

# Winter Sowing Workshop

in support of the Pollinator Pathway and the Pollinator Health Initiative





# To make your garden Monarch-friendly, there are four essentials:

- Pick a spot with enough sun (at least 6 hours)
- Plant a continuous sequence of blooming nectar flowers
- **Plant milkweeds** (ideally, a variety)
- Go organic – no pesticides or herbicides



# Milkweed seeds to choose from

- Annuals & perennials from the milkweed (asclepias) family

Annual  
milkweed from  
Mexico

← Native Northeast perennial milkweeds →



*A. curassavica*/  
Tropical milkweed

- Easy to grow from seed
- Sometimes reseeds itself
- Blooms till frost
- A favorite for Monarch egg-laying
- Supplements native perennials
- 36"-48" tall
- Fall nectar source



*A. tuberosa*  
Butterfly weed

- Pretty orange flower
- well-behaved front of border plant
- Average water needs
- Blooms July-August
- Not such a favorite for egg-laying
- 24"-36" tall



*A. Incarnata* / Swamp milkweed

Rose



Ice Ballet

*A. Incarnata*

Swamp milkweed

- Likes average to moist garden sites
- Part sun (6hrs.) ok
- 3ft to 5 ft tall
- Blooms July
- Pink and white varieties
- Dies back late summer



*A. Incarnata*  
subspecies *Pulchra*

- Native to our coastal area
- Fuller, more robust leaves
- Average to moist
- Prettier, deeper pink blooms than species
- July-August flowers
- 4 to 5 ft tall
- Stays lush longer



*A. syriaca*

Common milkweed

- Spreads by rhizomes
- Weedy look after blooming
- Big leaves for caterpillars
- Good for meadows, naturalized areas; a thug in small gardens

# 2 native seeds to winter sow

From the CT Ecotype Project at The Hickories: Pollinator favorites



## New York Ironweed

*Vernonia boracensis*

Native perennial; blooms late summer – fall

Likes moist/wet soils, prefers full sun

4 – 6 ft. tall, deep magenta bloom

Control height by cutting back in late spring

Barely cover seed; needs light to germinate



## Joe Pye Weed

*Eutrochium (aka Eupatorium) purpureum*

Native perennial, blooms mid-summer to fall

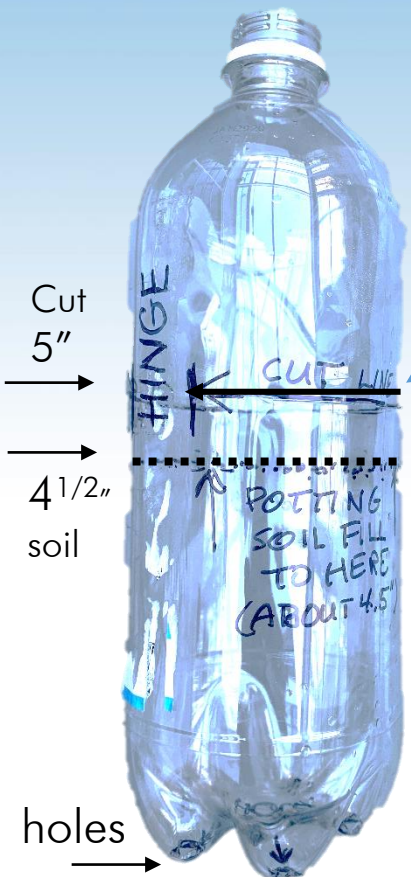
Likes medium moist soils, happy in full sun to part shade

5 – 7 ft. tall, soft mauve bloom

Control height by cutting stems half back in June

Barely cover seed; needs light to germinate

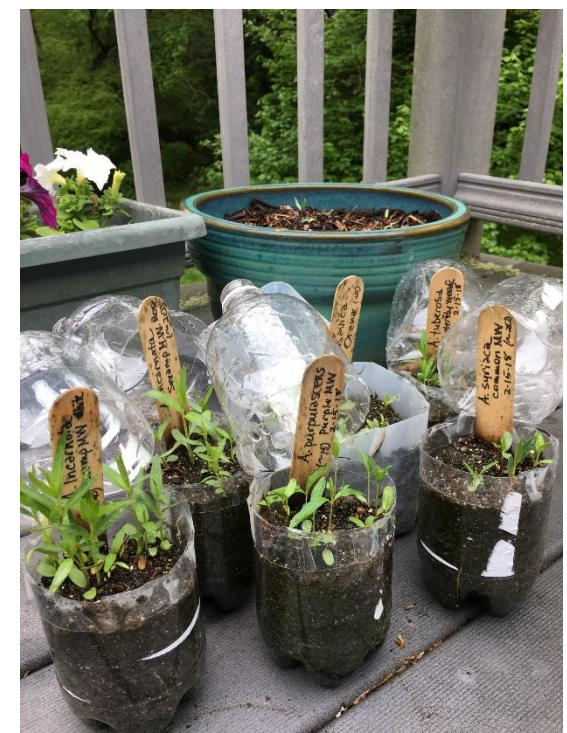
# Winter sowing basics



February 1

- Moisten but do not soak potting mix
- Poke drain holes in clear or translucent bottle
- Draw line around bottle 5" from base
- Cut around leaving 1" uncut "hinge"
- Fill & gently firm soil to 4.5" from bottom of bottle
- Choose your seeds & LABEL YOUR STICK & envelope
- 20 seeds/litre; 40/2 liter
- Spread seeds on surface and pat to barely cover
- Insert your labeled stick inside
- Tape bottle shut, label outside too
- Set plastic bottles outside in Jan/Feb
- Pick a sunny spot but not sheltered
- Let Nature do the work
- Watch for seedlings around April 15
- Cut open along tape on first warm day (~75F)
- Prop top open on nice days & water if it's dry
- Flip shut if frost threatens
- If no danger of frost, leave top propped open

May 15



# Transplanting instructions

- For best results, pot up seedlings around 5/15
  - More time to adjust before planting in garden
- Buy organic potting mix; use clean, 3" or 4" pots
- Empty the seedlings from bottle onto a surface
  - Work in a shady spot not full sun
  - Gently tease the seedlings apart with fingers
  - One plant per pot
- Place moistened soil mix in the pots
  - Make a hole to drape the seedling's roots into
- Pat the soil around the seedling
  - Same level as it grew in the bottle
- Keep soil moist
  - Leave seedlings in shade for first few days
- Transplant to garden when plant looks sturdy and roots are well developed
- Fertilize sparingly in the garden



In mid-May your seedlings should be ready to transplant.



Email questions to [alice@gardenwithalice.com](mailto:alice@gardenwithalice.com)



# garden with alice

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