

What type of finish is best for preserving teak?

Teak does not require any type of finish to maintain its life. The primary reason that teak is used for marine environments is because teakwood in its raw form is impervious to sun, salt water, insects, and whatever else you can think of.

When left unfinished, teak weathers to a light gray color, and can be easily cleaned using a soft brush and some soap and water. This is the preferred look for teak for many applications, including lawn and garden furniture. In England, there are numerous of outdoor furniture that has been in use for one hundred years with no protective coating applied.



Teak oil

If you want to treat your teak, teak oil is the most popular option. There are many types of teak oil, running from thin, lightweight oils to thick, heavy oils. The lightweight oils are easy to apply and give the teak a lighter-colored look, but they require maintenance on a more regular basis. The heavier or thicker oils are more laborious to apply and give the teak a darker color, but maintain their finished appearance longer and require less maintenance.

Varnish

Another choice is to use varnish. Varnish is much more difficult to apply than any of the oils available, but provides a gloss coat that will last for a long time. The only potential problem with using varnish is that the natural oil that is contained in teak can get trapped between the varnish coat and the teak, creating milky spots in the finish.

No finish that you apply to teak is permanent. Without some sort of maintenance, the oil or varnish will begin to crack, peel, or become mottled after a period of time.

If the teak item is left out in the sun and weather, the finish will begin to become blotchy and fade, and will eventually disappear. This will look unattractive for the period of time required for the finish to disappear, but it will not harm the teak.



Teak requires no finishing for preservation.