Fountain FAQs

Every fountain sign lists the cost, dimensions, and number of people required for delivery.

WHAT ARE THE FOUNTAINS MADE OF?

The self-contained fountains manufactured by Campania, Al's Garden Art, or Henri are made of high-density concrete, also called cast stone. The faux basalt columns are made of ferro-cement. The glazed fountains from Pacific Home and Garden are made of frost proof ceramic. We also carry a selection of actual stone fountains.

WHY DO SOME OF THE FOUNTAINS HAVE RESIDUE ON THEM?

Cast stone products will age naturally over time as they are exposed to the elements. Most of the patinas do not contain any chemical sealers and are intended to create the illusion that the cast stone has already begun its natural aging.

Part of the natural aging cycle for all cast stone material is a chemical reaction between salts found in natural materials and water. This reaction is called efflorescence. The degree of efflorescence will vary depending on weather conditions. When Mother Nature produces rainy, cold, windy weather, the calcium carbonate (salt) contained in the raw materials used to make cast stone will be drawn to the surface and will appear as a chalky white residue on the surface of the piece. This residue will disappear as more of the same weather conditions complete the efflorescence cycle and will disappear as the chalky white residue washes away. The efflorescence process occurs only once. Efflorescence can be cleaned up if desired with a soft brush and white vinegar.

Other than efflorescence, iron oxidization is another natural occurrence that may appear on a small number of products. The raw materials for cast stone contain minimal levels of iron. When iron reacts with water a powdery pink or orange residue can appear.

Finally, bowls and basins in use are continually wet, so algae can grow. A gentle cleaning of your product with a soft cloth and rinsing (no soap!) will help to minimize build-up. We also carry a product called FOUNTEC. Using this in your fountains or bird baths will greatly reduce algae build-up on surfaces and in the water.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE FOUNTAIN COST?

The pumps, tubing, stoppers and all necessary parts are included with the self-contained fountains and the table top ceramic and stone fountains. The basalt columns, large ceramic fountains and large stone fountains require additional components sold individually.

DOES SKY DELIVER FOUNTAINS?

Sky Nursery does deliver fountains to many neighborhoods, but we do not place them or set them up. Our delivery charge for curbside delivery is based on your location and the number of people required to safely unload your fountain. Have a sales associate check your address with Sky's office to determine your basic delivery charge. If your fountain requires one person to deliver, this would be the total delivery charge. If your fountain requires more, add $100 to the basic charge.

WHAT ABOUT WINTER CARE OF FOUNTAINS?

We recommend that you drain your fountain and remove the pump. If water is left in the pump and it freezes, there is a possibility that the pump will crack. All the fountains we carry are made to withstand our normal winter conditions if drained. However, we do recommend that you cover your fountain with some type of material to provide additional protections. We carry actual fountain covers as well as frost protection cloth.

WHAT DO I NEED TO SET UP MY FOUNTAIN?

Most self-contained fountains are extremely easy to set up. Power, a water source, and a proper surface are all that is needed. The weight of larger pieces may be the only difficulty. Here are some important considerations for the installation of a self-contained fountain. Either you or the person you hire will need to consider and/or implement the following.

SITE REQUIREMENTS

- Foundation – The fountain must be set on a stable, level foundation of concrete or crushed gravel. Gravel should be 4 inches deep (not mounded up, or it will erode). Unsupported (no sublayer of gravel) concrete pavers are acceptable for small to medium fountains and/or on decks. An inadequate foundation can lead to:
    - Fountain settling and tumbling
    - Cracking due to uneven support of weight
    - Moisture wicking from the soil degrading the concrete
- Electricity – All fountains have standard 3-prong plugs on cords extending 1 to 15 feet from bottom of the fountain. Please have a conduit installed near the fountain, or an outdoor extension cord available to test/run the fountain.
- Water source nearby for installation team to fill and test/level fountain.
- Structural support – If the fountain is going on an elevated surface (i.e. a deck), is the location capable of supporting the weight of a fountain with water?

LOCATION ACCESS

The following questions are particularly important if you are having a large fountain installed. Be sure you think about access questions before getting a fountain installed. (And remember that Sky only does a curbside delivery for your fountain; you or your fountain installation company will need to put it in place.)

- Is the fountain going to a house, apartment/condo, other?
- Is the fountain going inside or outside?
- Is the fountain going in a garden? On a deck? On a patio?
- Is the fountain going in the front, back, or side yard?
- How close can the installation equipment get to the site? Are there any obstacles?
- Is your property on a hill?
- Is there a minimum 4-foot-wide and 7-foot-tall path to the final site?

- What type of surfaces will need to be traversed? Grass, gravel, dirt, concrete?
- Are there any steps to contend with?
    - If so, how many?
    - What are the tread lengths and step heights?
    - How wide?
    - Any switchbacks?
    - Can a dolly with fountain reasonably and safely ascend or descend?
    - Some smaller 2-man fountains can be carried up/down narrow stairs and paths; can this reasonably and safely be done without undue risk to the delivery persons' health and safety?
- Some larger fountains have bowls and/or basins too heavy to carry and too large for a dolly. These pieces require use of a pallet jack, lift or the pieces may need to be rolled (rolling applies only to round pieces)
- A pallet jack requires a minimum 5-foot-wide, flat (no steps) concrete path to the final site clear of all obstacles
- A lift requires a minimum 5-foot-wide maneuver area.
- Rolling requires a minimum 5-foot-wide, flat path to the final site clear of steps and of all obstacles.

MODIFICATIONS

Do you plan on making any modifications to the fountain? Please have such modifications ready to go before installing the fountain.

- Some people install auto refill devices and/or lights which require a different plug and additional hosing, etc. Sky Nursery can supply the plug and lights, but the rest is up to the customer.
- Similarly, some bury conduit to hide the cable(s).

BASALT COLUMN/LARGE STONE/LARGE CERAMIC FOUNTAIN COMPONENTS

Large stone fountains, ceramic fountains and basalt columns are a bit more involved since they have multiple components (see below), but installation still can be done by homeowners without much difficulty. Again, the major concern can be the weight of the pieces. If you have a group of people to help you carry and position the pieces, talk with one of our fountain experts who can walk you through the process.

Basins: Each basalt column fountain, large ceramic fountain, and large stone fountain requires a basin underneath for catchment and recirculation. We carry a number of different sizes of basins. These can be buried or sit above ground. The larger sizes are typically used for more than one basalt column or for a very wide fountain.

Pumps: remember, the lower the pump size, the less water volume. Higher pump size, more water volume. More volume, more splash. Consider a larger basin or make sure the area around the fountain won't mind getting wet.

BASALT COLUMN FOUNTAIN COMPONENTS:

Below are GENERAL guidelines for components needed to set up your Basalt Column fountain system:

PUMP (FOR SINGLE COMPONENT)

- 16-22" column – 250-350 Gallons Per Hour pump
- 28-36" column – 350-500 GPH pump
- 42-54" column – 500-900 GPH pump
- 3 Column Styles, use largest size pump indicated for height for best waterfall effects.

PUMP FOR MULTIPLE (SEPARATE) COLUMNS:

If installing more than one column, you can use multiple pumps (one per column, using the guide above), or increase pump size. If using one pump for more than one column, you will need to purchase one of our diverter components. Again, GENERAL guidelines:

- 2 Columns – 750-900 GPH
- 3 Columns – 1200-1800 GPH
- Diverter component

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

- 1 - ½" x ¾" bushing. This connects the pvc tubing in the column to your barb adaptor.
- 1 - ¾" male barb adapter. This screws into the bushing component. Your tubing is attached to it.
- Enough ¾" tubing to go from column to pump, with a bit extra for pump access.
- 1- Pipe clamp to attach tubing to pump.

RECOMMENDED BUT NOT REQUIRED:

- 2- ¾" male barb adaptors
- 1 - ¾" ball valve OR 1- ¾" bar ball valve

We recommend installing a valve inline with your fountain tubing to be able to easily adjust the flow of water.

LARGE CERAMIC FOUNTAINS

All ceramic fountains are plumbed with 5/8" tubing. Depending on the pump size, the size of the outlet may be different. Make sure you are purchasing the proper tubing size to fit both pump and fountain.

Below are GENERAL guidelines for the materials you will need to set up your ceramic fountain:

- Appropriate pump size for your fountain. These should be listed with each fountain.
- Enough 5/8" tubing to go from pump to fountain tubing with room to move pump around.
- pipe clamps to attach tubing to pump and/or valves

RECOMMENDED BUT NOT REQUIRED

- 2 - ½" male barb adaptors
- 1 - ½" ball valve OR 1- ½" inline t-valve

We recommend installing a valve inline with your fountain tubing to be able to easily adjust the flow of water.