

Effectively and Safely Cleaning Gravestones with a Minimal Amount of Work (Updated January 2014)

Important Note: I am no longer endorsing BioWash (now called ReVive) for cleaning gravestones. Apparently this product was reformulated sometime in late 2012 or early 2013 and it simply does not work like the older formulated BioWash. Until further notice, I am only endorsing D/2.

One of the frustrating things about cleaning gravestones, at least for me, has been the less than clean looking results after one has spent a great deal of time and effort in cleaning a stone. The only approved cleaner, up till now, has been a mild detergent or clear ammonia. Even with aggressive hand washing with a stiff plastic brush, the final results had always been less than desired. Sure the stone was cleaner, but the stone still *looked* dirty.

Let me introduce you to a fantastic cleaning product that is now approved for use on gravestones. It is called **D/2** and is manufactured by Biological Solutions, Inc. D/2 is classified as biocidal cleaner and contains quaternary ammonium compounds. D/2's features and benefits are described as follows: Safe for landscape plantings and grass - effective on all types of stone, concrete and brick masonry - nonfuming - low-odor formulation - minimal precautions required for handling and storage - easy to apply with brush, roller or coarse spray – biodegradable. By most accounts it is considered a “green” product.

A small amount of this products will go a long way. Read the manufacturer’s instructions that come with the product. D/2 can be used in the concentrated form for stones with heavy deposits of algae and lichen, but I have found that most stones clean up nicely with a 50% water diluted product. If you dilute the product, you can adequately clean a standard size upright military gravestone with about 6 ounces of 50% diluted product (3 ounces concentrate). According to the manufacturer the unopened D/2 has a shelf life of 5 years. As soon as you spray the product on the stone, you should start to see the product working on the algae and lichen (green or black streaks running down from the applied area. Some people using this product have reported good results with no scrubbing at all. I would recommend at least some gentle scrubbing after the product is applied to aid in the removal of biological growth. After a short contact time (3-5 minutes) and some gentle scrubbing, rinse the stone well with clean water. You will be amazed on how well this product works. Immediately after cleaning, the stone will actually *look* cleaner, but the stone will look even whiter and cleaner (for the standard upright white marble military stone) 4-6 weeks *after* it has been cleaned!! D/2 will even deter future biological growth on the cleaned stone for about 2 to 3 years (see my own independent tests at the end of this document). These products can also be used and on and will work well on all other types of gravestones, including limestone and granite.

Important Note: The first rule in cleaning any gravestone is to do no harm. If the stone is too fragile and/or broken, do not attempt to clean it. It should be repaired or stabilized first by an experienced gravestone restorer before any type of cleaning is attempted.

I bet some of you are still skeptical, so here is a study the Department of Veteran Affairs National Cemetery Administration conducted with the help from the National Park Service, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training:

<http://ncptt.nps.gov/blog/best-practice-recommendations-for-cleaning-government-issued-marble-headstones/>

How Much is D/2 and Where Can it be Purchased?

The phrase “you get what you pay for” certainly applies here. D/2 is not cheap. D/2 can be purchased for about \$50-\$60/gallon. You can generally get it a little cheaper if you buy multiple gallons at a time and are able to pick them up directly from a local supplier. D/2 is available in 5 gallon containers, but the one gallon containers are easier to carry and pour from. I have personally used D/2 and have been satisfied with the results.

Where to Buy D/2

Here are a few suppliers for this product:

Limeworks.us

<http://www.limeworks.us/>

Cemetery Preservation Supply, LLC

<http://www.gravestonecleaner.com/>

Bonestone

<http://www.bonstone.com/>

Granite City Tools

<http://www.granitecitytool.com/>

Here is a good link about the proper way to clean gravestones

<http://www.chicora.org/cleaning.html>

If you have any questions, please let me know. Happy Cleaning!!

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D/2 Study – St. Boniface Cemetery, Fulda, Spencer County Indiana
by Tim Beckman



Upright White Marble Military Stone of Corp. William C. Jackson
Stone Beginning to be Cleaned with 50% D/2 on 7/22/2010
Notice the Product Already Starting to Work



Stone Immediately After Cleaning with 50% D/2 on 7/22/2010



Stone Nearly One Year After Cleaning with 50% D/2 – Picture Taken 7/17/2011
Note: Corp'l. Jackson was mortally wounded at the Battle of Perryville, KY - October 8, 1862

**D/2 Study – St. Boniface Cemetery, Fulda, Spencer County Indiana
by Tim Beckman (3rd Great Grandson of Johannes Schwartz)**



White Marble Stone of Johannes Schwartz – Date of Death 1854
Stone Before Cleaning with 50% D/2 on 7/22/2010



Stone Immediately After Cleaning with 50% D/2 on 7/22/2010



Stone Nearly One Year After Cleaning with 50% D/2 – Picture Taken 7/17/2011