

DeepStream Designs

www.DeepStreamDesigns.com

ABOUT WOOD AND PLANTER CARE

It is the character of wood - warm and sophisticated, yet rugged - that makes it our favorite material for our planters. Getting to work with it in the shop is a very rewarding and almost spiritual experience. Wood's warmth of color and feel, the figuring of its grain, and its varied organic nature give each piece its own unique identity in an increasingly uniform world.

While all of the characteristics of the woods we use make it beautiful for indoor applications and rugged enough for the outdoors, it is not for everyone. The planks we use are solid $\frac{3}{4}$ " flooring grade hardwoods, appropriate for ship and deck construction. This planking has more wonderful character than you will find in thin, uniform cabinetry-grade veneers of similar wood. This includes shallow chips, small knots, burrs, interlocking and wooly grain.

We revere wood, the trees and the natural environment that it comes from, and we never waste it. If it is structurally sound and aesthetically pleasing, we use it. Non-structural flaws are part of the natural character of the wood that we cherish in our planters. Because we have sized our planters around standard plank lengths, cut off pieces are minimal and all trimmings and sawdust is taken to a wood recycler. If you have enough appropriate $\frac{3}{4}$ " unfinished solid wood left over from a flooring project we can probably use it!

While these woods are chosen for their stability in both wet and sunny environments, wood is still a "living" entity that changes on a daily basis. We use tongue and groove construction to minimize warping. I have designed our proprietary legs specifically to handle the dimensional changes that wood undergoes as it swells in humid environments and shrinks in dry or sunny locations. Each plank comes from a different part of the tree or from different trees, so each will have its own "life."

Even though we handcraft these planters in humid Miami, you may find that the top plank swells upwards over the top of the leg when exposed to rain. This is normal, but you may modify it easily if you like. We urge you to wait until the wood has seasoned and stabilized over time before doing so, as you may find it shrinks back during the dry season. The easiest way we have found to plane the wood down is to use an inexpensive Microplane® or Sureform® rasp available at any hardware store. Carefully plane the top edge down to almost flush before finishing with 120- grit sandpaper. If you want to make the wood absolutely flush, you must remove the plank from the leg to avoid damaging the leg by removing two fasteners, but with every change in the weather it will continue to shrink or grow.

Occasionally a plank may split over time and, while this is not a material defect, nor will it reduce the planter strength, if it diminishes the aesthetic appeal for you, call us with the

2699 Tigertail Avenue #54
Miami, Florida 33133
(305) 857 0466 Fax: (305) 854-3218
dstream@bellsouth.net

exact measurement between the legs, accurate to 1/64", and we can supply a replacement plank that can be inserted in our modular design.

Similarly, if a leg should be badly damaged, we can supply a new leg for a reasonable cost provided you return the damaged leg to us for recycling. The anodized leg may be refinished locally if there is neither damage to the aluminum itself nor any corrosion. **It is imperative that neither acid nor abrasives be used to clean the aluminum leg.** **MEK** available at any hardware store paint department is the best cleaner to use for stubborn stains and waterproofing buildup.

We drill and tap the holes in the leg before anodizing for the greatest corrosion protection. When the leg is anodized, electricity passes through the solution to chemically bond and protect the leg. The legs are hung in the anodizing solution by the screw holes to give an even cosmetic appearance to the outside of the leg that will be visible when the planter is in use. It is not uncommon to see a "halo" effect around the screw hole. This is not considered a defect and it will not be seen in an assembled planter.

Without any protective finish, tropical hardwoods will last for decades. Our planter design eliminates contact between the wood and wet dirt or standing water. These woods are photo-reactive and change color with exposure to the elements. **Even with treated wood, water will wash out red color from wood and leave stains for the first few weeks or months. Phosphoric acid will remove these stains easily from pavers, cement, and porcelain tile, but will quickly eat into the anodizing and aluminum legs. So move the planters first and use care. Use MEK early and often in the initial months to prevent stains.**

Just as with teak, other woods will go "grey" with time if not oiled, and the planks will take on a more uniform appearance. Oil will darken the wood while adding protective oils to minimize water and sun damage, but it also attracts dirt. Many people find that Thompson Water Seal Plus Clear Wood Protector (TWS) lets them enjoy the beauty of the planter's exterior wood grain while protecting it from sun and water changes with minimal time and effort. Simply wipe the sealer on with a rag in minutes.

Your planter has been finished with Thompson's WaterSeal Waterproofing Plus Clear Wood Protector. To renew the finish, let wood dry after washing with plain soap and water before reapplying the same finish with a clean rag. **Afterwards, be sure to dispose of oily rags per the package instructions to prevent spontaneous combustion.** It is easy to tape off the legs with masking tape before refinishing to prevent a yellowing buildup over time or simply wipe the leg down with MEK. The whole process takes only about 10 minutes.

To clean the aluminum, **do NOT use acids**, including vinegar, **caustic agents** such as ammonia, **or abrasives** such as Soft Scrub or Comet. Just mild dish soap and water, or products such as Simple Green, Formula 409, etc. will clean the aluminum as well as the wood. If you ever get sealer, paint, markers, or the like on the legs, MEK on a clean rag is the best solvent for heavy duty clean up. Wear gloves when applying MEK. Mineral spirits are also safe to use.