Stone ornament stain chart

For cast stone, concrete and most natural stone garden statues. Start gentle and only step up if the mark stays.

1 Dry brush **2 Water and a soft brush** **3 A little mild washing-up liquid in water**

Step 3: test it on a hidden spot and rinse it off well.

Mark	Try first	If it stays	Never
Green algae	Water and a soft bristle or nylon brush.	Move the piece somewhere it dries faster: growth returns while the spot stays damp.	Wire brushes, bleach.
Moss	Lift loose moss by hand.	Reduce damp around the base.	Abrasive pads.
Lichen	Leave it: the RHS says these growths do not damage the surfaces they grow on.	Lift only loose growth with a wooden spatula, then water and a soft brush.	Scraping with metal.
Black spots and mildew	Water and a soft brush.	A poultice made with dilute ammonia or hydrogen peroxide (poultice steps on the page).	Ammonia mixed with bleach: together they make a toxic gas.
Bird droppings	Soak, then lift gently. Do it soon: droppings are corrosive to stone.	Repeat the soak. Outdoors, the mark left behind fades in sun and rain once the dropping is gone.	Scrubbing it dry.
Leaf and tannin stains	Clear leaves promptly; water and a soft cloth.	Accept a faint mark; it weathers.	Bleach and acids.
Rust	Take away the iron that is causing it.	A poultice of diatomaceous earth and a shop rust remover. Deep rust may never fully lift, and can show again as the stone dries.	Wire brushes and metal scrapers.
Copper and bronze green	Stop the drip: move the metal, or seal it so it stops weathering.	A poultice of powder and household ammonia, repeated. Hard to shift: a conservator can help.	Adding bleach to an ammonia poultice.
White bloom (efflorescence)	Let it dry and brush off the loose powder.	If it keeps coming back, the piece is staying wet: move it somewhere it dries.	Washing it with water (it only hides for a while); acid descalers.
Hard white crust and drip lines	Turn sprinklers away from the piece.	Lift what you can with a wooden scraper.	Vinegar and acid descalers.
Soot and black crust	A soft dry brush on the loose soot first.	Soften it with a fine water mist, sprayed on and off over hours.	Pressure washers.
Oil and grease	Household detergent in water, worked in gently.	A poultice of baking soda and water, or of powder and white spirit.	Scrubbing hard, which spreads it.
Paint splashes, marker and graffiti	Lift what you can with a wooden or plastic scraper.	A shop paint stripper, rinsed off well. It can etch the surface.	Acids or a flame.

Painted pieces: wipe with a soft damp cloth and avoid harsh chemicals and scrubbing; test anything stronger on a hidden spot first.

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Sources: Historic England, RHS, Marshalls cast stone data sheet CSTB8, Natural Stone Institute, Prosoco and Cliveden Conservation.
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