



Three year old screen



After water-blasting



After application of Cetol Light Oak

Bamboo goes through many changes as it ages, from the fresh green of a newly cut cane, through the straw colour typical of dry bamboo, to the silvery grey of sun bleached bamboo. So please don't expect bamboo to look new for years on end. It will age naturally as it dries and is exposed to the elements. Whole canes may also crack which is normal and usually won't affect the structural integrity of the cane. Bambusero screens have an expected lifespan of at least seven years, worst case scenario, which would be in full sun with no cleaning or treatment at any stage. This can be greatly increased by following the suggestions below.

Bambusero screens and canes are usually supplied with the bamboo in a green state. This will quickly dry off to the dry bamboo colour in a matter of weeks in full sun or months if in the shade.

The most damaging factor for bamboo in ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun. This will silver off and bleach the original colour of the bamboo and in the long run will make the bamboo brittle. This can be slowed down by the application of oils or stains (see below). Rain, salt or cold don't affect bamboo too much. However, bamboo must always be installed so that it is kept off the soil. With screens, this includes the Macrocarpa frame.

Moss and Mould - The screen will have been sprayed with a moss and mould inhibitor before being shipped. A regular spraying every 3 months with a similar product will keep the black spotted mould from growing on the screen. There are many brands such as Wet 'n forget, CRC Clene up, 30 Seconds Move-it, all of which use benzalkonium chloride as the active ingredient. It is effective while also being non-toxic.

Water blasting - A regular spray with a waterblaster will keep it looking fresh and clean and remove surface dirt.

Protective coatings - After about a year of weathering in the sun the bamboo will have silvered off. This will have broken down the outside skin slightly which will allow the application of a protective coating. It is pointless doing so before the bamboo has weathered to a silver grey as the skin is impervious to anything you try to apply and will flake or rub off.

Application - Give the bamboo a good waterblast to clean it. Then brush or spray on your chosen coating. A stain will change the colour of the screen as well as provide a barrier for the UV. But will also cover the natural grain and look of the bamboo. An oil will penetrate into the bamboo and provide protection from the drying effects of UV which in the long run will make the bamboo brittle. But if the oil is clear there won't be much difference in colour. If you want to get the original bamboo colour back, try one of the penetrating oils with a pigment or colour in it such as CD50 Extreme, or Sikkens Cetol HLS, both of which can have pigment mixed with them.

Insect attack - we are very fortunate in New Zealand not too have much of a problem with Powder Post Beetle, which is the main insect which attacks bamboo in the Tropics. It does exist here but I have only ever come across one infestation in 10 years. If you do see small borer-like holes in the bamboo, and a very fine talc dust then you might have PPB. In this case remove the affected pieces of bamboo immediately to stop it from spreading. Steam cleaning has been known to kill it and our winters here seem to also kill the bugs.