

Cambridge Corten

Experts in creating beautiful features in Corten steel.

sales@cambridgecorten.co.uk 01767 682756

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CORTEN STEEL CARE

Everything you need to know

Your Cambridge Corten product is built to last a lifetime — and then some. This guide tells you exactly how to care for it, what to expect as it weathers, and what to watch out for.

Stage	What to expect
Weeks 1-4	Bright orange rust forms. Run-off is at it's peak.
Months 1-4	Colour deepens to red-brown. Texture develops.
Months 4-18	Patina begins to bind. Run-off reduces significantly.
Months 18-36	Patina fully stabilises. Rich dark-brown. Job done.

*Timescales vary with exposure. Sheltered elements may take longer to stabilise. Shot blasting can accelerate patination - contact us for specialist referrals

DO'S AND DON'T'S

DO	DON'T
Use stainless steel fixings only We supply fixings including Corten-coloured heads for discreet assembly — ask us.	Use wire brushes or abrasives These disrupt the patina. A soft brush and clean water is all you need.
Wear gloves during patination Iron oxide transfers to skin and clothing for the first year.	Use bleach, acid, or solvent cleaners These strip the patina and damage the steel surface.
Treat ground-contact sections Glass-flake epoxy or bituminous paint on buried sections prevents accelerated corrosion.	Trap moisture against walls Screens and cladding need ventilation gaps. Never block a rainscreen cavity.
Allow wet/dry cycling Corten needs rain then sun. Avoid permanently shading the piece.	Use chemical accelerators without a specialist Only rainwater acceleration is advised. Other accelerants need specialist applicators.
Plan run-off routes Position so run-off drains away from patios, decking, and pale stone. Hose off early staining quickly.	Leave debris on the surface Rotting leaves and organic matter cause localised pitting and surface marking.
Inspect fixings annually Check for any signs of galvanic corrosion and replace as needed.	Expect uniform colour Patina varies between pieces and over time. This is the beauty of the material.

PRODUCT SPECIFIC TIPS - AT A GLANCE

Planters & Raised Beds Geotextile liner before soil. Keep drainage clear. We design bracing for soil weight - ask about bespoke options.	Screens, Fencing & Panels 50mm ground clearance. Stainless fixings only. Check annually and replace any with galvanic corrosion.
Cladding & Facades Professional install only. Never block the ventilation cavity. We offer cladding design — rainscreen only, not weather-proofed.	Water Features Secondary protective coating recommended where water is in constant contact. Iron-binding media if fish or plants are present.
Firepits Remove ash after every use. Wipe interior with cooking oil to slow oxidation. Never burn treated timber.	Sleepers & Seating Treat buried sections. Seating can stain fabric during patination— Owatrol Oil or wait a few weeks for natural sealing.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS: WHEN CORTEN NEEDS ATTENTION

Coastal / salt air	No fundamental issue — patination is accelerated. If a dusty salt layer appears, wash off and seal. Manageable with periodic maintenance.
Permanently damp	Avoid without treatment. Wet/dry cycling is essential. Boggy or waterlogged ground causes accelerated section loss.
Ground contact	All buried sections must be coated with glass-flake epoxy or bituminous paint before installation.
Clothing contact	Steps, seating, handrails: Owatrol Oil during patination, or wait a few weeks for natural sealing to occur.
Interior use	Seal with Owatrol Oil to prevent particle shedding, or allow natural patination and sealing before bringing indoors.

Got a question? We love talking Corten.

Whether you're specifying for a commercial project or choosing a planter for your garden, our team is always happy to advise on suitability, care, and installation. We can connect you with specialist finishers and applicators where needed.

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