Tips for Taking Care of Outdoor Furniture

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Here in Arizona, we get our money's worth from outdoor furniture. With the exception of summer, we are lucky enough to enjoy evenings outdoors, full of stargazing and wine sipping. However, with so much usage of your outdoor furniture, it is bound to get dirty. Instead of heading to the store to purchase expensive, often-toxic cleaning supplies, Arizona Foothills Magazine teamed up with home and garden pros, Hometalk, and their contributors to teach you quick, easy and safe ways to make your own outdoor furniture cleaners at home.

GLASS TABLES

Many patios across our state are donned with glass patio tables which, while beautiful, are not the easiest to keep clean in the dust of the desert. Hometalk contributor Bev from The Make Your Own Zone suggests, "attaching a spray nozzle to club soda to clean dirt and grime off of your glass table." Spray and wipe, and enjoy the shine.

WHITE PLASTIC FURNITURE

While not the most glamorous piece of outdoor furniture, white plastic chairs and tables are a staple. However, the white dirties quite quickly and requires frequent cleaning. Don't worry, the cleaning is much easier than you think and requires two basic ingredients you are sure to already have. Pine Hall Brick shared with Hometalk their "recipe" for white plastic furniture that is simply 2-3 tablespoons of dishwasher detergent mixed with one gallon of warm water. Pine Hall Brick says to "use the solution to wipe down furniture with a cloth, making sure to get all of the sides and edges." Then, "rinse your furniture with a hose until you don't feel any grit from the detergent on the plastic, and then let it sit in the sun to dry off." With our sun, it won't be long before your furniture is squeaky clean and ready to use.

PATIO CUSHIONS

With patio furniture typically made of plastic or wood, patio cushions are a must. White ones are particularly classic, but hard to maintain. "To get rid of the weather-worn appearance (and smell!) of white patio cushions, try mixing up a solution of 75% bleach and 25% water and spray heavily on mildewed sports," offers Bella Tucker Decorative Finishes. Let them dry in the sun for approximately 30 minutes and then scrub them with Fels-Naptha soap. Simply rinse with a hose and enjoy.

Colored cushions require cleaning too, and a different recipe. "For colored cushions, mix up a solution of 1 teaspoon of dishwashing detergent, 1 quart of warm water, and 1 teaspoon of borax in a spray bottle" to be sprayed all over the cushions, suggests Bella Tucker. Allow the cushions to soak for 15 minutes, rinse off and then let dry in the sun.

WOOD

In order to keep your wooden outdoor furniture gleaming and clean, Eliesa of Pinterest Addict advises using "a mixture of 3 parts oil to 1 part vinegar to clean marks and water stains off of wood furniture. The mixture works in smoothly and doesn't leave any sticky or greasy residue on

furniture, and the vinegar smell fades as the furniture airs out.”

PATIO UMBRELLA

With the sun beaming as much as it does here, enjoying your patio during the day is hard without an umbrella. But when those umbrellas are not being used, they can get quite the green buildup. “To remove these mold and mildew stains from your umbrella, try using some Resolve spray and scrubbing with a rough scrub brush,” says Chaotically Creative Co. With this, you will be killing two birds with one stone – cleaning your umbrella and killing bacteria.