

Water Care for Your Adagio Water Feature

A guide to keeping your water feature clean, clear, and running beautifully.

Most water features never need treatment

The large majority of Adagio water features run for years on nothing but clean water and regular top-offs. Indoor features away from direct sunlight rarely develop any growth at all.

Treatment is only needed when something tells you it is. The most common sign is a musty or foul smell from the water. Less often you may see cloudy water, a slippery film on surfaces, or green discoloration. If your water is clear and odor-free, leave it alone. Adding treatment “just in case” does more harm than good.

Features most likely to need occasional treatment:

- Outdoor features, especially in sun
- Indoor features in direct or prolonged sunlight
- Features where organic material is getting into the water (see below)

Start with the right water

Know your water. Water quality varies greatly from region to region and home to home. Distilled or filtered water is ideal. Tap water is generally acceptable, but in most areas it carries more hard-water minerals, which leave scale on the water surface and distribution unit over time and mean more frequent cleaning.

Never use water from a salt-based water softener. As water evaporates, the dissolved salts concentrate in the basin and can damage the pump and feature components.

Use one water source and stay with it. Switching back and forth makes problems harder to identify.

Top off regularly, and change the water occasionally

Topping off replaces water lost to evaporation, but minerals and everything else in the water stay behind and concentrate over time.

- **Under normal conditions**, a full drain and refill once or twice a year is usually sufficient.
- **If you're dealing with a smell or growth**, drain and refill every 1 to 3 months until the problem is resolved.

What we mean by a drop

When we say drops, we mean drops literally — the amount that falls from an eyedropper, or from the tip of a fork dipped into the bleach and lifted out.

This is easy to misread, and it's the most common mistake we see. A drop is not a capful, a teaspoon, or a splash from the bottle.

For perspective: **a single teaspoon is roughly 100 drops.** A tablespoon is roughly 300. So a teaspoon of bleach in a Tranquil River is about 16 times the recommended amount, and a tablespoon is nearly 50 times.

An eyedropper from any pharmacy is the easiest way to be accurate, and it also keeps you from pouring straight from the bottle, which is how most spills happen.

Know how much water your feature holds

Water features hold more water than most people expect. The basin is wide and shallow and looks smaller than it is. Every treatment product is dosed by volume, so knowing your gallons is the key to using any of them correctly.

Always top your feature off to a full water level before adding any treatment. The capacities below are for a full feature, and dosing a partially filled feature puts the treatment at a higher concentration than intended.

MODEL	CAPACITY	BLEACH DOSE	MODEL	CAPACITY	BLEACH DOSE
Artesian Springs	8 gallons	3 drops	Olympus Falls	10 gallons	4 drops
Aspen Falls	6.5 gallons	3 drops	Pacifica Waters	1.5 gallons	1 drop
Bantam River	5 gallons	2 drops	Reflection Creek	3 gallons	1 drop
Calming Waters	6.5 gallons	3 drops	Regal Falls	16 gallons	6 drops
Cascade Springs	3 gallons	1 drop	Serene Waters	1 gallon	1 drop
Cottonwood Falls	8 gallons	3 drops	Solitude River	12 gallons	5 drops
Deep Creek Falls	12 gallons	5 drops	Summit Falls	5.5 gallons	2 drops
Grandeur River	25 gallons	10 drops	Sunrise Springs	7 gallons	3 drops
Harmony River	13 gallons	5 drops	Teton Falls	8 gallons	3 drops
Inspiration Falls	4 gallons	2 drops	Tranquil River	16 gallons	6 drops
Majestic River	7 gallons	3 drops	Whispering Creek	1.5 gallons	1 drop

Custom features vary. If you have a custom feature and need to know its capacity, contact us.

Keep organic material out

Nearly every case of growth we've seen traced back to something organic getting into the water, almost always by accident. Common sources:

- Houseplants near or above the feature
- Live or decorative plants in the pebble shelf
- Pets drinking from the basin
- Leaves, soil, or debris, especially outdoors
- Stones or décor brought in from outside
- Fish (please never add fish to your water feature)

Removing the source is often all it takes.

Using chlorine (household bleach)

For a musty or foul smell, a very small amount of plain, unscented household bleach is usually enough.

Before you begin

Bleach will permanently stain and discolor carpet, flooring, walls, furniture, and fabrics, and even a drop or two can do it. Take a moment to protect the area around your feature before you open the bottle. Set a towel or drop cloth under your working area, pour carefully, and keep the bottle closed and away from the feature when you're not using it. Wipe up any drips right away.

- **Top the feature off to a full water level first**, then add the dose listed for your model in the table above.
- **Add it once or twice a month, only while the smell is present.** This is not a routine addition. When the water is clear and odor-free, stop.
- **Add bleach to the basin while the feature is running** so it circulates and dilutes quickly.
- **Use only plain, unscented liquid bleach.** Never use bleach sprays, gels, or "splash-less" products. They contain detergents and thickeners that cause bubbling and residue.
- **More is not better.** Too much bleach can discolor natural stone, streak mirror surfaces, and damage internal parts. If a small dose doesn't solve the problem, contact us rather than increasing it.

Using an algaecide

If you see growth such as slime, film, or green discoloration, an algaecide made for fountains may be more effective than bleach.

- Choose one labeled safe for indoor fountains.
- **Dose for your feature's actual volume** from the table above, following the product label exactly for both the starting dose and ongoing maintenance.
- Use it consistently. Occasional or low doses can slow growth without ever clearing it.
- **Never use an algaecide and bleach together.** They work against each other and can cause cloudy water and heavy bubbling. If you switch from one to the other, drain, rinse, and refill first.

Never mix

- **Bleach and vinegar** release chlorine gas
- **Bleach and calcium removers** (CLR, Lime-Away, and similar) release chlorine gas
- **Bleach and ammonia**, including ammonia-based glass cleaners, release toxic gas
- **Bleach and algaecide** cancel each other out

If bleach has been used in your feature, follow the rinse steps under "Removing hard-water scale" before using any other cleaner.

Cleaning your water feature

- 1 Unplug the feature and drain it completely.
- 2 Remove the pebbles and rinse them in warm water.
- 3 Wipe out the basin with a soft cloth.
- 4 Wipe down the pump. Remove the pump's large particle filter to expose the impeller, and rinse or pull out any debris.
- 5 Wipe down the water distribution unit and clean out the trough inside it to remove all old water and residue.

6 Clean each surface as described below.

7 Rinse everything with clean water, reassemble, and refill with fresh water.

Avoid dish soap, detergents, and general household cleaners, which leave residue that causes bubbling.

Cleaning by surface

Glass and mirror

- Clean with an ammonia-free glass cleaner such as Windex Ammonia-Free and a soft cloth.
- **Never use Scotch-Brite pads or any abrasive on glass or mirror.** They will scratch the surface permanently.

Copper water distribution unit

- An ammonia-free glass cleaner works well here. Hands touching the distribution unit leave oils and lotions behind, and a mild glass cleaner breaks them down without causing bubbling.
- For calcium and mineral buildup, scrub with a green Scotch-Brite or similar abrasive pad. This also helps the water flow evenly.

Stone and Featherstone

- Glass cleaner is not recommended on stone.
- For hard-water buildup, use a vinegar solution or calcium remover (see below), then rinse.
- For moderately stubborn buildup, you may scrub **lightly** with a green Scotch-Brite pad.
- **Never use power tools, sanders, or wire brushes on stone.** They can permanently damage the surface.

Decorative trim

- Clean with a microfiber cloth and an ammonia-free glass cleaner to remove water spots and fingerprints.
- For heavy calcium buildup, use a microfiber cloth with the vinegar solution or a calcium remover such as CLR or Lime-Away.
- **Never use Scotch-Brite pads or any abrasive on the trim.** They will damage the finish.

Removing hard-water scale

Over time, especially with tap water or long stretches between cleanings, minerals build up as white or chalky deposits on the water surface, distribution unit, trim, and basin.

To remove them, use either:

- A solution of **50% white vinegar and 50% distilled water**, or
- A **calcium remover** such as CLR or Lime-Away, used according to the product label

Apply, let it work briefly, then wipe clean and rinse thoroughly. On stone, keep contact time short and rinse well.

If bleach has been used in the feature:

- 1 Drain the feature completely.
- 2 Refill with fresh water, run it for 15 to 20 minutes, and drain again.
- 3 Only then apply vinegar, a calcium remover, or glass cleaner.

After descaling, rinse all surfaces thoroughly with clean water before refilling, so no cleaner remains in the system.

Stubborn cases: one-time sanitizing

When growth has become established and keeps returning after cleaning, a one-time sanitizing run at a higher bleach concentration can reach the pump and tubing that can't be cleaned by hand. As a general reference, this is about **1 teaspoon of plain bleach per 15 gallons**, circulated for a short time and then fully drained and rinsed.

Please call us before doing this

At this concentration, splashing water can bleach carpet, furniture, and fabrics around the feature, and too long a run can harm the feature itself. We'll walk you through the right amount and timing for your model and setup.

When to contact us

If a smell or growth persists after cleaning and correct dosing, please reach out before trying stronger treatments. We'll help you work through it.

Adagio Water Features

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