

JaxsArts Willow Sculpture and Crafts Preserving willow items for outside use.

Willow by its nature will start to degrade if it's left outside in the elements and is repeatedly soaked or frozen. Try to place it in a place where there is good air circulation.

To help to preserve your sculpture it is best to cover your item when it is very wet weather . The part of the sculpture that is in contact with the ground will be the first to decay so placing it on dry ground such as gravel, or a grassed area that has good drainage will help to preserve it .

Untreated items such as birdhouses/ bird feeders, plant trellis etc. are likely to last less time 2- 3 years but that depends on use and where it is sited.

If it kept dry etc., if treated it will last longer 5 or more years.. You can repair and patch your sculpture with more willow or other hedgerow materials if you want to.

The willow will change in colour and take on different variations this is natural.

When is it better to not use a preservative? If your item is going to be used by animals e.g. a bird house or bird feeder or you have animals who are likely to chew your item.

Treatments

Make sure that your item is thoroughly dry before you start. Then spray or brush on your chosen preservative. (I prefer to use a small brush it takes longer)

- 50:50 boiled linseed oil or Danish oil and turpentine/ turps substitute or 1:3 boiled linseed and white spirit
- An alternative option is to use a wood preserver that is described as penetrating, whichever you choose ideally you want to choose a product that is water based and watery in consistency.

Once you've treated your item leave it and then check again later to see if it needs another coat it needs to be well soaked. Often willow growers recommend that you repeat this every 6 months, you may leave it up to a year if it is protected from harsh weather.

Please note that willow items are flammable if you put them next to a naked flame it may catch fire especially if you have treated your item, so it's best to use led lights.

www.jaxsarts.co.uk