



## PREPARING AND MAINTAINING OUTDOOR TIMBER GARDEN FURNITURE IN NZ

This is a general information sheet for preparing, finishing and maintaining timber outdoor garden furniture in NZ especially when the furniture fully exposed to the weather.

The majority of timber outdoor furniture in NZ is made from either a tropical species hardwood such as kwila/merbau etc or softer woods such as Pine, Douglas Fir (Oregon) and Macrocarpa. Hardwood timbers contain natural ingredients such as tannins and resins, which are the tree's defence against rot, mould and fungal attack. These ingredients will not allow a finishing product such as Osmo to penetrate and bind correctly with the timber. Instead, the finish will sit on top of the timber and simply burn off under the sun. Accordingly, hardwood timbers need to weather before any finishing product is applied.

### Preparing:

For new timber, we recommend allowing the timber to weather before application of any finishing product. This should be for approximately 3-4 weeks for softwoods and 8 - 12 weeks for hardwoods. If in doubt, refer to your timber supplier.

For existing settings, any previous film forming finish such as a varnish should be removed completely by sanding. Any barrier left on the surface will prevent the oil from penetrating the surface and it will just wash off. Recycled timber should be wiped down with a solvent such as Osmo's Brush Cleaner and Thinner, or normal turpentine after sanding, as a precaution to remove any unseen residue in the pores of the timber left behind from previous finishes.

The moisture content of the timber should be below 18%. High levels of moisture mean the oil cannot penetrate into the timber and bind with the wood fibres.

If too much oil is applied to the timber, it will become saturated, and a film will build on the surface. This may cause the finish to "peel off" the surface – something it is not meant to do. Osmo oil based finishes should always be applied thinly and evenly along the grain. Osmo's motto is "Less is Best".

Wood which has turned grey should be treated with a product such as Osmo Wood Reviver Power-Gel before finishing. This is the link. [www.naturaloils.co.nz/product/Wood%20Reviver%20Power%20Gel](http://www.naturaloils.co.nz/product/Wood%20Reviver%20Power%20Gel) Be careful when you rinse off the Power Gel, as run off can damage plants. If plants or lawns are nearby, we recommend a salt-based cleaner in preference. Whatever product is used, please allow the surface to dry for a minimum of 12 hours without rain. The wood moisture content should be below 18% before applying the Garden Furniture Oil.

If the surface has been grey for some time (years) the Wood Reviver may not be effective, and sanding may be required. If sanding is required, use 80 - 120 grit paper. Anything finer will close the pores of the timber and prevent the oil from penetrating. The oil should end up in the timber, not on the surface.

### Finish recommendations:

The natural durability of various wood species is dependent on the timber's density and the amount of natural ingredients and oils which they contain. Newly timber should be allowed to weather, allowing tannins etc to wash or bleed out. Hardwood species such as Kwila should be wiped down with a solvent before any oil is applied. Take care as the washing out or leaching of tannins can leave stains on surrounding materials such as timber decking, pavers and concrete paths etc.

After the weathering period, and before the timber starts to grey off again, the dry surface should be finished with two coats of the Osmo Garden Furniture Oil 028. This has a clear satin finish, and the finish is food safe once cured.

**Note:** Most people seem to want a clear finish on their timber furniture. However, due to the strength of the UV in New Zealand, the clear finish will only last 3-4 months. Garden Furniture Oil is easy to re-apply with a lint free cloth to the clean and dry surface as often as required.

If a coloured oil is preferred, we recommend using one of Osmo's decking oils, which are biocide free and food safe. <https://www.naturaloils.co.nz/product/decking-oil>

Always apply the finish thinly and evenly along the wood grain. A good quality bristle brush, or Osmo's applicator fleece are the recommended applicators. A clean lint free cloth can also be used.

2 coats is maximum for hardwoods. Do not apply the second coat until the first coat has dried. Soft woods such as pine etc can be very absorbent and a third thin "top up" coat **may** be required if the finish looks patchy after the second coat has dried.

### **Regular cleaning and care**

Many outdoor timber settings are unprotected and exposed to high levels of UV weathering and day to day use. As such, the regular cleaning of the surface and swift repair of any damage is definitely recommended. Stubborn stains and soiling can be removed using Osmo Wash & Care which is a pH neutral detergent. Damage/scratches to the finish itself (e.g. caused by cutlery, grit and food residue etc) should be cleaned and re-oiled as soon as possible. Such areas can simply be touched up/partially renovated without having to sand the area.

### **When should I refresh the surface?**

Osmo Garden Furniture Oil will weather naturally and fade from the UV exposure. This can easily be cleaned and refreshed with a coat of oil before the effects of greying begin. To do this, clean the entire surface thoroughly with Osmo Wash & Care or any pH neutral cleaner (diluted with water as per directions on the container) using a scrubbing brush. After the timber has been allowed to dry completely, a single coat of Garden Furniture Oil should be applied. Areas which are subject to less wear and tear and weathering will generally have a longer renovation interval.

Full information on all Osmo products can be found on our website: [www.naturaloils.co.nz](http://www.naturaloils.co.nz)

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