

Natural slate - care outside

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I had natural slate installed outside on my covered patio. How do I care for it and how do I keep a shine on it? The grout was sealed & an impregnator was applied.

Dear Leah:

By saying slate you're saying very little "if anything at all. There are many different (and I do mean **different**) kinds of slate that span from dense and acceptable rocks, to slate that will actually fall apart under foot traffic, or turn into mud when repeatedly hit by water, and everything in between.

So which slate do you have?

That said, the application of an impregnator to outdoors stone installations in general is never a good idea: stone must "breathe" to endure, and while this scientific is not very important for indoor installations, it becomes vital outdoors. For outdoors, either a stone is appropriate, or it isn't. It's that simple. Certain slates are suitable and enjoyable, but many others are not.

However, even the suitable ones may not be so suitable anymore, if some resin of sorts is forced into them. If you're lucky, nothing is going to happen. The consequent slowing down of the osmosis may void all bets. If you're lucky, nothing is going to happen.

Stones have been installed outdoors for ever. The suitable ones are still there (unsealed). The unsuitable ones are long gone! And no product that's only meant to prevent (improbable and inconsequential) stains could ever turn poor stones into good ones.

Unfortunately there's no substitute for knowledge and professionalism and they sure don't come inside a bottle.

Furthermore, I don't understand your desire to "keep a shine on it". How come it's shiny now?... Unless some topical hard-shell sealer (urethane or acrylic) was applied to it, I don't see how natural slate could be possible shiny.

Could you please explain?

Finally, if you install stone outdoors and hope to keep it as brand-new all the time, you're going to be in for an unpleasant surprise. Especially slate "whatever slate you have.

A few slates are very enjoyable outdoors, but only if you learn how to just "enjoy them"! If you want to fight Mother Nature by desperately trying to keep them in pristine conditions, you're gonna be in for an uphill and non-winnable battle.

All you should use to care for your outdoor stone installations (assuming that's the right stone for the application), is good-quality stone floor cleaner like MB-1 and, occasionally (maybe once a year or so) a heavy duty stone cleaner like MB-2. All the rest: impregnators, topical hard-shell finishes and all that, is just trash.

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

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