

How to remove yellow flower petal stains from outdoor limestone tiles?

Q. Yellow flower petals from Arizona trees recently stained my outdoor limestone tiles. Is there a way to remove this type of stain? The yellow does not blend well with my light grayish tiles.

A. It's a shame something natural and harmless like flower petals can discolor limestone. Organic stains come from plant pigments, sap, pollen, or other natural materials. The yellow discolorations you describe are typical of organic stains. Limestone is porous, so stains can soak in rather than remaining on the surface. This can make cleaning a challenge. The good news is that this type of stain is usually removable.

Before you proceed, here's what you need to know about stain removal methods. Using acids, harsh degreasers, bleach, or abrasive tools can, etch the stone, lighten it unevenly, and set the stain deeper by partially dissolving the stone around it. It's important to start with the gentlest methods and only use more aggressive methods when necessary.

First, rinse any plant material off the stone. Apply a stone-safe, pH-neutral cleaner mixed with water. Scrub gently with a soft nylon brush. Rinse the limestone thoroughly, and allow it to dry. Often, fresh organic stains will lift with these simple steps.

If the discolorations remain, pour 40-volume hydrogen peroxide, available at beauty supply stores, directly on the yellow marks and add a few drops of ammonia.

NOTE: Follow the manufacturer's safety precautions for chemicals.

Do not use regular hydrogen peroxide from the drug store, as it is not strong

enough to do any good. Leave this solution on the stone until any bubbling stops. **CAUTION:** Do not use ammonia only. Ammonia can permanently set the stain. Rinse the stone and allow it to dry.

If the discolorations remain, apply a poultice. A poultice draws the stain out of the stone over time. For detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to mix and apply a poultice correctly, check out our free [Stain Management App](#). Your poultice ingredients will be a poultice powder or diatomaceous earth mixed with 40-volume hydrogen peroxide. If the poultice lightens the stains at all, that means it is working. Reapply the poultice as many times as needed to completely remove the stains. Rinse the stone and allow it to dry.

If the 40-volume hydrogen peroxide poultice fails to lighten the stain, poultice with mineral spirits instead.

We recommend you follow up with an experienced stone restoration contractor who can select and correctly apply an appropriate sealer to the limestone tiles. This will inhibit future staining. To find a vetted **PRO** in your area, visit www.surfacecarepros.com and click on **Find a PRO**. In addition, during the season when the flower petals fall on the limestone, sweep them away on a daily basis.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Fred Hueston is the Chief Technical Director at SurfaceCarePROS.com and Director at StoneForensics.com. He is also the author of [Stone and Tile Restoration: The Manual](#), a comprehensive online manual for stone and tile restoration contractors. [[Learn more about Fred.](#)]

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