

USE CARE MANUAL FOR DURX – LITECRETE

IMPORTANCE OF PROPER CARE FOR YOUR PLANTERS AND GARDEN STATUES

Creating your outdoor environment is an ongoing process. A beautiful landscape can add not only value to your home, and offer the perfect space for entertaining family and friends, it can also create a spiritual place to rejuvenate, relax and reflect among nature.

Planters are simple way to brighten up any area of your home. Whether a front entryway, your patio, or along a pathway, these large planters can add pops of colour and lots of contrast to an otherwise dull area. Whether you have modern outdoor planters or simple containers placed around your yard and patio area, proper care and maintenance will create an area that all of your guests will swoon over.

Gardens have always had a certain mystical and magical character. They mesmerize us with arrays of dazzling colors and aromatic smells and flavors, transforming themselves into wonderful sanctuaries ideal for meditation, relaxation and spending quality time with friends or in the company of a good book. Garden statues can be a part of this complex visual stimulation, adding a touch of sophistication or playfulness to the great outdoors.

To maintain the beauty of your garden statues for as long as possible, it's important to give them proper care. Painted statues should be kept in enclosed areas, protected from the elements. You can also keep them in exposed areas if you coat them with liquid car wax.

CLEANING TIPS

Ceramics

Using some dish soap and a hard-bristle plastic scrub brush, give the planter a thorough cleaning, inside and out. Rinse to remove all soap residue. Now, using my favorite cleaner, vinegar, wipe the entire pot with full-strength regular or apple-cider vinegar until all the white mineral deposits have dissolved. Fill a water bottle spray with half water and half white vinegar solution, spray and leave for a few minutes before rubbing off.

On ceramic planters, try removing very heavy limescale deposits by rubbing gently with an old toothbrush (or for very hard and encrusted limescale, try using a pumice stone gently).

Clay

Terracotta has many advantages for the gardener and flower grower. One of the greatest is the fact that clay is completely natural, porous, and has thermal properties that make it an asset to plants. Those who use terracotta know that the porous nature of clay means you cannot easily overwater plants, the roots can breathe, and the clay itself has excellent heat retention and repellent properties. All of this adds up to better plant care.

These traditional, beautiful earthenware pots are heavy and subject to breaking, however, some care must be taken in their handling and use. The porous nature of the pots also makes them more difficult to clean between seasons especially if you're unaware of how to properly go about it.

Cleaning terracotta is all about keeping fungus and algae from growing. The pores that naturally occur in the clay can harbor these and pass them on to the plants when you replant. Cleaning is not a difficult job, however. It just requires that you know what to do and why you're doing it.



Completely empty the pot of all soil and residue, rinsing or scrubbing to do so if necessary. It's not recommended that you use harsh chemicals to kill any spores or fungus that might be present, as these chemicals can linger and then get into your plants when you replant. Once the dirt has been removed from the pots, there are three methods that are commonly used to ensure a disinfected pot.

Another method is to use household bleach cut with water. Mix it at a (maximum) 1:10 ratio of bleach to water and dunk the pots completely into the water (or wash them thoroughly if they're too large). Let the pots dry in the open air for at least two days after cleaning and most of the residual bleach will dissipate. Bleach is hard on clay and slowly eats away at it, so avoid overusing bleach in your solution.

Before planting anything new in a terracotta pot, you should presoak the pot. The porous nature of the clay tends to pull water from the soil, robbing your plant of it at this important, delicate stage. Soaking the pots in clean water for 24 hours prevents this.

Concrete

Concrete planters are sturdy, strong and often look like decorative stone. If you've used a concrete planter for a plant that has died (or that has been potted elsewhere), and now wish to re-use the planter, clean it first. Cleaning and sanitizing planters prevents diseases from spreading plant to plant. A concrete planter's rough surface doesn't always lend itself to easy cleaning, but with the proper equipment you should be able to prepare the planter well enough to safely house a new plant.

Place a plastic bag near the planter. This is to hold the dirt you remove from the planter. If the previous plant suffered from a disease, or the dirt appears moldy, you should dispose of this with your yard waste--otherwise, you can just put it in your compost pile or another area of your garden.

Put on your garden gloves. Use a spade or small shovel to remove dirt from the pot. If the pot is small and light enough, you can turn it on its side, on the plastic bag, to let gravity help you with this part. Otherwise, use the spade or shovel to remove all you can, first.

Turn on your garden hose and fill a clean bucket with water. Add 2 to 3 tbsp. of a mild, biodegradable dish detergent.

Wet a scrubbing brush in the detergent solution and scrub the inside of the pot, where it is likely the most dirty. Rinse the concrete planter out with your garden hose. Scrub the inside again if any dirt remains (and rinse once more).

Scrub the exterior of the planter with the scrubbing brush dipped in the detergent solution. Rinse as you did the interior of the planter.

Iron and Metal

Cast iron planters are plant holders or plant stands. Rather than putting a plant directly into the planter, the plant is in another pot that is then set into the planter. Many cast iron planters are used outdoors, and exposure to the elements such as rain and polluted air can present some challenges when it comes to taking care of the planter. Fear of the elements shouldn't stop you from enjoying the look of cast iron planters. By following a few tips, you can take care of the planter and make it last for years.

Coat the planter with liquid car wax at least two times per year. This will help protect the planter from water and the elements, much like wax protects your car's finish. Pour some car wax on the planter, spread it out and rub it in with a clean rag.

Sand down any chipped areas with steel wool, wipe them clean and touch up with an anti-rust primer, followed by matching all-weather enamel paint. Allow it to dry completely and apply a clear sealant. Check the paint labels for drying times.

Do not allow the iron planter to sit in puddles of standing water, because this will promote rust.

Never plant flowers or plants directly into an iron planter. The soil will take up iron, and the moisture from watering the plant may cause the planter to rust.

Wood

Most wood used for planters naturally repels bacteria and fungi, but it can get dirty. Wash wooden planters with warm, soapy water, let dry and oil or wipe with a wood preservative.

Mix one part chlorine bleach to nine parts water in the spray bottle, and soak all surfaces of the planter. Scrub the planter clean with the plastic dish scrubber and air-dry. Brush all surfaces of the planter with nontoxic, plant-safe waterproofing liquid.