

Seasonal Tip

Ice melt

To prevent injury to gardens and lawns and to decrease the damaging effects of runoff to our ground water, avoid using salt (sodium chloride) for winter ice control. There are alternative, eco-safe ice melting materials that are better choices.

Sand can be messy, but it's easy to obtain and apply, and spring rain will help clean it up. Cat litter is another popular option and great for traction on busy surfaces. Alfalfa meal is a completely natural fertilizer that contains nitrogen to help melt ice, and it also has good texture for traction. Although slower acting on ice and more costly than some options, urea is an organic lawn fertilizer that will not harm vegetation. The Earth Friendly brand (available at Whole Foods and most Jewel stores) offers Ice Melt which is one of the mildest formulas you can use; it works down to -13°F and is safe for pets.

Remember that snow should always be moved to the lowest point on your property for natural melting and drainage, and whatever ice melting substance you choose, apply it lightly, early and often!

— Sandra Alguire

Reprinted from CFC Newsletter Winter 2011