

## Tips for Yard Art Snow Sculpting

Weather conditions and consistency of the snow will always impact what you can sculpt. Consider how wet the snow is and if temperatures are likely to harden or soften the snow. Be ready to think creatively, change your plans and keep experimenting.

**FIRST, Packing Snow** – The better you can pack snow the more you can sculpt it. Let packed snow sit overnight before sculpting. Basic method is shoveling snow into big piles, packing them down as much as possible. Forms can be used. When using a form add snow in layers packing it down as you go. Use something flat, such as the bottom of a bucket or a piece of wood, to press down each snow layer. Large cardboard boxes provide a disposable form, simply cut it off before sculpting. A large Rubbermaid tote or trashcan, as well as a sturdy plastic 5-gallon bucket, can provide reusable forms. Once firmly packed, carefully turn reusable form upside down to release packed snow, tapping sides as needed. Pull form straight up and off, let the snow sit for at least 2 hours, preferably overnight before sculpting. Pack the reusable form several times.

**Additive/Building Sculpting Method** – Good when snow is wet and heavy with temperatures at freezing or above. Use your hands to pack and build shapes. Plastic containers and bowls can help mold details.

**Subtractive/Carving Sculpting Method** – Good when weather is below freezing, and packed snow is holding shape. Dry fluffy snow must be packed for sculpting. After packed snow sets up, experiment with various tools to carve into the snow. Undercutting details slightly will create shadow and help everything pop visually.

**Tools** – Look for ideas in your garage, tool shed, kitchen or hardware store. Always ask adults first, to be safe and not damage anything important. Do NOT use knives! So many **sturdy** items made of plastic, metal or wood can be utilized to carve into snow. Experiment with various sized shovels, scoops, car ice scrapers, large spoons & spatulas, cheese graters, spackling tools, open rasps, garden trowels, hoes, rakes, hand saws, curry combs, and more. Plastic containers headed for recycling can be used for molds. Disposable aluminum or plastic pans can be used for freezing ice. Dollar Store & Goodwill can be a great place to find low-cost items.

**Ice Enhancements** – Adding ice near the end of your creation process can be rewarding. Look for accessible low-hanging icicles safe to harvest. Freeze water in small balloons to create ice globes. Freeze 1.5 inches of colored water in shallow pans for thin layers of ice, then break into pieces. These colored pieces can be embedded into and onto the surface of your sculpture. It is best to fill and freeze ice forms outdoors to avoid making a mess indoors. Choose a location away from walkways. Watch the weather forecast to know if temperatures will be low enough for items to freeze overnight or over a few days.

**Adding Surface Color** – After sculpture is completed, color can be added using spray bottles filled with water and a little food coloring. Do Not overdo spraying as it will degrade the snow. Spray a little, let it set/freeze, observe how much the color penetrates, then come back later to spray another layer if it needs more.

### SAFETY FIRST

- All tools approved by parent or supervising adult:
  - It will be ok if they get bent, broken or rusty
  - Items unlikely to cause person harm or injury
  - Age appropriate (provide increased adult supervision the sharper & pointier the tool)
  - Paint is Not environmentally sound, always use food coloring instead
- Have a place for tools not in use (Large bucket that will not tip over easily)
  - Keep tools off the ground where someone might kneel or step on them
  - Place tool bucket on a non-slippery surface and away from walking areas
- Stay hydrated by drinking water
- Take breaks to warm up and change out mittens as well as other clothing