Essential equipment and materials needed for seed sowing

Most items on this list can be purchased from a good garden centre or hardware store. They may have items they can give you for free. Parents or others may have old pots and tools they can donate to the project. Freecycle is a good website where people offer items they do not want anymore.

**Sowing Direct**

To prepare the soil/compost for sowing direct you may need:

1. Garden forks and spades to dig over soil/old compost in the plot/planters and to remove weeds.
2. New soil/compost to fill pots/planters or enrich soil/old compost in the plot/planters.
3. Good drainage for containers used as planters. Make sure there are drainage holes in the bottom and use stone chippings, pea gravel, old pieces of clay flower pots or polystyrene pieces to ‘crock’ your planters. This will help cut down on how much compost needed to fill the container.
4. Possibly a slow release fertiliser to enrich the plot/planter and feed the plants over time or a foliar feed which can be diluted in a watering can and watered on whilst the plants are growing.
5. Hard headed rakes (not springbok rakes) to rake the soil/compost to a fine tilth for seed sowing where the plot/planters are sufficiently large to do so. Otherwise small hand forks might suffice.
6. String or garden twine strung between to small pieces of cane or sticks to use as a string line used to mark out the rows.
7. Draw hoes or dibbers or canes or trowels or something that can be used to ‘draw’ through the soil/compost to create your rows along the string line in which the seed is sown. You could possibly use canes or an old broom handle to push into compost to create a shallow row.
8. Something to mark the end of the rows e.g. Canes/sticks/lolly pop sticks.
9. Watering cans with ‘roses’ or a hosepipe with spray attachment to gently water the rows after seed sowing and for watering regularly afterwards.
10. White labels or painted white pieces of wood or something that could be used to label the different rows of seed sown.
11. We use fine netting, spread over small canes with pots on top to stop mice and pigeons from eating our oat seeds and rocket plants until established. We also have a few mouse traps at the ready until the oats are growing well. We also use organic slug pellets throughout the season for the *Amaranthus caudatus*.
12. Scissors to thin the seedlings within the row or hand forks and trowels if wanting to transplant some of the thinned seedlings carefully out of the row. Cutlery is quite good for transplanting.
13. Hand forks or hoes to weed between the rows and again cutlery is quite good for removing weeds within the row itself minimizing disturbance to the seedlings.
14. Trays/plastic cartons e.g. ones that cherry tomatoes come in, to collect seed and paper bags/envelopes to store it in once the seed has been cleaned.

Sowing in pots

To sow seeds in pots you will need some of these:

1. Pots 3 ½ plastic round or 9cm square. We use 7cm square for this project, just because we have a large quantity of carry trays to fit this size pot from plant sales at the Botanic Garden. So 7cm are sufficient but will need planting out into the plot/planters sooner. Could use round yoghurt pots or similar but will need to punch holes (from the inside to outside) in to the base for drainage. Space to line out your pots until the seedlings are ready to plant out.
2. Compost-multipurpose in bags. Compost depends on how environmentally friendly you would like to be. Many are peat based and light to use but do not let the surface of the compost dry out completely-they can be difficult to rewet.
3. Possibly a slow release fertiliser to enrich the plot/planter and feed the plants over time or a foliar feed which can be diluted in a watering can and watered on whilst the seedlings are growing well in their pots after about 6 weeks and waiting to be planted out and then whilst the plants are growing in the plot/planter.
4. Pressers-something like a pot of the same size to lightly press the surface of the compost in each pot. We have homemade pressers made out of wood with handles to fit various sizes of pots and trays at the Botanic Garden.
5. Garden sieves for removing large lumps from the compost when creating an even surface onto which to sow seed and then for covering seed afterwards. May be able to improvise, by rubbing compost between hands.
6. White labels or lollypop sticks or something that could be used to label the different types of seed, sown in batches.
7. Watering cans with a ‘rose’ or a hose pipe with a spray attachment for gently watering the seed in and then for watering planters regularly.
8. Space to line the pots out, preferably sunny. We use fine netting, spread over small canes with pots on top to stop mice and pigeons from eating our oat seeds and rocket plants until established. We also have a few mouse traps at the ready until the oats are growing well. We also use organic slug pellets for the Amaranthus caudatus plants throughout the season.
9. Garden forks and spades to dig over soil/old compost in the plot/planters to prepare for planting out pots of established plants and also to remove weeds.
10. New soil/compost to fill pots/planters or enrich soil/old compost in the plot/planters.
11. Good drainage for containers used as planters. Make sure there are drainage holes in the bottom and use stone chippings, pea gravel, old pieces of clay flower
pots or polystyrene pieces to ‘crock’ your planters. This will help cut down on how much compost needed to fill the container.

12. Trowels to plant out the established plants into the plot/planters.

13. Hand forks or hoes to weed between the rows, and cutlery is quite good for removing weeds.

14. Trays/plastic cartons e.g. ones that cherry tomatoes are purchased in, to collect seed and paper bags/envelopes to store it in once the seed has been cleaned.