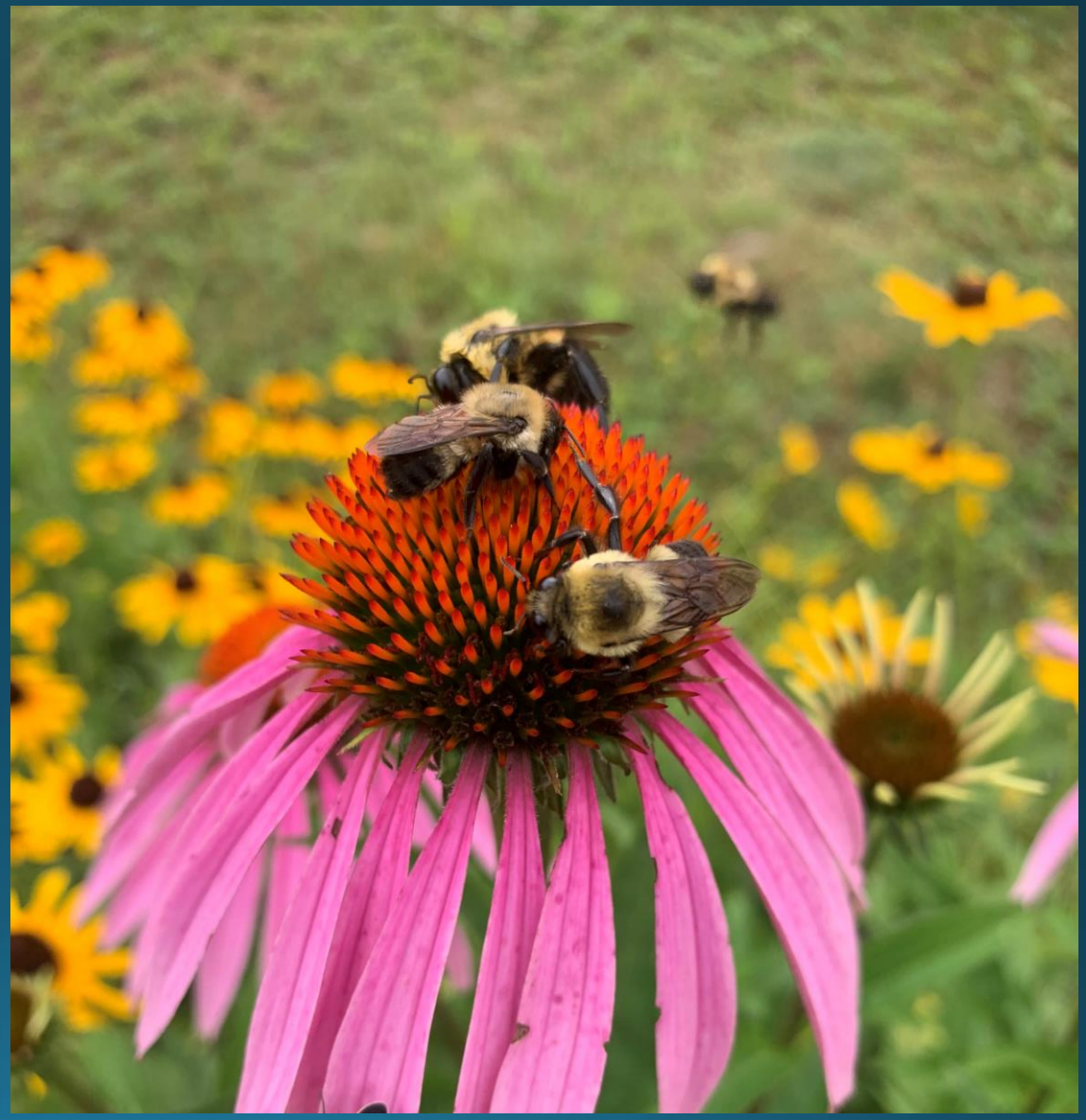
Lake Sunapee Protective Association

Spring Seed Sowing Workshop



LSPA
Devoted to the Environmental Quality of the Lake Sunapee Watershed

I spend a lot of time in the winter dreaming about my garden – it's a great time to plan

Even in a small area, your plant choices can have a BIG impact on pollinator populations and water quality

But native plants can be hard to come by, expensive to buy, or time-consuming to grow yourself

Winter Sowing

A great method to germinate native plant seeds – it is inexpensive, less labor-intensive than other methods, and can produce more plants than you'll know what to do with!

And it's particularly great for seeds that require ***cold stratification***

It isn't this complicated in nature! With winter sowing the seeds are naturally cold stratified and you don't have to do any extra work

Winter Sowing starts on/after the winter solstice – Dec. 21 in our region

<u>You can use any container that:</u>

Holds at least 3-4” of potting soil

Has headroom for the seedlings to grow (about 2”)

Is translucent enough to let light through.

Milk jugs are great, but they are not the only containers you can use.

Preparing the containers

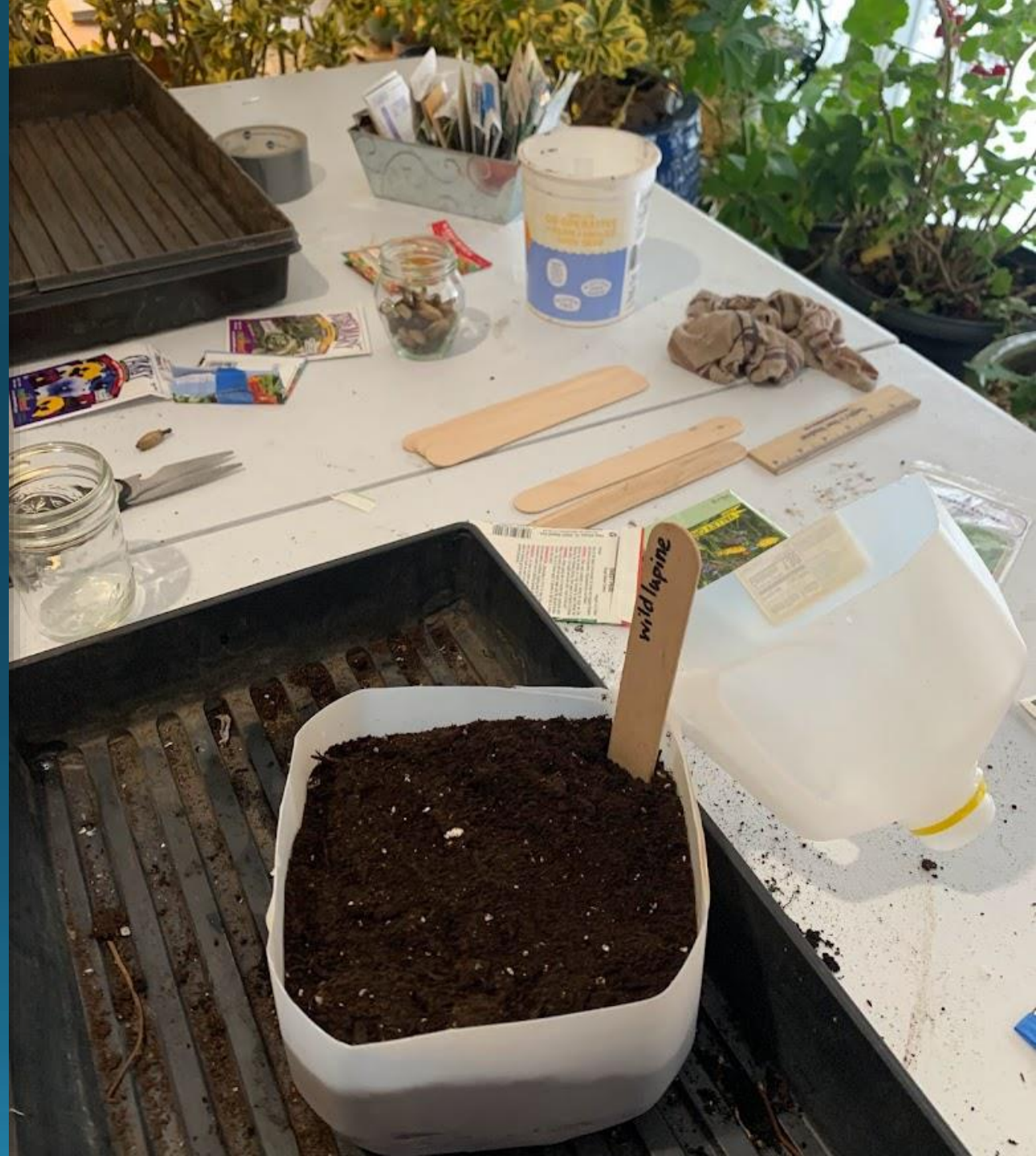
- Make drainage holes in the bottom – good drainage is key!
- Cut milk jugs about 4-5 " from the bottom leaving a "hinge" at the handle
- Remove the cap (you won't need it)
- Fill the container with 3 – 4" of potting soil (not seed starting mix)

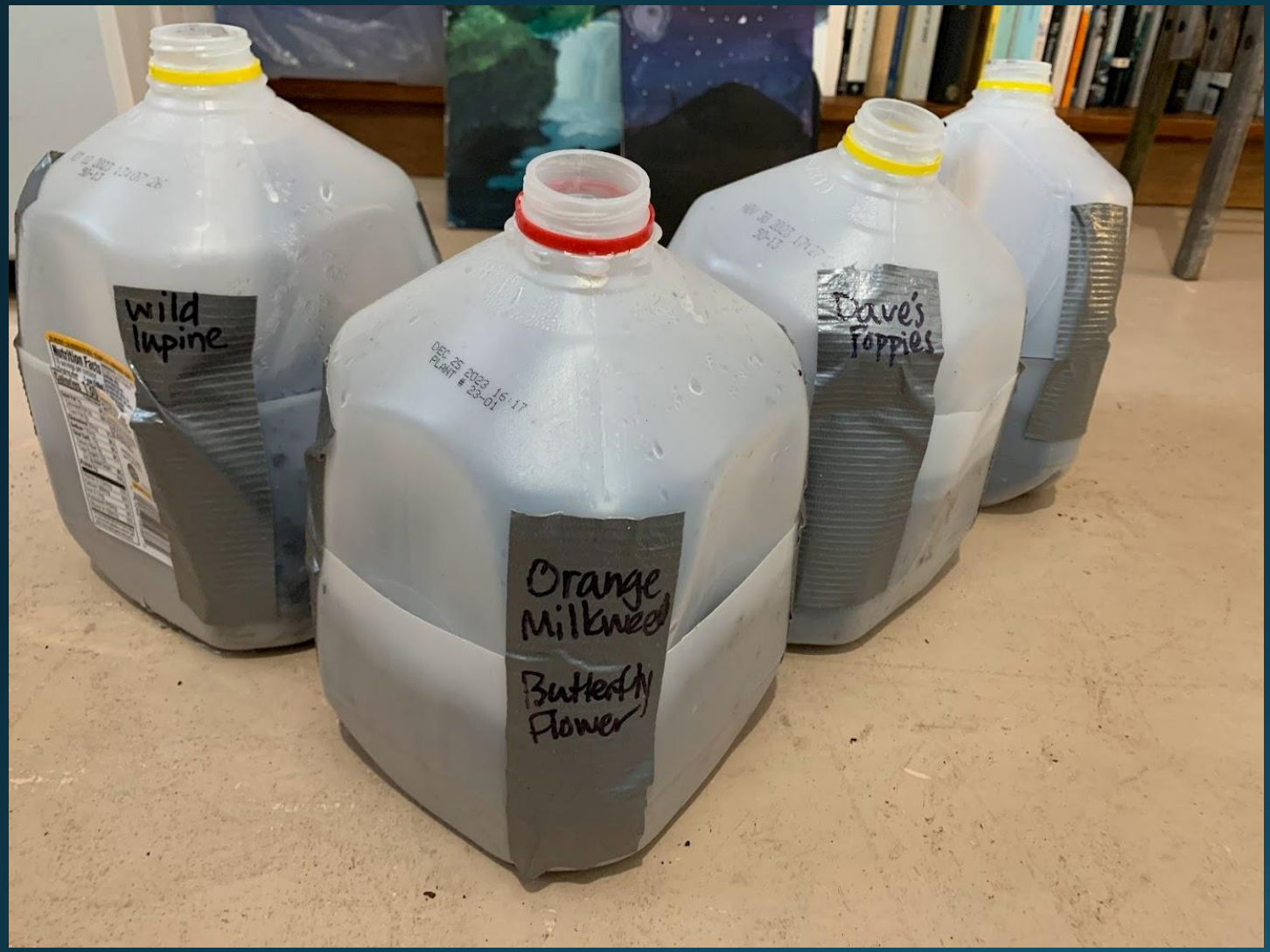
Sow your seeds!

- Press small seeds into the top of the soil to make contact – you can sow them densely
- Larger seeds can be spaced out a bit and covered lightly with soil
- The seeds will germinate when they're ready outside, so you don't need to worry about which seeds to plant when, just make sure that seeds needing cold stratification are planted early

Water and label

- Label your containers
- Water thoroughly – add more drainage holes if the water doesn't drain well





Close them up!

- Use duct tape or painter's tape to close the containers
- Leave the lids off to allow snow and rain to do the watering for you

Set them outside and wait for spring!

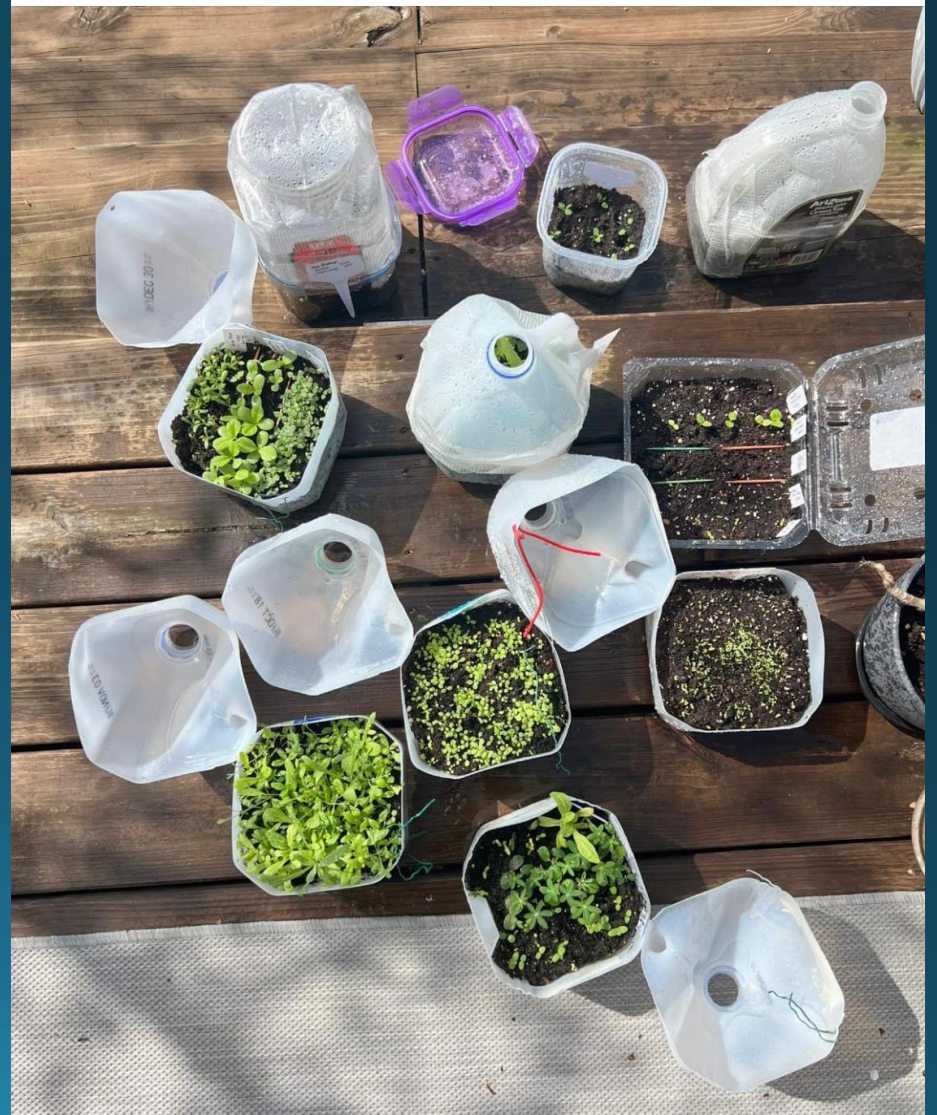
- Make sure they're in an area where they will be rained and snowed on
- They need sunshine
- Also make sure they can drain well
- And check occasionally to make sure they don't dry out (smaller containers dry out faster, so keep an eye on those)

Spring!

In spring you will need to provide some ventilation.

Just open the tops when it's sunny and close them up again if you're expecting a frost

It's a beautiful day to open the containers in middle Tennessee! I also planted out some of my winter sown poppies, lupine, calendula and bachelor buttons to see how they fare. This is my first year to winter sow and I am hooked. Thank you!



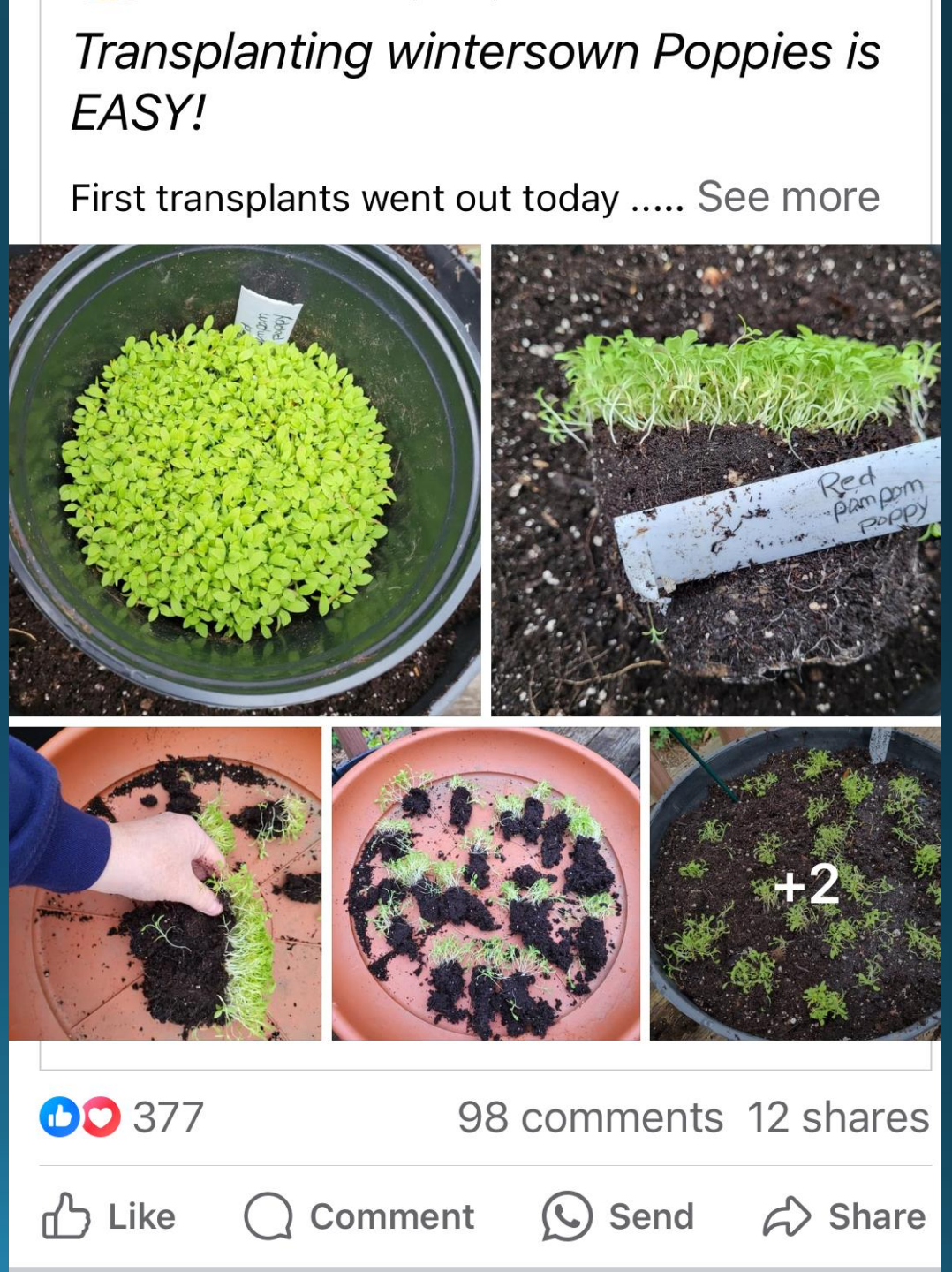
Transplanting

- Transplant to garden when plants have two sets of real leaves or are about 2” tall
- Don’t leave them in the containers much longer than that
- Make sure you know the sun/shade requirements for your plant
- Water well

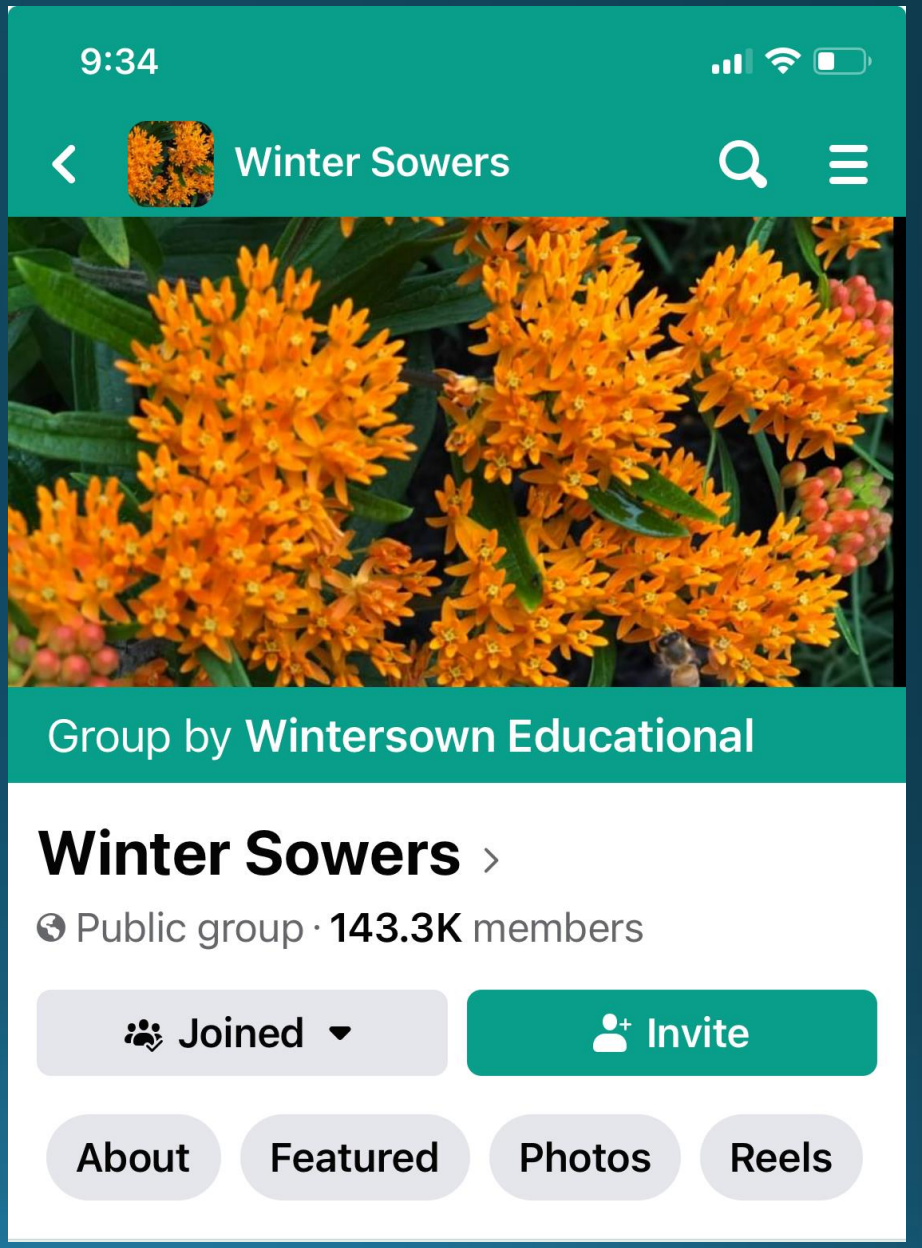
Transplanting

The “hunk of seeds” method works well for densely sown smaller seeds.

Don’t bother trying to separate out each seedling.



Questions?

What is HOS/Hunk O Seeds transplant method:

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