

## Melt Ice But Save Plants

**CREAMERY (Montgomery Co.)**— With all the talk about global warming we still need to deal with ice and snow. Fortunately, even if it is deep, snow is not usually a problem for your lawn and landscape plants. However, as you shovel or blow snow from walks and drives, watch where you throw it. Snow can be heavy and too much piled over shrubs may cause mechanical damage.

A real concern at this time of year is with the type of melting materials some people use to remove ice and snow. If used incorrectly, these materials can damage lawns, shrubs, and ground covers along walks and drives. The most common melting salt used locally is probably sodium chloride, sold as table salt, rock salt, ice cream salt or water softener salt. Calcium chloride is also available commercially in some places.

Applied at excessive rates, both

calcium chloride and sodium chloride can injure plants. The sodium in sodium chloride will also damage soil structure and inhibit root growth and expansion. The U.S. Department of Interior, Park Maintenance Division, considers one-half pound of salt per square yard a safe rate for plants. This should be considered as total application per season and may be used as a guide.

If most of the salty water runs off your property onto the street, you might be able to get by with slightly higher applications. But remember, it's the salt that enters the soil that does the damage - both on your property as well as to surrounding areas.

A safer alternative for melting ice might be to use garden fertilizer. This is not quite as effective as salt, but run-off water mixed with fertilizer will help plants and lawns as long as you don't use too much.

Excessive applications of fertilizer will harm plants in the growing season. When you use a complete fertilizer like 5-10-10, the muriate of potash or KCI does most of the melting. Any superphosphate in the fertilizer probably adds traction and skid resistance rather than increasing melting.

Pure nitrogen fertilizer, such as urea, is a good melter at temperatures down to 11 degrees Fahrenheit, and is best applied at temperatures between 25 to 30 degrees. Urea can be applied at rates of 10 pounds per 100 square feet. An application of a mixture containing 3 pounds of urea and 100 pounds of sand will melt ice and increase surface traction at the same time.

For longer lasting control of ice on sidewalks, mix sawdust and calcium chloride. The sawdust absorbs some of the melter and slows the run-off rate. Mix at a rate of one part calcium chloride to three parts sawdust.



## Have You Heard?

By Doris Thomas

Lancaster Extension Home Economist

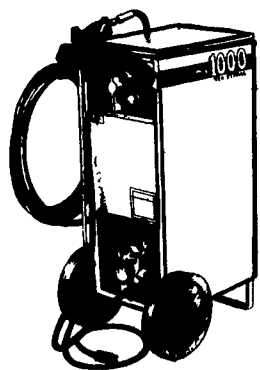
For most people, a large appliance is a major item in their household budget. To keep satisfaction high and disappointment low, I offer the following suggestions.

First study all the dealer's available printed materials. Specification sheets will help you compare different features, designs, and capacities on different makes and models. Check the warranty to find out how long the coverage is in effect, if it covers the entire product or only certain parts, and if labor is included. The appliance manual gives you information about how the product operates and any special care required.

Compare what you have learned with your personal requirements. What features will you really use? Will the use justify any extra cost? Will this model allow you to add on features in the future? Does the size meet your family's lifestyle requirements? Will the appliance fit where you plan to install it... with sufficient clearance to open

doors or accommodate family traffic patterns? Does this include removal of your old appliance? How much will that cost? Does the dealer service the appliances he sells? If not, find the nearest location for authorized factory service.

Once you have that new appliance in your home, don't wait until it is too late to discover that something does not work properly. Warranties are based on time, not usage. Since most defects show up during the first few uses, make a point of trying out each feature and testing the controls in the early stages of ownership. If you have a problem, contact the dealer or service agency immediately. If they do not handle the problem to your satisfaction, contact the manufacturer. Keep a "paper trail," for example, put your complaints in writing, then keep a copy of all correspondence and service receipts, including no-charge, in-warranty calls. This type of documentation will help settle any conflicts that might arise.



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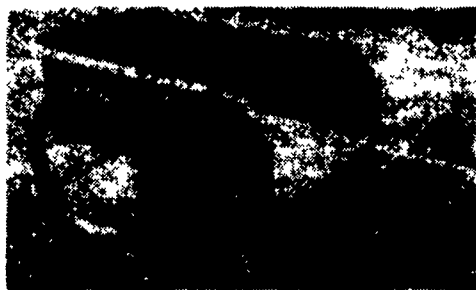


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