

Native Herbaceous Perennial Germination Guide

Germination Scale (1 = Easy, 10 = Hard)

- **Curly kale:** 1 (roots in ~7 days)
- **White trillium:** 10 (roots in ~2 years)
- **Most native perennials:** 7–8

Examples: Wild leek (7), Common milkweed (8), **May apple (8)**

Photo Note

 A delicate may apple flower blooming on a southern Ontario woodland floor in late spring. (Germination scale: 8)

Seed Storage

- **Store** in a sealed container in the refrigerator (1–6°C).
- **Avoid** temperature swings, moisture, and pests.

Natural Dormancy

Native seeds delay germination to survive frost/drought. Expect:

- **Slow, irregular sprouting** (6–24 months).
- **Extended cold/moist treatment** (stratification) needed for 2–4 months.

Stratification Guide

When seeds arrive:	Action
Spring, Summer, Fall	Direct sow outdoors. <i>No extra steps needed.</i>
Winter	Cold-stratify indoors 60–90 days before spring:

1. Mix seeds with media:

→ **Ratio:** 1 part seeds : 9 parts *moist* fine sand (by volume).

- Example: 1 spoon seeds + 9 spoons sand.

→ **Moist sand:** 2 tsp water per ⅓ cup sand.

2. Seal in a plastic bag.

3. Refrigerate (not freeze!). Keep *barely moist*—check weekly for mold.

4. **Plant** outdoors in spring.

Planting & Germination Tips

- **Sow shallowly:** Depth $\leq$ seed width.
- **Water regularly** to establish seedlings.
- **Patience is key:**
 - Shade-lovers (e.g., wild leek, may apple): 2–4 months to sprout.
 - Sun-lovers (e.g., nodding onion): 2–4 weeks.
- **No growth? Don't discard!** Some seeds germinate after 1–2 years (or decades!).

Best Practice: Outdoor Sowing

- **When:** Late fall → Early spring.
- **Why:** Let the seeds follow their natural rhythms.
- **Works for all native seeds!**

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