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Monthly Newsletter

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GROWING SNOW IN SUMMER PLANTS



Ground covers are an attractive way to cover a lot of area in a garden quickly. Snow in summer flower, or Cerastium silver carpet, is an evergreen ground cover that flowers from May to June and grows well in USDA plant hardiness zones 3-7. This stunning European native is a member of the carnation family and is deer resistant. Flowering is profuse, with blooms that are silvery white and star-shaped, and when in full bloom, this mounded plant resembles a pile of snow, hence the plant's name. However, the flowers are not the only attractive part of this showy plant. The silver, grayish green foliage is a dainty addition to this plant and retains its rich color year round. Growing snow in summer plants (Cerastium tomentosum) is relatively easy. Snow in summer likes full sun but will also thrive in partial sun in warm climates. New plants can be started from seed, either directly sown into the flower garden in early spring or started indoors four to six weeks before the last expected frost date. The soil must be kept moist for proper germination but once the plant is established, it is very drought tolerant. Established plants may be propagated by division in the fall or by cuttings. Care of Snow in Summer Ground Cover is very easy to maintain but will spread rapidly and may become invasive, even earning the nickname mouse-ear chickweed.

For more on this, please visit:
<http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornemental/groundcover/snow-in-summer/growing-snow-in-summer-plants.htm>

WINTER WEATHER FOR FACILITY MANAGERS, WORK SPANS EVERY SEASON

For most people, snow is a seasonal phenomenon; love it or hate it, the white stuff is generally out of sight and out of mind for six months of the year. Facility managers, on the other hand, have to think about the white stuff year round. If they're not actually dealing with snowflakes coming down, they are evaluating current and potential snow removal suppliers, negotiating pricing, updating site plans and working to improve their response to snow and ice storms of every size.

Winter weather planning generally starts in late spring with a review of the season just passed.

"We go over what happened with each client, and we also take a look at our processes to see if there are any improvements we have to make," said Mark Goulding, Director of Recurring Services at Springwise Facility Management, which is responsible for snow removal at 2,700 retail locations throughout the country.

Part of this process is evaluating current snow removal suppliers. "There are a lot of quantitative metrics you can build in to manage suppliers and get a holistic view of whether or not a supplier is doing a good job," said Wayne Knaub, SVP of Sales and Marketing at RSM Maintenance, which oversees these services at 165 retail, restaurant and multi-site clients nationwide. Those metrics can include store managers' ratings, time to get the service completed and the number of callbacks to a location.

By June or July, companies are sending out snow removal RFPs. Some retailers prefer the continuity of multi-year contracts. "With roughly 1,100 snow suppliers and 3,300 stores and clubs, you don't want to be doing bids every year just to do a bid," said Doug McDaniel, Walmart's Senior Manager, External Services. "If everybody's happy, if everything is going smoothly, we really don't want to rock the boat on the price; we'll just let that contract go on to next year."

Whether suppliers are seasoned or new, RSM makes sure that they are a good fit for each location.

"We will talk to them, review expectations and let them know what clients we are working with," said Chris Mammolitti, Director of Operations, RSM Maintenance. Large suppliers may not want to deal with small convenience stores or gas station lots; smaller suppliers may not be equipped to deal with big box stores. "You don't find a lot of suppliers who will say no to a job, so it's our responsibility to vet that. We check how many other locations they are servicing in the area, how many trucks and routes they have. We help them map it out and make sure that they are not biting off more than they can chew and that they are going to be able to deliver the service that we need."

Facility managers want to work with suppliers that will be honest with them up front about what they can do and who will communicate openly if problems such as an equipment breakdown occur during the season, he added.

For more on this, please visit: <http://www.prsm.com/blog/winter-weather-for-facility-managers,-work-spans-every-season>



ATS SNOW QUOTE

"What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness?"

-John Steinbeck

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