



West Vincent

Pollinator PitStop Program

Because what's good for pollinators is good for people!

How to Winter Sow Wild Petunia



Supplies:

- Gallon plastic jug – as in milk jug, water jug – clean and dry – no cap
- Something sharp to poke holes – drill bit, scissors, pick
- Sharp scissors or box cutter to cut jug
- Moistened potting soil – extra vermiculite/perlite a plus!
- Seeds
- Spray bottle with water
- Shipping tape or duct tape



Image by Gardening Know How, via Liz Baesler

Steps:

1. In the bottom of the jug, poke 20 small drainage holes of about 1/8" diameter
2. Cut through jug on 3 sides just below the handle, leaving the side with the handle attached to bottom, with lots of height for long healthy roots to grow
3. Add moistened potting soil to the bottom of the jug to just shy of the height of the cut – if you have extra vermiculite or perlite around, mix some in.



4. Sow all the seeds evenly on top. It is okay if the seeds are close together. Most native plants do better when planted thickly.
5. Press seeds into the soil, but don't cover them. They need light.
6. Mist with water to moisten seeds.
7. Tape the container back together with duct tape or shipping tape.
8. Place outside along a south facing wall. Make sure there is no roof overhang that would prevent snow and rain from getting in the bottle top. The area must drain well. Do not let the pots sit in water or the plants will rot.
9. In spring, when there are 4-6 sets of leaves on the plants, take the top off of the jug. If it is dry outside, your young plants will need to be watered, both when they are still in the jug and after they are planted in the garden.
10. In early summer, you can transplant your young plants into your flower garden!



The milk jugs protect the seeds and young plants from predators. They allow the seeds to germinate naturally. Wild Petunia is a perennial – they will come back every year!

Nice video on winter sowing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKXY6dl-5Tk>



Wild Petunia – *Ruellia humilis*

Wild Petunia is a hummingbird favorite with trumpet-shaped lavender blooms that attract long-tongued bees and butterflies, as well. Seldom reaching more than one foot in height, it is an excellent companion to other low-growing plants. Native to much of the eastern U.S., Wild Petunia prefers dry sandy locations such as rock gardens, but it will thrive in well-drained loam. It self-seeds readily and is able to hold its own when combined with larger aggressive plants. *Ruellia humilis* is a host plant for caterpillars of the Common Buckeye butterfly (*Junonia coenia*).

Wild Petunia loves the edges of sidewalks and driveways – it spills over and softens the edge. They will fill in a space and prevent most weeds from growing. Plant it in a space where you would love to see pretty flowers all season long, but you don't want to weed or water too often! Don't plant it near a delicate plant or it may outcompete the other plant.

Bloom Time – June-September

Moisture – dry to medium

Soil Type – Loam, sandy, most garden soils

Height – 1' – 18"

Sun – Full sun-partial shade (not deep shade)

Spacing 1'

Benefits

Butterflies **Pollinators** **Hummingbirds** **Deer Resistant**