

Environmentally-friendly ways to Melt Ice and Snow

Salt may be effective, but there are more sustainable methods of ensuring your walkways are safe

Salt does a wonderful job of keeping your walkways ice free, but it's not kind on the environment or your pet's paws. [Over 20 million tons of salt](#) is used in an average winter to clear roads and sidewalks. This salt washes down to rivers, lakes and groundwater in the spring, causing damage to aquatic life. Spray from roads can negatively affect vegetation up to [650 feet away](#). Animals are drawn to roadways to lick the salt and can pose a danger to motorists. Salt can pit your concrete walkways and erode metal gates and fences. Luckily, there are many eco-friendly alternatives to consider this winter.

Organic De-icers

There are many commercial products at your local pet and hardware stores that lower the melting temperature of ice and snow to provide pet-friendly solutions. Be sure to check the list of ingredients and opt for organic de-icers so that you're not putting chemical additives into your garden and local water sources.

Sand or Coffee Grinds

Ask your local coffee shop for some free grinds or pick up a bag of sand from the hardware store. When you sprinkle these over your sidewalks, the darker colours will absorb more heat from the sun. Both sand and coffee grinds provide traction so you're less likely to slip. You can sprinkle ash from your wood fireplace on the walkways for the same effect.

Alfalfa Meal

This is a great natural ice-melting alternative to rock salt. Usually utilized as a fertilizer, alfalfa meal is available from most hardware stores and garden centres. Its grainy texture will provide traction and it's a cheap alternative that is very effective in moderation.

Sugar Beet Juice

This is beginning to be a [popular alternative to rock salt](#) used on roads as well as in residential settings. It's a cheap, natural choice that is effective in temperatures up to -20C. If you are concerned about turning

your sidewalks purple, don't worry—sugar beets are white and look more like carrots so they won't stain. Get a recipe to make your own sugar beet de-icer [here](#).

Shovelling

There really isn't a cheaper or more environmentally-friendly way to clean your walkways than shovelling. You get a little exercise and it's the most effective way to clear away ice and snow. Of course, you want to prevent accidents when you aren't there or perhaps you don't always have time to shovel, and that is when your organic de-icers come in handy.

Source URL (modified on 10/26/2017 - 10:37):

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