

Extension Notes

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

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Deicing Around Your Home

When winter storms are part of our forecast, we tend to think of all the possible hazards. Sometimes winter storms bring ice and snow that cover our sidewalks and driveways. Many people use deicers to help remove the slippery stuff, but how much is too much?

Following a few simple steps can help you stay safe while using fewer deicer products. Clear the necessary pathways of all snow. You can save time and energy by just shoveling the areas you need to get in and out of your house, greenhouse, barn, etc. Limit using deicer to the problem areas. You may only need a handful of product for a square yard. Be sure to read the product label for best practices, as products vary.

After the storm, sweep up any excess product to protect your lawn and local waterways. Experts suggest using more product is no more effective at clearing ice and snow. If you see salt crystals after the pathway is dry, that's a sign you have used too much.

Using too much deicer is not just wasting financial resources. The chemicals in deicing products can enter our stormwater and eventually streams and nearby rivers. Excess chemicals can also cause your lawn and landscape shrubs to turn yellow. The chemicals may also damage sidewalks and landscape pavers. It's a good idea to research native, salt-resistant plants for areas close to paved surfaces to keep your landscape looking nice in all seasons.

If you need help deciding on which deicer to use, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a helpful resource at <https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice/products> that show deicers and other household products that are safer for human health and for the environment.

You can also try some deicer alternatives. Cracked corn may not be a deicer, but it can provide much-needed traction in slippery areas. Several other options, such as sand, fireplace ashes or cat litter may help increase traction and they do not require as much cleanup after the winter weather passes. A creative way to keep ice from covering problem areas like stairs is to cover them in heavy plastic before a storm begins.

For more information, contact the Carter County Cooperative Extension Service. Educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expressions, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

Upcoming Events:

- **Beef Quality Care & Assurance Training** – February 2nd @ 10:00 AM – Call 474-6686 to register.
- **Private Pesticide Applicator Training** – February 2nd @ 5:30 PM – Call 474-6686 to register.
- **Little Sandy Beekeepers Association** – February 7th @ 6:00 PM
- **Ag Advancement Council** – February 13th @ 4:00 PM
- **Berry Plants** – The Extension Office is also accepting orders through February 27th for strawberry, raspberry, and blackberry plants. Call 474-6686 to request an order form.