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## FOUNTAINS, PLANTERS, BIRDBATHS AND STATUES

### Winter Care & General Maintenance

#### GENERAL PRODUCT CARE FOR CAST STONE, POTTERY AND GRANITE:

1. Cast stone (concrete), pottery and granite products should never be set directly on dirt or mulched beds. A patio stone must be placed underneath them. The patio stone helps keep the item level, prevents it from absorbing moisture from the ground, and from lying in standing, freezing and thawing water in the winter. If your piece sits in standing water during the winter, it will absorb water, and when it freezes, it will crack and crumble. Please remember, standing water can occur on your deck or patio and certainly includes your pond. Raise items in your pond above the highest water level for the winter.
2. Most products can be left outside through the winter as long as they cannot hold water anywhere.
3. Mexican pottery, other delicate pottery and red clay products must be brought indoors prior to the first frost and stored indoors during the winter.
4. Sealing pieces with a water sealant will not prevent cracking or other winter damage.
5. Product can typically be wiped clean with a sponge and water. For excessive dirt or stubborn stains use mild detergent and a soft brush.
6. Stained cast stone should be treated with Henri stone sealer once a year. Painted products should be treated with Henri sealer spray once a year. The piece must be clean and dry when the spray is applied. Painted or stained products left outside year round will weather quicker. Any applied color will last longer if the piece is stored inside during the winter.

#### FOUNTAINS:

1. Any fountain set outside should not be set directly on dirt or mulched beds. A patio stone must be placed beneath it, unless it is sitting on a deck or patio that does not allow standing water to accumulate around the base of the fountain. A fountain with a flat bottom basin set in the landscape, must have a minimum of 2 inches of pea gravel as a base. A fountain with a flat bottom basin set on a hard surface (concrete patio, paver patio, etc.) must have 1/2" or more of sand underneath it for leveling and for the pump cord to run under the basin. A bead of silicone should be applied around the perimeter of the basin to prevent the sand from washing away.
2. Fountains should never be installed on loose soil or where a tree or shrub, etc. has been removed. This area is essentially a hole. Gravel or other hard material needs to be used to fill the hole. The area needs to be compacted to produce a stable support for your fountain. It is important that the area is settled so that your fountain can remain level. An un-level fountain will not flow evenly.

3. Fountain bowls must remain filled with water at all times in season. Allowing a fountain to run low on water will cause the pump to overheat and fail. Pump failure due to lack of water is not covered under any warranty.
4. The pump intake must remain free of leaves and debris at all times. If the pump intake is clogged, the pump will not have enough water flowing through it to keep the motor cool, and the pump could overheat and fail. Pump failure due to operating while clogged is not covered by warranty.
5. Aquatic & Garden Decor does not recommend using extension cords with re-circulating pumps.
6. **Do not** run fountains 24 hours a day. **Do not** run fountains overnight, while at work, on vacation, etc. Fountains running for longer periods of time are more susceptible to water loss from wind, splash, evaporation, etc.
7. Algaecides available at Aquatic & Garden Decor can be added to fountains to help prevent algae growth. They are not harmful to humans, birds, or other animals when used as directed. Be sure to read and follow the directions on the package. Also, clean out the fountain and fill it with fresh water before adding the algaecide.
8. Chlorine bleach is not recommended for use in fountains to treat algae. It is corrosive to the pump and will fade any color applied to the fountain. Adding chlorine voids the warranty of the pump and the fountain.
9. For the winter months, re-circulating pumps should be removed if practical. They should be cleaned and stored indoors in a container of water. The water prevents the seals from drying out.
10. If water lies in a fountain bowl during the winter and freezes, the bowl could crack. The best winter care for a fountain is to disassemble the unit and store it in a garage, barn, etc. At a minimum, the bowls must be flipped over, or the unit can be left assembled, drained and covered with a fountain cover. When covering fountains, be sure to place water absorbent material in the bowl(s) to absorb any condensation that forms under the cover. In order for the fountain cover to fit correctly, there needs to be a natural high spot at the top center of the fountain. If you have removed any components of the fountain or the fountain does not have a natural central high spot, it may be necessary to use an object to hold the center of the cover in a cone shape allowing water to run off. The cover must fit tightly so it does not sag into the bowls, thus creating areas where water can pool. Fountain covers, in a variety of sizes, to fit most fountains, are available at Aquatic & Garden Decor. **Great Tip!** If the unit does not splash, bring it indoors in the fall and winter, and run it inside. A fountain makes a wonderful humidifier for dry winter air.
11. **Do not** use antifreeze in fountains during the winter. This will not prevent winter damage and will void any warranty.
12. **Do not** leave fountains outdoors, assembled and uncovered during the winter. This will void any warranty. Water from rain and snow will accumulate in an assembled uncovered fountain, which will then freeze and damage the fountain.
13. **Do not** use any type of heating or de-icing device in any type of fountain during the winter. Not draining and not covering the fountain voids any warranty.

14. One piece pottery fountains make beautiful home accents that double as humidifiers in the winter. Be aware that pottery is susceptible to weeping. Always place some type of saucer under a pottery fountain that is run indoors.

## **PLANTERS:**

1. Any outside planter should never be set directly on dirt or mulched beds. A patio stone must be placed underneath it, unless it is on a deck or patio that does not allow standing water to accumulate around the base of the planter.
2. To prevent winter damage for planters, we recommend the following: A piece of underlayment or landscape fabric should be sandwiched between a 2" - 4" layer of cobblestone in the bottom with your planting soil on top. This will allow for proper drainage and will prevent your potting soil from clogging the planter's drainage hole. The water that drains from your planter will be cleaner because it is being filtered by the underlayment.
3. Planters can remain outside during the winter if the drainage holes are not plugged up, and the planter is draining properly. Clay soils are more prone to clog drain holes.
4. Planters that sit on smooth patios should be shimmed so that they do not seal themselves to the patio thus preventing water from draining through the hole in the bottom.

## **BIRDBATHS:**

1. Any birdbath set outside should never be set directly on dirt or mulched beds. A patio stone must be placed underneath it, unless it is sitting on a deck or patio that does not allow standing water to accumulate around the base of the birdbath.
2. If water lies in a birdbath bowl during the winter and freezes, the bowl could crack. The best winter care for a birdbath is to store the unit in a garage, barn, etc. At minimum, the bowl must be flipped over. If there are still recesses that can hold water, they can freeze and crack. Cover appropriately.
3. **Do not** use any type of heating or de-icing device in any type of birdbath during the winter. Not draining and not covering the birdbath voids any warranty.

**ATTENTION: Cast stone fountains and other garden ornaments are not toys, and are not meant to be climbed on or played around.**

**All products and accessories discussed in this tip sheet are available at Aquatic & Garden Decor.**