

Garden Products / Patio cleaners



Buff up your patio

Geoff Hodge tests products that will help you make your patio look spick and span again

PATIOS and other paved and hard surfaces can become deathtraps in winter. The build-up of algae, lichen, moss and dirt make them really slippery.

They also make the surface look dirty, especially combined with mud

and stains from decaying leaves.

There's a variety of patio or surface cleaners on the market, although some of them don't actually 'clean', but just kill or remove algae, lichen and moss.

Traditionally, products that use chlorine bleach, acids or solvents

have been used to do the cleaning and stain removal. While these products can be effective, they can harm the environment and plants.

Most products now are based on non-toxic ingredients that won't harm plants, and they break down naturally after use.



The test

I have to admit before I started this test, I thought a hard surface cleaner not only cleaned but also killed moss, lichen and algae (called a biocide). How wrong I was - some clean, some kill and others do both.

I treated paving slabs on my patio with each of the cleaners as recommended by the manufacturer. Some you simply apply, and either wash off or leave to work, others are vigorously brushed on, so there is a difference in how easy they are to use.

I also just used a 10 per cent solution of household bleach as a control, to see whether it is worth spending out on a specific cleaner.

Strangely, you have to be careful using household bleach as a cleaner. According to the Control of Pesticides Regulations (COPR), a product containing bleach sold as a household disinfectant could be used as patio cleaner (to clean away dirt). Using it as a surface biocide (to have an action against moss, lichen, mould or mildew), would result in the user committing an offence under the regulations, which

could lead to prosecution. Proprietary products containing bleach will have COPR approval.

The bleach solution gave ***** in the cleaning ability test. As I wanted to thoroughly clean the patio, I was looking for a product that did just that - completely cleaned the slabs and killed any moss or lichen and brought them back to their original condition.

Some products also claim to go on protecting the surfaces for several months, but as this was a short-term test, I couldn't check this.

Lithofin MN Outdoor Cleaner

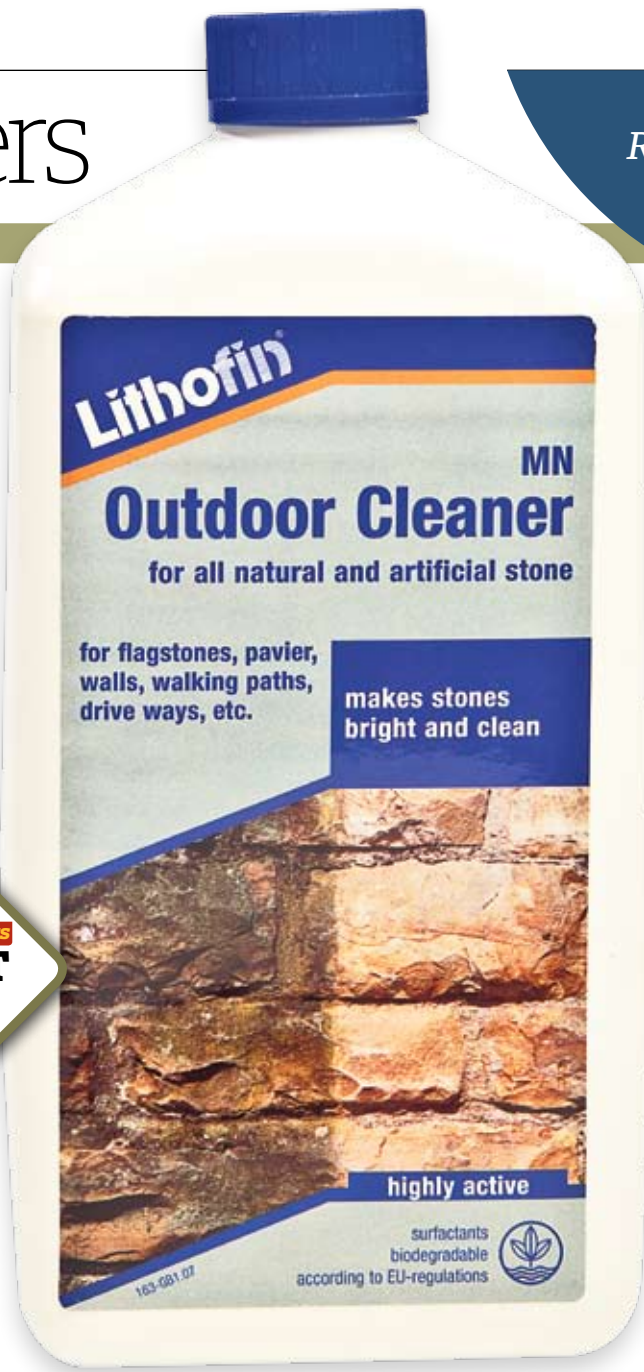
£12.30; £1.23-£2.46 per sq m

Chlorine-based cleaner that dissolves and removes stubborn stains and algae and moss.

- Application method Apply, brush, leave for 2-10 hours, rinse
- Cleaning ability
- Biocide action
- Size 1 litre
- Coverage 5-10 sq m (6-12sq yd) per litre
- Price guide £12.30; £1.23-£2.46 per sq m



THIS CLEANER SCORED HIGHLY FOR CLEANING AND BIOCIDAL ACTION



GN TOP TIP
Read the small print on the packets to get the best from the products

ANOTHER CLEANER THAT SCORED WELL AND PROMISES TO PROTECT TOO

Ronseal 3 in 1 Cleaner & Protector

£12.99; 65p per sq m

Removes dirt and grime, kills moss, mould and algae, and prevents re-growth for up to six months.

- Application method Apply, scrub, leave for 15 minutes, scrub, rinse
- Cleaning ability
- Biocide action
- Size 5 litres
- Coverage up to 4sq m (4.8sq yd) per litre
- Price guide £12.99; 65p per sq m



HG Patio Cleaner

£4.99; 20p per sq m

Cleans dirty and stained concrete, paving slabs and gravel.

- Application method Wet the surface, dilute, apply, scrub, leave for 10 minutes, scrub again, rinse
- Cleaning ability
- Biocide action

- Size 1 litre
- Coverage 25sq m (30sq yd) per litre
- Price guide £4.99; 20p per sq m



Suppliers

- B&Q 08456 096688, www.diy.com; Extreme Green Patio Cleaner
- Bayer Garden, 0845 345 4100, www.bayergarden.co.uk
- Casdron Enterprises 01962 732126, www.lithofin-uk.co.uk; Lithofin MN Outdoor Cleaner
- Geocel 01752 202060, www.geocel.co.uk; Ecochem Patio and Paving Cleaner
- HG Hagesan (UK) 01206 795200, www.hg.eu
- Mykal Industries 01933 402822, www.mykal.co.uk; De-Solv-it Path and Patio Cleaner
- Ronseal 0114 240 9469, www.ronseal.co.uk
- Scotts Miracle-Gro 08451 901881, www.lovethegarden.com; Brintons Patio Magic!
- Screwfix 0500 414141, www.screwfix.com; No Nonsense Path, Patio & Driveway Cleaner
- Westland Horticulture 08700 663566, www.gardenhealth.com

Bayer Garden Green Cleaner

£5.99; 6p per sq m

Long lasting cleaner that removes green algae, moss, lichen, mould and fungal stains.

- Application method Dissolve in water, apply, leave for an hour, scrub and rinse
- Cleaning ability:
- Biocide action:
- Size: four dissolvable sachets
- Coverage: 100sq m (120sq yd)
- Price guide: £5.99; 6p per sq m



De-Solv-it Path and Patio Cleaner

£6.99; 3.5-7p per sq m

Foaming action penetrates porous surfaces to remove algae, dirt, moss and stains.

- Application method Apply, scrub, leave for 15 minutes, rinse
- Cleaning ability
- Biocide action
- Size 5 litres
- Coverage 20-40sq m (24-48sq yd) per litre
- Price guide £6.99; 3.5-7p per sq m



Ecochem Patio and Paving Cleaner

£7.49; 3-37p per sq m

Biodegradable cleaner that removes stains.

- Application method Wet the surface, dilute, apply, scrub, leave for 10 minutes, scrub and rinse
- Cleaning ability
- Biocide action
- Sizes 1 litre, 5 litres
- Coverage 20-100sq m (24-120sq yd) per litre, depending on dilution/how dirty
- Price guide £7.49; £15.99; 3-37p per sq m

No Nonsense Path, Patio & Driveway Cleaner

£5.10; 2.5-5p per sq m

Foaming action penetrates porous surfaces to remove algae, dirt, moss and stains.

- Application method Apply, scrub, leave for 15 minutes, rinse
- Cleaning ability
- Biocide action
- Size 5 litres
- Coverage 20-40sq m (24-48sq yd) per litre
- Price guide £5.10; 2.5-5p per sq m



Extreme Green Patio Cleaner

£9.98

Removes moss, dirt and other biodegradable stains.

- Application method Dilute, apply, scrub, leave for 10 minutes, rinse
- Cleaning ability
- Biocide action
- Size 5 litres
- Coverage Not provided
- Price guide £9.98

Westland Horticulture Hero Paving & Decking Power Cleaner

£9.99; 7-10p per sq m

Removes algae, moss and mould and protects for up to nine months.

- Application method Dilute, apply and leave to dry
- Cleaning ability
- Biocide action
- Size 1 litre; four dissolvable sachets
- Coverage 100sq m (120sq yd) per litre, per four sachets
- Price guide £9.99; £6.99; 7-10p per sq m

