

Winter Sowing by Rosemary Botner

In January of 2022, I decided to try, once again, growing plants from seed. I searched online and found excellent information on winter sowing on this site:

<https://www.hobbyfarms.com/sow-seeds-in-the-winter-without-grow-lights/>

Using that information as my guide, this is what I did:

I collected together 4-litre milk jugs, duct tape, potting soil and some seeds.



Following the instructions, I prepared the milk jugs:

1. Punctured holes in the bottom of the jugs (it's easier to do this before cutting them).
2. Cut part-way around the milk jugs to form a hinged top and bottom
3. Placed a few inches of potting soil in the bottom of the cut jug.

I sowed the seeds fairly thickly as the plants would be transferred to my garden in spring... if they grew! Then covered the seeds with a little soil, and sprayed the soil with water to dampen it.



A marker inside the jug showed what seeds had been planted.

Then I taped the jugs closed,



and put them outside in the snow (for my first attempt at winter sowing, that was on January 31, 2022).

Although the above photo shows the jugs without caps, I did in fact, put the bottle caps on until the seeds germinated.

With just the winter sun warming the jugs, condensation began forming on the inside of the jugs, enough to irrigate. I never did have to water but if the weather had become really warm that may have been necessary and I would have watered gently through the cap-hole.

Well, the spinach and mesclun seeds grew beautifully...



... the Grand Rapids lettuce did not. Could be the seeds were past their due date!

Once the garden soil in my raised bed was warm enough for planting, I transplanted my seedlings and they grew beautifully (see photo below).



This winter (2023), I am experimenting with a variety of perennial flower seeds and again spinach and lettuce. I put them out on January 20th. Here's hoping for an exciting new crop.

I found Winter Sowing a great way to get my longing for gardening under control without expensive risk. And I was delighted with the result.

Rosemary Botner, former KGC president and club member since 2004
January 2023