



Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District

Creating Conservation Solutions for Over 70 Years

Backyard Conversation Connecting Community + Conservation

Welcome to the Backyard Conversation! Each month we'll be sharing a conservation topic from a more personal viewpoint for our readers. To make this successful, I want to hear feedback from you! I'll include a poll at the bottom regarding our topic and share links to some of our partner organizations with similar messages. So, let's get to it!

Got Salt?

Be Salt Smart for Water Quality

Winter is here. Sorry, summer aficionados. Time to grab your winter coats, snow shovels and road salt. Did you know that many lakes and rivers across the country are contaminated with chloride? [Sources of chloride](#) include road salt and deicer, water softeners, fertilizers and dust suppressants. Although salt and deicers makes it easier to get from one place to another, salt breaks down in water into sodium and chloride.

When salt breaks down in water, it can severely impact water quality and freshwater critters. Chloride is nearly impossible to remove from a waterbody. Just one teaspoon of salt contains enough chloride to pollute 5 gallons of water forever. [Research has shown that freshwater has become saltier over time.](#) Reducing salt and deicer usage is key to reducing chloride contamination. So, let's talk about how you can be ["Salt Smart."](#)



It takes only
1 teaspoon
of road salt
to permanently pollute
5 gallons of water.



Step 1: Remove the Snow

Shovel, Scrape, Repeat. The old-fashioned way is the best way to remove snow! Shovel the snow, scrape the ice. Avoid ice buildup by shoveling early and often. Redirect downspouts away from hard surfaces to keep water from building up and freezing on your paved surfaces.

Don't Let Snow Get Compacted. Don't wait until the snowstorm is over. Try to get out and shovel one or two times before the snow piles up and becomes compacted. Compacted snow is very heavy, slick and hard to separate from the pavement.

Choose the Right Tool. There are many kinds of snow and ice, so you're going to need more than one tool to do the job. Check with your local hardware store to find push shovels, school shovels, ice chisels, and ice scrapers.

Step 2: Let's Talk About Salt, Baby!

There is no such thing as an "environmentally friendly" salt or deicer. Any salt or deicer contains chloride. The best thing you can do is to reduce how much you use. When you do use it, use in moderation and follow product instructions.

When to Use Salt. If you must apply salt or deicer, apply after the storm is over. Clear off loose or compacted snow first. Apply the product on ice only. Do not apply it on dry pavement. Temperatures commonly drop after a storm. Double-check the label on the product to ensure it will work before you apply it! Some do not work below specific temperatures. Furthermore, if it's a warm day and the sidewalk is wet, don't use deicers. The sun will do the job for you, and any deicer you apply will go straight down the storm drain.

How Much Salt to Use. Using more salt doesn't melt ice any faster. Use just enough to

do the job. You can shoot for a 3-inch spread between salt granules. A hand spreader is about \$10-\$20 and can make application easier and more precise. Try to apply no more than one pound of salt per 250 square feet of pavement. Pro tip: one pound of salt can typically fit in a regular-sized coffee mug.

Sand is Another Option. Use sand when it's too cold for salt to work. Sprinkle just enough to get traction on walkways. Sweep up any excess after the ice melts and dispose of in the trash or reuse it. Keep sand out of the storm drains - sand is a pollutant too. Don't mix sand and salt together. They have two different purposes, and sand will not help in wet, melting snow and slush.



Conservation Mini-Grants

Now accepting applications for our 2022 Conservation Mini-Grant program! We are offering up to \$2000 to three non-profit organizations for on-the-ground conservation projects in Franklin County, Ohio. Preferred projects are those directly benefitting underserved communities. Applications are due February 28. First-time applicants are encouraged to attend one of our virtual Q&A sessions or reach out to us prior to submitting your application. For more information and to register for a Q&A session, [click here.](#)

POLL TIME

Are you ready for winter weather and snow removal?

Yes, I have been ready!

Select

No, I'm procrastinating

Select

Someone takes care of snow removal for me

Select

Winter... what's that?

Select

Here are the full results from last month's poll about how readers manage leftover paint:

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 32.3% | 25% | 15.3% |
| Repurpose with another project! | Dry it with hardeners | Drop off at collection events |
| 8.9% | 7.3% | 5.6% |
| I don't have any leftover, I use it all! | Drop off at EEI | Donate it |
| | 5.6% | |
| | N/A - I don't do projects ;) | |

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