



NATURAL STONE CARE GUIDELINES

Thank you for trusting us with your outdoor living space. Your natural stone material was selected for timeless character, texture, and long-term beauty. Because our seasons bring freeze/thaw cycles, snow, moisture, and organic debris, a simple maintenance routine will preserve both appearance and structural integrity for years to come.

Overview:

The main priorities for natural stone care include managing water correctly, keeping joints full and surfaces clean. Confirm the jointing material used in your natural stone area to help manage future maintenance.

Weekly/Routine Care:

A light cleaning every couple of weeks during the outdoor season keeps the stone looking its best

- Blow off leaves, dirt, and pollen
 - Rinse with a gentle garden hose spray
 - No pressure washing at close range
- Remove wet leaves to prevent tannin staining
- Clean any spills from food, wine, oils or mulch promptly
- Clean with a pH-neutral stone cleaner only
 - No bleach
 - No vinegar or acidic cleaners (these will etch surfaces)
 - No harsh degreasers not rated for natural stone
 - No wire brushes on limestone or sandstone

Yearly Care:

- *Spring Refresh:*
 - Deep clean surface - remove any winter buildup
 - Inspect for heaving or settled areas
 - Replace missing joint sand
 - Remove moss in shaded areas
 - Spot-clean rust, grill grease, and furniture stains
 - Note any chipped or spalled pieces for reset
- *Winter Protection (Before Snow Season):*
 - Top off any missing joint material
 - Clean organic debris from surface
 - Confirm water drains away from patio
 - Inspect edges for movement

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IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Do not use salt or heavy deicers
- Do not aggressively pressure wash stone or jointing material
- Do not seal with non-breathable wet-look coatings
- Do not allow wet leaves to sit for extended periods
- Inspect/fill joints prior to winter to prevent further damage

Snow and Ice Removal:

- Use a plastic snow shovel only (avoid metal blades scraping stone edges)
- Repeated salt exposure can accelerate surface scaling and internal stone degradation
- Use calcium magnesium acetate or sand for traction
 - Avoid rock salt and sodium chloride on limestone and sandstone

Joint and Edge Maintenance:

- Check seasonally:
 - Missing sand in joints
 - Weed growth
 - Edge movement
 - Low spots holding water
- If joints begin opening, refill promptly before winter. Open joints allow water infiltration that expands during freeze cycles and can shift or crack stone

Sealing Recommendations:

- Natural stone consists of a variety of materials. Not every type of natural stone should be sealed the same way. Here are some best practices:
 - Porous Stones (ex. *Limestone, Sandstone, some Travertine*)
 - Use a breathable penetrating sealer every 2-3 years, ideally in fall before freezing weather. This reduces water and salt absorption while still allowing vapor to escape
 - Dense Stones (ex. *Granite, Bluestone*)
 - Sealing can depend on finish and stain exposure
 - A natural-look penetrating sealer is recommended – not a glossy topical film – to preserve traction and avoid trapped moisture

WHY IS MY STONE BREAKING IN LAYERS?

- ‘Spalling’ or ‘delamination’ in natural stone is a natural occurrence. It is generally an indicator of sub-florescence, a condition in which mineral salts are carried into the stone by moisture and accumulate beneath the stone’s surface, creating stress within the pores of the stone. Spalling causes layers to flake off the natural stone. This is a normal condition of natural stone. Certain stones may show this more than others. This condition is usually noticed more in spring after the stone experiences freeze-thaw cycles, since the moisture and salts will freeze and expand, building up even more pressure within the stone.