York Ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*)
- Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*)
- Jacob's Ladder (*Polemonium reptans*)
- Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)
- Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)
- Common Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)
- Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
- Flowering Perennials (Wildflowers)
Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)

Ground Sowing

- **Best Time:** Late fall/winter is ideal for natural cold-moist stratification
- **Density:** Sow seeds thickly (roughly 1/8 to 1/4 inch apart) to account for lower, natural germination rates
- **Depth:** Generally, cover seeds to a depth equal to their thickness. Tiny seeds (e.g., *Lobelia*) require light and should not be covered, or only covered with a very light dusting of sand
- **Soil Preparation:** Clear weeds, and rake or disturb the top 1 inch of soil
- **Covering:** Use coarse sand to cover seeds, which helps stabilize them against heavy rain and reduces weed competition
- **Site Prep:** Clear existing vegetation and create a clean, loose soil surface. A 2 to 1 soil to compost works well
- **Methods:** Broadcast seeding can work, but for better results, mix seeds with damp sand for more even distribution
- **Watering:** Gently water with a mist or fine spray to avoid washing seeds away
- **Maintenance:** Keep beds moist until established. If germination does not occur the first year, remain patient, as many species may germinate in the second year
- **Weed Control:** Utilize techniques like, covering beds with a light layer of horticultural sand or using weed mats to reduce competition

Container Method

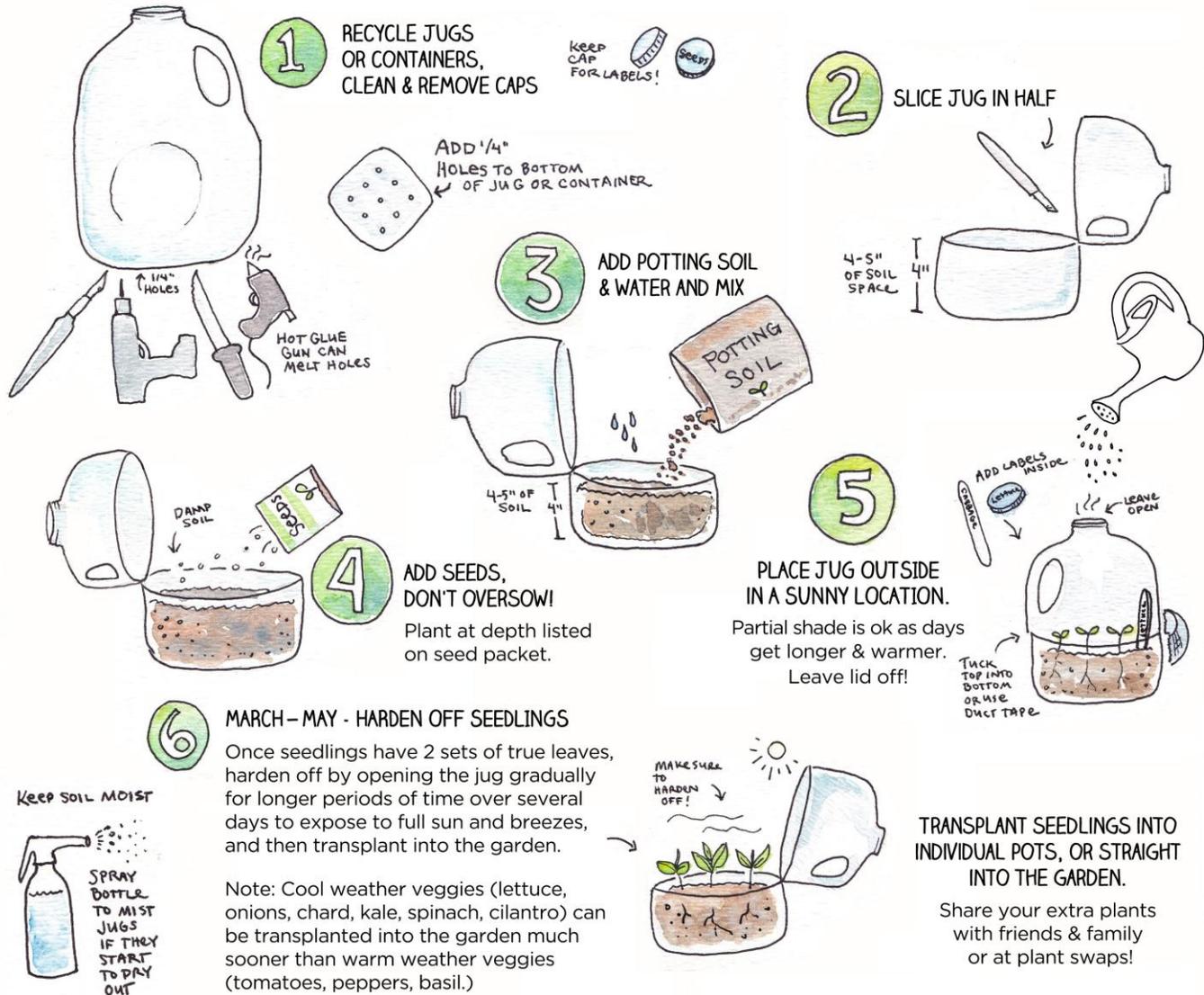
Plastic Jugs, Clam Shells, Bins

- **Winter Sowing:** The freezing / thawing cycles break seed dormancy (stratification), which many native perennials require to germinate
- **Protection:** The plastic protects seeds from harsh winds and pests
- **No Hardening Off:** Seedlings grown this way are already adapted to the elements and do not require a formal hardening-off period
- **Cost-Effective:** Reuses household waste to start large quantities of plants for free
- **Native Perennials:** Milkweed, purple coneflower, black-eyed Susans, liatris, and asters are ideal for this method



WINTER SOWING

BEGIN IN JANUARY - MAY



Wild Ones
Front Range
Chapter



Shutterstock/KylieP

Growing Vegetable and Native Plant Gardens Together

- Increases yields
- Improves crop quality
- Boosts biodiversity
- Attract bees, butterflies, and beneficial insects that pollinate crops like squash and tomatoes, resulting in larger, more uniform fruits
- Help to repel pests, enhance soil health, and support overall ecosystem resilience



February 28th 11:30-12:30pm

NATIVE PLANT WINTER SOWING WORKSHOP



Learn how to grow native plants from seed!!
Bring a milk jug to bring your own
wildflowers home or
help sow wildflowers for the New Rochelle
Community!!

THE NEW ROCHELLE GIRL SCOUT HOUSE
971 NORTH AVENUE, NEW ROCHELLE, NY 10801

RSVP



WWW.GARDENCLUBOFNEWROCHELLE.ORG

Healthy Yards New Rochelle

JOIN our monthly meetings and yard tours, meet knowledgeable people.

LEARN about the importance of native plants in supporting pollinators and local fauna.

SUPPORT our events and learn about sources of native plants.

PLANNING MEETINGS: Held virtually the first half of each month (First or second Wednesday).

Stay connected by joining our email list:

[*healthyyardsnr@gmail.com*](mailto:healthyyardsnr@gmail.com)

Keep current with events and by sharing your garden questions and accomplishments on:

[Healthy Yards New Rochelle | Facebook](#)
[Westchester Pollinators | Facebook](#)

Check out our website for gardening tips:

[**Healthy Yards New Rochelle**](#)

