

Outside Bluestone Deck Seal it or not?

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My contractor wants to seal our recently installed bluestone pool deck "to make it last longer and protect it". He is recommending Prosoco SLX100 Water & Oil Repellent or Prosoco Natural Stone Treatment or Protectosil Aqua-Trete. The stone yard does not recommend sealing outside stone and I see that you agree. Why are all these sealers made for outside stone if it is not supposed to be sealed? What would these products do for the deck? Thank you. Kathleen

Dear Kathleen:

“Why are all these sealers made for outside stone if it is not supposed to be sealed?”

Hmmm! This is a difficult one! Let's see! Perhaps money and “selling it” may have something to do with it!?!

How could consumers resist when they hear words like “sealer”, “protection”, “preservation” and “we're concerned about your investment”! (Yeah, sure!) J

I make sealers, too, but I don't have one for outdoors.

Oh, no, wait a minute, I do! All I have to do is change color a little bit put it in a different bottle labeled “Specifically Formulated For Outdoors” (whatever that means), and Tah-Dah! J

“What would these products do for the deck?”

Not much, really, this side of helping their makers, their distributors and their applicators improve their bottom line. They're also pretty good at suffocating the stone a little bit, which she needs like you need a hole in your head.

The “ministers” of the “sealing cult” and their brain-washed “followers” like your contractor “preach” that the sealer will keep the moisture out. Well, guess, what: it does exactly the opposite. In fact it keeps the moisture in for longer than it should. I'm not talking about the moisture coming from without, like rain and dew and melting snow. Those never damaged stone, if the stone is appropriate for outdoors. I'm talking about the moisture coming from the ground underneath it and migrating through its core. If you alter the natural rate of migration that was designed by Mother Nature for any given stone by obviously slowing it down because of a sealer, you never know what is going to happen, even with stones like Blue Stone that are very good for outdoors in their natural state. If you're lucky, nothing is going to happen - that's all.

But who knows, maybe your contractor knows better than I do, and the stone would last longer if sealed periodically with those wondrous and very impressing-sounding (almost intimidating, actually) products.

But I can't help thinking that the Coliseum in Rome is over 2000-year-old. It's still there and going strong. It will last probably another 4000 or 5000 years or more. Of course, if the Romans had sealed it with those amazing products it would last even longerâ€”!

Well, what can I tell you? Look at it this way: by being a cheapskate and saving yourself the money for the sealing â€œritualâ€•, you're probably gonna give up a few hundred years and you'll have to settle to enjoying your stone only for a few millenniaâ€” J

If I were you, I'd tell your contractor flat-out to go seal his sister's outdoor stone patio. Andâ€” you'd better make sure that he knows what he's doing and he installed it right. A faulty installation **will** really do some damage â€” not the lack of a silly sealer.

Needless to say, if marblecleaning.org could have its ways, questions like this one would never be asked. But we can't do anything by ourselves. We need the support of the consumers to succeed. On that spiritâ€”!

May I ask you now to please read and e-sign our Statement of Purpose at: <http://www.marblecleaning.org/purpose.htm>?

Ciao and good luck,

Maurizio Bertoli

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