

# Winter Storage & Maintenance

## Cast Stone Has A Life Of Its Own...

It all begins on the drawing board with the most original and eye-catching designs. Next, each piece is handcrafted with only the highest grade, most durable materials. Predictably, the results are always the same with every cast stone piece we make. It all comes down to beauty, longevity, and unsurpassed quality. And we've been doing it that way for over five decades. But what part does nature play? The elements? The changing of seasons once your cast stone treasure finds its way into your home or garden? Surely, time can take its toll. The fact is, it can – and will. But the bottom line is – preserving the lasting beauty of our fine products is easy. All it takes is a basic understanding of cast stone, and with just a few simple steps - you can protect and preserve the beauty of fountains, birdbaths, urns, planters, statuary – virtually everything in this catalog - season after season – year after year. Please read on...

## Nature's Way

The weather and the environment will have an effect on any cast stone object. Each piece will age differently and take on a unique life of its own. But that's a good thing. Some people call it a residue or patina. We call it character.

## Efflorescence

Efflor – what? Don't panic. Efflorescence is the chalky white, sometimes grayish residue that appears on the surface of cast stone materials. It is actually a part of the natural aging process - and eventually washes away during a normal weather cycle.

Chemically speaking, efflorescence occurs when water leaves behind salt deposits and is present on the stone surface.

The word efflorescence means “to flower out” in French. In this case, it is salt flowering out of surfaces.

## Iron Oxidation

Iron Oxidation is another natural occurrence that appears on bowls and basins that hold water. Minimal amounts of iron used as ingredients in cast stone products react with water and a pink or orange powdery-like substance may become visible.

## The Bottom Line

The plain truth is - nature happens. But that's what gives each stone piece its individuality, or like we say “a life of its own.” Most of the time, the oxidation and/or powdery white substance will disappear when it rains. You can also remove the discoloration with water and a soft brush. Or you can leave it be. Weathered finishes designed by Mother Nature enhance the beauty of cast stone creating a truly one-of-a kind look.



## Winterizing Your Fountain

Freezing water expands and can cause cracks to form in concrete and other materials. Before the first frost you should winterize your fountain to protect it.

**Remove all of the water from the fountain shells and any parts of the fountain that will hold water.** A wet vacuum or similar vacuum works well for removing the water completely. If your fountain has drain plugs, remove the drain plugs to drain the water. Collect the drain plugs and place in a plastic bag. Leave the bag in the fountain so you can find them next spring. You will need to insert the drain plugs in the spring when you start up your fountain. The pump can remain in the fountain.

This is a perfect time to clean your fountain. Remove the drain plugs. Let the water drain, remove the leaves and any other debris by hand. Squirt the debris/mud that accumulates in the shells of the fountain with your garden hose. Never use harsh cleaners/chemicals or stiff brushes as they will harm the finish. While the shells of the fountain are still damp use a mild soap and a sponge to clean any dirt that may have accumulated during use.

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Rinse with clean water and wipe the remaining water with a sponge until all the water is removed. **If you have the Massarelli's EZ fountain lighting system installed in your fountain** carefully remove the string of LED lights and the transformer and store indoors for the winter. The jumper wires that are run inside the fountain can be left in the fountain.

Finally, it is time to place the cover over the fountain. Be sure the fountain is dry before you cover it. Massarelli's has fountain covers available in four sizes. Contact your Massarelli's dealer for pricing and availability. Center the cover on the fountain. Carefully tighten the drawstring so that the cover opening is smaller than the bottom shell of the fountain. **DO NOT OVER TIGHTEN.** Grab the cover from the top and lift the cover up until the cover opening touches the bottom of the shell. While holding the cover above the fountain with one hand, grab the cover with your other hand just above the top piece of the fountain. At this point, you will tie off the cover with a piece of rope. Doing this will custom fit the cover to your fountain. After your fountain is covered **DO NOT** allow water to re-enter the fountain, **DO NOT** allow water, snow or ice to collect on top of the cover. Through the winter check your fountain to make sure the cover is secure and water or ice has not collected on the fountain cover. You want to keep your fountain free of water, ice and condensation. **Please note that Massarelli's is not responsible for damage to our products due to freezing temperatures or seasonal weather conditions.**

If you have more specific questions about winterizing your Massarelli's fountain, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sales@massarelli.com](mailto:sales@massarelli.com).

## Fountain Maintenance While Operating Your Fountain

**Always operate your fountain with the pump fully submerged in water.** Do not let your pump run dry. Low water levels in your fountain may cause pump burnout. Check your fountain's water level frequently. You may need to add water to your fountain every day or every week, depending on the fountain, to maintain levels and to keep the water from stagnating.

**Keep your fountain clean. Massarelli's recommends weekly cleaning.** Remove leaves and debris that may enter the fountain. To control the growth of algae **DO NOT** use a chlorine-based product as they can damage the finish on the fountain. Use a water clarifier and algaecide. You can also use products that contain natural enzymes which safely break down organic contaminants. Natural enzymes are not a chemical and may take longer to work. Such cleaners can be purchased from your local garden center or swimming pool supply store. Before adding any cleaner product in your fountain, always start with fresh clean water. Aquatic plants and fish are not recommended in your fountain. Plant roots will clog the pump and most ornamental fountains are not deep enough to support fish.

## Urn and Planter Maintenance

**Urns and planters should not hold water.** Water should drain through the drain holes that are in all of Massarelli's urns and planters. Keep the drain holes open. When water does not drain, it may kill your plants and/or cause cracks in your planter. To encourage proper drainage, we recommend the following. First, place a piece of weed barrier inside the planting cavity completely covering the bottom of the urn or planter. Second, place a layer of stone on top of the weed barrier; the size of the stone should be larger than the diameter of the drain hole, about 1/3 of the depth of the planting cavity of the urn or planter. Third, completely cover the stone layer with another piece of weed barrier. Next fill the urn or planter with the soil of your choice to the desired height. Finally, plant your flowers. **During winter weather raise the urn or planter off the ground using two wood strips.** This will prevent the urn or planter from freezing to the ground. Be careful not to block the drain holes.

## Bird Bath Winter Maintenance

If a bird bath is left outdoors when the temperature drops below freezing, ice can form inside the bird bath, which may damage the finish and/or possibly crack the bird bath. **To prevent freeze damage, you should consider storing your bird bath indoors (garage or shed).** If you leave your bird bath outdoors during winter weather, turn the top over so water will not collect in it. Do not allow the pedestal to sit in a pool of ice or freeze to the ground. Massarelli's does not recommend the use of any type of heating or de-icing device for our bird baths. During winter weather raise the bird bath off the ground using two wood strips. This will prevent the bird bath from freezing to the ground.