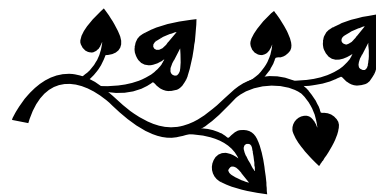


Book Review
Kathy Kamm (MG 2002)

Fun With Winter Seed Sowing A Hands-On Practical Guide



Monica Milla
Garden Faerie Press Nov. 2007
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Available online @ www.thegardenfaerie.com

Outdoor winter seed sowing is quite different from using grow lights or a greenhouse to grow seedlings to transplant in the garden. Of course, all the preparations and actual planting of the seeds are done in indoor warmth. Then the planted pots are placed outdoors so that when spring arrives the seedlings are already hardened off and ready to plant as soon as they get their first true leaves. Monica leads us step by step from choosing, cleaning and preparing containers, to planting the seedlings in the location best suited for them.

A container may be anything from a seed sowing flat to something recycled, such as a milk jug or pop bottle, or something fancy, like a decorative pot. In addition, there are containers within containers that can include cell packs, peat pots or newspaper pots. These porous pots need to be soaked before use. Of course, ventilation holes are needed in any lid and bottom of a pot. Lids may need to be modified to dome covers for headroom or covers for wildlife protection.

Once one has chosen a container, choosing types of soil mixtures, adding soil to prepared pots, adequate watering of the soil, and choosing seeds are the tasks that come next. It is preferable to choose seeds of plants that would reseed or self sow on their own in nature. After seed choice, Milla discusses timing of planting, preparing seeds for planting if needed (scarification or soaking for example), types of seeding, moving them to appropriate light as the seedlings emerge, and then transplanting the seedlings. Gardeners trying winter seed sowing for the first time can expect to do some things they wish they had done differently, so there is a helpful section on avoiding common mistakes both before and after sprouting.

Two appendices follow:

Appendix A lists resources for both winter seed sowing information and general gardening. A list of seed sources follows. Appendix B lists plants suitable for winter sowing. These are divided into perennials and biennials, vegetables and fruits, herbs, old fashioned/heirloom plants and native plants. This appendix ends with an alphabetical list of combined categories. Nearly all plants except tropicals may be used.

Monica Milla is one of our own master gardeners. She is an Advanced Master Gardener who enjoys speaking to gardening groups and community organizations. She teaches adult classes at Washtenaw Community College, Hidden Lake Gardens and Ann Arbor Community Education. She has a BA in public relations and an MA in written communications. Monica has been published in several local publications and serves on the Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum Editorial Advisory Board. She is also involved in a number of community gardening projects.

Count your garden by the flowers * Never by the leaves that fall * Count your days by golden hours * Don't remember clouds at all * Count your nights by stars, not shadows * Count your years with smiles, not tears * Count your blessings, not your troubles * Count your age by friends, not years.

Author Unknown