The weathering of a marker can be caused by chemical, physical, and biological processes (UCL Earth Sciences). In this region, it is oftentimes caused by fallen tree sap, lichen and moss growth, car exhaust, pollution, and acid rain.

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HOW TO CLEAN YOUR MARKER
A Guide
**HOW TO CLEAN THE MARKER**

- First, if your gravestone is laying on the ground, such as a tablet or a fallen marker, you must brush rocks off with something soft like a paintbrush before scrubbing, so they don’t scratch the surface.

- Next, scrape biological matter off if you think it is safe to do so and the roots aren’t too deep. For larger plants such as ivy, cut the plant at the base and let it die before scraping it off, otherwise the roots may destroy the stone.

- To start cleaning, spray the stone with water and gently begin scrubbing the surface with a brush with either plastic or natural bristles. For example, you could use an angled dish brush to clean the narrow crevasses of the inscriptions. If you do not want to purchase any products, water does a fantastic job of cleaning the stone on its own.

- If you would like to clean the stone further than water allows you, spray a solution of D2 and water, with a ratio of 1:1, onto the surface and continue to scrub as it starts to foam. D2 is the only substance that we know of that does not harm the stone. In fact, D2 is also used by the Smithsonian Institute.

- Keep repeating the process of rinsing the stone and scrubbing it with D2 and you will start to see immediate results. You can leave D2 on the stone for several hours up to a few days, as it works with the sun to bleach the stone. Please note that when D2 dries, it becomes pink, and when it is wet again, it will turn yellow. Once you rinse it off, the D2 will continue to keep the stone clean and prevent future staining.

**CLEANING DON’TS**

- Do not use wire brushes when scrubbing the surface of the stone. Their bristles are too hard, and they will scratch the stone, which will ruin its inscriptions.

- Do not take a rubbing of the stone if text is illegible. This might further wear down inscriptions. Instead, you can shine a flashlight at the text at varying angles or take photos and lighten them to read it.

- Do not spray any substances on the stone other than water or D2. Chemical and traditional cleaning substances will travel into the pores of the stone and expand over time. This will result in fragments chipping off the stone’s surface.

- Do not pour powder on the stone to read the text. This includes but is not limited to baby powder and flour. Similar to the cleaning substances, this will also alter the stone’s surface over time.

- Do not pull biological matter off the stones. Lichen, moss, and vines have roots that grow into the pores of the stone, and if you pull it, you may pull pieces of rock out with the roots.