

Surface treatment an easy way to improve a drab slab

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You call that old, gray slab a patio?

The latest batch of do-it-yourself concrete stains and treatments allow homeowners to perk up plain patios and wow with amazing walkways — usually in a week-end or less.

Using common patio resurfacers and concrete stains in a range of stylish hues, homeowners can transform drab slabs into stylish extensions of their home, perfectly matched to any color scheme and just as durable as a brand-new porch.

“A treated patio really does enhance the curb appeal of the home,” said Randy Williams, regional sales manager for the QUIKRETE Companies. “Much like a driveway, that’s usually the first thing people see as they pull up to a home,” he said. “People really want the fronts of their homes to look nice and be something they’re proud of — and resurfacers are one way to accomplish that.”

“Consumers want the ability to express their own style, not just inside their homes but on the exterior as well,” said Peter Donati, product manager for H&C Concrete Stain, a division of the Sherwin-Williams Co. “Concrete decor is emerging as a newly discovered form of easy-to-complete landscape design that allows homeowners to dress up something as mundane as a bare concrete driveway,” he said.

The prevalence of decorative concrete treatments found at restaurants, resorts and hotels might

have something to do with the increasing popularity of custom concrete creations, according to Donati. There are even stencils homeowners can use with concrete treatments that create the look of brick or natural stone.

“Consumers want to replicate these looks in their homes,” he said. “The major obstacle is that most commercial applications were created with new concrete.”

“Concrete has a 15- to 20-year life span, and the economics of removing and replacing structurally sound concrete just to add a decorative treatment is not feasible for the average consumer. This is where topical decorative treatments come into play.”

“Assuming the concrete is structurally sound, the do-it-yourself consumer can transform their in-place concrete with any number of treatments, from acrylic stain to stencil patterns. Resurfacers add a new finish to existing concrete, covering cracks and pitted areas.

“If the entire patio is an eyesore but it’s still structurally sound, homeowners can use the QUIKRETE Concrete Resurfacer to resurface the complete patio,” Williams said.

“You just mix it in a five-gallon bucket with a paddle-mixer and use a squeegee to move the product around,” he said. “You’ve got a brand-new look at a fraction of the cost to break it up, haul it off and pour a new slab.”

For a truly stylish slab, homeowners can tailor the color of their patio, porch or walkway to match their home using products like QUIKRETE Liquid Cement

Color, which is added directly to the resurfacer.

“It allows the consumer to decorate their patio,” Williams said. “They can add different doses to get different colors, and the color is an integral mix, which means it goes all the way through the cement.”

Available in five colors — red, brown, buff, charcoal and terra cotta — the pigment can be used as is or mixed for a custom shade. Williams even recommends swirling colors for a dramatic, decorative touch.

“You could do the base color in charcoal, then dab on top to make a swirl pattern with other colors,” he said. “It gives you a breakup of the pattern, which gives it a decorative appeal.”

Concrete stains are another option.

Applied like paint, acrylic stain, like H&C Silicone Acrylic Concrete Sealer, requires minimal preparation and skill, according to Donati, which makes it a

perfect DIY project.

And, just like paint, the treatment comes in a wide range of colors to match virtually any color scheme, from neutral tans and browns to earth-tone reds and yellows — even ocean-inspired blues and greens.

“Rather than spending thousands of dollars on replacing concrete walkways, patios or driveways, the same beautiful effect can easily be accomplished by using decorative techniques on existing concrete,” said Donati.

CNS Photo/H&C Concrete Stain

Concrete decor is emerging as a new form of landscape design that allows homeowners to dress up plain surfaces. Using a color treatment and a pattern template, this walkway was made to look like natural stone.



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