Winter Sowing Workshop

in support of the Pollinator Pathway and the Pollinator Health Initiative

CT NOFA

POLLINATOR HEALTH INITIATIVE

BOTANISTS COLLECT NATIVE WILD SEED

ORGANIC FARMERS GROW SEED CROPS

SEED SAVERS HARVEST + CLEAN THE SEED

NURSERY GROWERS PROPAGATE NATIVE PLANTS FROM SEED

GARDENERS + LANDSCAPERS PLANT HABITATS

POLLINATORS + BIRDS THRIVE

THE RIGHT PLANTS IN THE RIGHT PLACE

CONSERVATION | BIODIVERSITY | STEWARDSHIP

PLANT THE GREEN CORRIDOR | WWW.CTNOFA.ORG

Wakeman Town Farm
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**

- **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
  - 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

**Native Northeast perennial milkweeds**

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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

- 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
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
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