

Ask Jon Eakes

Dealing with icy sidewalks, & roofs

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To get some adhesion on the top of ice you can of course use sand, but cat litter and fireplace ashes work as well. Of the commercial de-icers, the finer power like ones will tend to go down slowly and do better at thinning the ice. The more rock style will cut their way down to the bottom quickly making holes in the ice which can make it easier to break it up with shovels. If you are de-icing a roof, don't use anything that has NaCl in it, a common ingredient for de-icers. It can do damage to your gutters and flashings and perhaps even your shingles. In general we don't use any ice breakers made for walkways on roofs. The most effective of the products that won't bother the roof are fertilizers from the gardening stores. They are not as fast, but they won't create future leaks.

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