



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

Wholesale Supplier To Landscape Professionals

This year, I have had many questions, concerns, and disasters brought to my attention regarding polymeric sweeping sand. And, the sand usually being the finishing touch to complete the project, the worst is to see it go terribly wrong. I have looked into the directions on the two polymeric sands we carry, and on other similar products we do not, and the instructions are basically the same. However, the one process they all emphasize the most is proper watering. So if you have NEVER had an issue with polymeric sweeping sand, read no more. As for the rest of us, we would like to have as much advice and help with technique to improve our skills for perfect results every time.

Now, when the manufacturers talk about the watering process, their main concerns are adding too much water too quickly and too soon, too much water in general, and not enough water.



The problem with adding too much water too soon is that it could displace the sand in the joint. They recommend using a fine mist nozzle, and apply just enough water so that you can see a slight amount on the top of the joint. Once you see this, STOP WATERING. You will most likely have to do this 3 - 4 times depending on weather conditions. But be careful, because you can over-water the joint. Adding too much water to the polymeric sand could result in the binding polymers washing out of the joint, or forcing the polymer to go too far down into the joint. Either results in a weak joint, and possibly a huge mess that can be very challenging to remove. You can take a thin nail or small screwdriver to check the depth of moisture in the sand. A good tip is to wait until the pavers are starting to dry (about 5 - 10 minutes) before starting another wetting cycle.

If you do not add enough water to activate all the polymeric sand in the joints, you will end up with a weak joint. But worse, the sand below the hardened part of the joint has not been activated. So what happens is the top part of the joint will crack allowing moisture to flow in, and now you could have a polymeric "River Runs Through" disaster after a good Michigan storm. And I am willing to bet it dries somewhere you wish it hadn't.

Now, there is one step that I would like to bring to your attention. Its the last, and most important step to follow before you even think of adding water; to remove all of the leftover sweeping sand off the pavers. Any leftover sand could cause a haze on your patio. We carry two kinds of polymeric joint sand, one which uses a Portland cement as part of it's binding agent, and one that does not. I prefer the sand which has no cement because it can be a little more forgiving if I happen to have a little dust left on. We also carry slurry remover, a product that will clean the haze off the pavers if you unfortunately get one. But be careful, this is a very strong chemical that you want to use sparingly because it could harm the finish of the pavers.

Please feel free to contact me, David Dresselhouse or Mark Quinn if you have any questions regarding the use of any of the products we carry, or about any issues that may come about.



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