

PLANTING MILKWEED SEEDS

Best - Natural Area Installation It is best to let nature take its course and install native seed between November 1st and January 31st to let the winter's natural cool and moist cycles wake them up in the spring.

Best - Sowing Seed Into Potted Plants Sow seed directly into a sterile potting soil vessel such as a plug flat or plant pot and cover it with chicken wire to keep out the varmints. It is not recommended to seed native mixes into containers, only individual species. Place your seeded vessels in a shady place such as the north side of a building during the late fall or winter. Again, let nature take its course over the winter. Move the planted seeds into a sunny spot in the spring and keep them watered regularly and with any luck, your seeds will germinate like magic.

Alternative Option - Spring Installation Installing seed from spring to early summer (June 15th) will also produce good results. The first spring you may see reduced forb and sedge germination because of the lack of the extended stratification, however, many of those seeds will sit dormant until the next spring to germinate at the optimal time. You will still see germination of certain flowers and most grasses the first season and most other the second season. For best results with this method put the seeds in the refrigerator for 6-8 weeks before planting.

Alternative Option - Cheating The System Spring Installation You can sow them in a slightly moist medium such as whetted sand or even a moist paper towel in a sealed plastic bag and place them in your refrigerator for a 30 - 90 day period to bypass this natural protection. You only want to do this if you are trying to get a head start with a spring or early summer (before June 15th) installation or when growing potted plants from seed. It is not necessary if the seed is installed during the fall or the winter.

Monitor the seeds during this period to ensure they do not germinate, become dry or become moldy. If they germinate or become moldy plant immediately or if they dry out re moisten the medium. Remember, this is sort of cheating the system and results may not be as favorable as the natural fall or winter installation or even the spring installation.

PLEASE NOTE:

At some point during the summer milkweed plants will attract a few bugs including the orange aphids, at first there will be just a few and then they'll multiply like no other bugs. The best way to keep them under control is a daily spray dish soap and water. (3 TBSP of any dish soap x 4 Lt. of water) It will kill them without any harm to the plant.

All Perennials Milkweed seeds needs cold stratification process before they can germinate. (In a zip lock in the fridge for at least 6-8 weeks will do it. You can always keep them in the fridge until ready to plant in spring-summer.)

When you're doing the outdoor winter sowing between Nov to January there is no need to be in the fridge, keep them into a paper bag anywhere.

For more information please visit our web page: www.savethemonarchbutterfly.ca