



Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

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We've Gotcha Covered

Sallie Strole, *Johnson's East Store*

As winter approaches and our activities move us inside, we tend to forget the beloved garden accessories we leave behind outside. Birdbaths, fountains, pots, chimeneas and statuary can all be adversely affected by winter weather.

The cold itself isn't the problem; it's moisture getting into small hairline cracks and under finishes. The repeated freezing, expanding then thawing will enlarge cracks and flake off finishes. The same freeze/thaw cycle will expand moist soil in pots, pushing it out. The resulting pressure causes cracks and breakage. For pots, emptying out the soil is the first step.

Protecting Outdoor Accessories

For all these pieces, one way to avoid damage is to move them under cover in a shed or garage. This is all right for smaller articles, but isn't always practical for large or heavy things. That is when bringing a cover out to them comes in handy.

We carry a line of Bosmere Garden Essential covers for birdbaths, fountains and chimeneas. These covers are heavy duty polyethylene, like a tarp, but conveniently shaped to fit specific items. They are also UV stabilized to hold up for years outdoors.

Protect Your Birdbath With a Warmer or Cover

Birdbaths can bring as much enjoyment in the winter as the summer; as other water freezes birds and squirrels are drawn to any open water source. But if you don't wish to keep the water thawed with a birdbath warmer, empty out any moisture and cover it with a birdbath cap. The cap fits bowls 18" to 21" and is held on by elastic around the bottom, like a giant hairnet.

Fountain Covers

Fountains are different because there really is no good way to keep them running in the winter. It's best to remove the pump, dry out the bowls and then cover it. Our fountain covers come in three sizes—small, medium and large; and are secured by brass eyelets and heavy ties.

Protect Chimeneas When Not In Use

Chimeneas are a special case since you definitely want to enjoy burning them during the winter months. But many are made of clay, which is porous and can be permeated with moisture making them susceptible to freezing and cracking. Because of that, you may want to cover your chimenea when moisture threatens. Just remember to let it cool down first.

These Bosmere specialty covers are an easy and relatively inexpensive way to safeguard the monetary and sentimental investment in your esoteric landscape accessories. ■