

FOUNTAIN SET-UP AND CARE

A fountain or bird bath is an essential piece in any garden nook or outdoor living space. The sight, sound and movement of water inspires the spirit, relaxes the soul and gladdens the heart. A bird bath can be the perfect finishing touch in a garden and provide an important source of water for wild birds. Proper set-up and care will prevent premature wear and tear, or breakage of your water feature, and ensure a long life for these pieces.

SET-UP

- Choose your location carefully for the fountain. Check out the view from sitting areas, open windows or gathering places so you achieve the viewing angle desired. Some fountains are very heavy and you won't want to move it more than once. Splashing fountains or bird baths should be in an area that is okay to get wet or messy.
- If electric is not available nearby, employ a certified electrician to install the proper outdoor line and weather resistant receptacle.
- If the fountain is very heavy, installing a stable footer underneath the fountain to below the frost line is essential. Heavy fountains without proper support will tilt and fall over, especially if the ground remains wet. Packed stone to a depth of 18" is usually adequate, poured concrete is better.
- Before beginning, make sure you keep all manuals and paperwork in a file. You'll need these for when pumps need replaced, the finish color needs touched up, or if a bird bath top is broken and needs to be matched with a now orphaned base. Also, test the operation of the pumps and lights, if equipped, in a bucket of water before installing in the fountain. It is a pain to take all that tubing and equipment out after you thought you were done!
- Wear sturdy shoes when setting up the fountain. Many a toe has been smashed moving heavy fountain pieces. Lay blankets or cardboard pieces around the work site to avoid scratches or breakage.
- Take your time setting the fountain up. Check as you go to make sure each layer is level and use shims as necessary to level the piece. If tubes and cords are run up through rubber stoppers, make sure these are very secure to avoid leaks.

MAINTENANCE

- Check water levels daily, and clean out debris from the basin and pump.
- Bird baths should be scrubbed every other day with plain water and soft bristled brush. Fountains should be cleaned the same way every three weeks and probably more often in mid summer when algae can run rampant.
- An algaecide can be added to fountains to reduce algae growth. (Don't add to bird baths)

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WINTERIZING.

The purpose of winterizing your fountain or water feature is to prevent damage from the freezing temperatures. If the ceramic or stone material that the fountain is made of absorbs water, this expands as it freezes and can crack or break stone or ceramic pieces. Winterizing also affords you the chance to thoroughly clean service the fountain pieces and equipment, such as pumps, lights and tubing and cords.

- Drain the basins completely, mop out any excess and remove the pump. This is best done during a dry stretch of weather so the concrete, stone or ceramic can dry out for a day or two.
- Inspect for any cracks, chips in the finish or tilting of the fountain.
- Cover the fountain with a fountain cover securely. If movable, bring inside.
- Clean the pump and store indoors till spring. Clean any rubber plugs well and spread a layer of petroleum jelly to preserve their elasticity.
- If you wish to keep your bird bath in service through the winter for our feathered friends, you will have to invest in a bird bath heater. Its important to maintain water level in the basin and check it daily for the heater to work efficiently.
- Keep clean as usual.