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## Winter Maintenance For Your Fountain

Before the first frost you should consider winterizing your fountain so you can enjoy it next season. Here are some good housekeeping tips we have collected from years of experience. We hope they will help you.

First, if your fountain has a copper fountain ring, disconnect the copper ring and store indoors. There is water in the copper ring so be careful not to get wet when you remove. These copper rings are highly sensitive to winter weather and the elements. The spray heads are very fragile. Always handle a copper fountain ring with extreme care.

If you have the 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.

Before you cover your fountain for the winter. Remove ALL of the water from the fountain shells and any parts of the fountain that will hold water. A Wet-Vac, Shop-Vac or similar vacuum works great for removing the water. 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. Most times all you need to do is squirt the muck that accumulates in the shells of the fountain with your garden hose. Never use harsh cleaners or stiff brushes this 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 built up through the summer. Rinse with clean water and wipe up the remaining water with a sponge until all the water is removed.

### Covering Your Fountain

Open the cover and place the cover over the fountain. 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.

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## **Fountain Maintenance**

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. You will need to add water to your fountain daily due to the design, wind, evaporation and splash.

Keep your fountain clean. Remove leaves and debris that may enter the fountain. To control the growth of algae do not use a chlorine base product. Chlorine base products can damage the finish on the fountain. Use a less harsh water clarifier and algaecide that can be purchased from your local garden center or swimming pool supply store. 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. Follow the directions printed on the bottle.

**Before adding any product in your fountain, always start with fresh clean water.**

Aquatic plants and fish are not recommended in your fountain. The roots from the plants will clog the pump and most ornamental fountains are not deep enough to support fish. In both cases there will be extra cleaning.

## **Urn and Planter Maintenance**

Keep the drain holes open. Urns and planters should not hold water. Water should drain through the drain holes that are in urns and planters. When water does not drain your plants will die in the summer and your urn or planter will crack in the winter. Here is what you do.

Place a piece of weed barrier inside the planting cavity completely covering the bottom of the urn or planter. (Weed barrier is available at your local garden center) 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. Completely cover the stone with another piece of weed barrier, to prevent the soil you place in the urn or planter from washing out and clogging the drain hole. Fill the urn or planter with the soil of your choice to the desired height. Then plant your flowers.

During the winter 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**

During the winter if birdbath is left outdoors, ice can form inside the birdbath top and damage the finish and possibly crack the top when the ice expands. Store your birdbath indoors (garage or shed). If your birdbath is left outdoors, turn the top over so water will not collect. Do not allow the pedestal to sit in a pool of ice or freeze to the ground.

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