

## Concrete Care and General Maintenance

### Natural Concrete Statuary and Birdbaths

Many people find the inevitable ageing and weathering of natural concrete to be appealing. Little or nothing needs to be done to protect the finish of natural concrete. Natural weathering may be impeded by applying clear concrete sealer.

### Finished Concrete Fountains, Statuary and Birdbaths

Finished concrete has been painted with penetrating sealer paint, and designed to resist the elements for many years. The luster may be revived seasonally with a light coating of clear aerosol paint. To refinish the concrete, purchase a refinishing kit from your local independent garden center.

To touch-up minor damage, such as dings, nicks and scratches, use a dab of any concrete paint that matches in color. To antique the concrete, let the base coat dry, apply a top coat and wipe it off immediately.

Depending upon temperature and evaporation, you may notice a buildup of white residue on the surface of the concrete bowl. Such a buildup is normal and unavoidable in areas with high mineral content in the water supply. A frequent rinse and water change will help to minimize the problem.

### Winter Storage

Extreme and rapid temperature changes and humidity affect all concrete adversely. Concrete has an inherent tendency to expand and contract with climatic conditions. Our fountains and birdbaths have been manufactured with weather in mind. The concrete mix contains fiber and mechanical additives, which enhance the elastic qualities of the concrete. It is normal for non-threatening surface cracks to sometimes appear, but this condition will not cause the fountain to crack due to weather contingent upon one important rule: **Do not allow standing water to freeze in the bowl, and do not allow the fountain or birdbath to sit in a pool of ice.**

Your fountain must be protected if indoor storage during the winter months is not possible. Remove the pump, drain and flush the filter and impeller. Store these parts in a warm, dry place. Drain the bowl(s), and fill the cavity with enough material (burlap, old blankets, etc) to form a dome, wrapping it with heavy plastic tightly secured with twine or rope. Condensation droplets may form on the inside of the plastic only to be absorbed by the cloth material. If your plan is to keep your birdbath operational through the winter, a birdbath heater placed in the bowl is necessary.

The same principle also applies to concrete planters. They must be drained of water to avoid cracking due to freezing outdoor temperatures.

### Spring Start-up for Fountains

Inspect your concrete fountain for winter damage. If damage has occurred, it is best to repair it before filling with water. Remove the pump filter, and turn the impeller with a small screw driver to see if it freely moves. Spray it with WD40 if it is frozen, and let it stand for a few minutes. Once the impeller moves freely, replace the filter cover, place the pump into the water and start-up.