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The Basic of Natural Stone

Natural stone is a product of nature formed over millions of years. There are three classes of rock that form the Earth's crust; sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic.

Sedimentary Rocks



limestone

Sedimentary rocks are formed in two ways. The first are formed by the pressing together or compacting of loose particles such as mud, sand, shells, pebbles and/or the remains of living things such as plants and animals, which have been deposited on land or in bodies of water such as lakes or seas. The other sedimentary rocks are formed by crystallization of dissolved minerals.

Sandstone is one of the most common sedimentary rocks. It is made from sand grains eroded from older rocks stuck together with some form of cement (usually quartz, calcite or iron minerals), and hardened into rock.

Limestone is made from fragments of sea creatures. Many limestones are made from dissolved lime which builds up around sand grains to form tiny. Limestones frequently contain fossils.

Igneous Rock



granite

Igneous rocks are formed by cooling and solidification of molten magma and lava. As they cool, crystals form and grow upon one another until the entire molten body has turned to stone. This classification of rocks was the very first to form on the earth and today makes up 95% of the Earth's crust.

Granite is the most common form of igneous rock and it's made from molten crystal rocks. It contains quartz, feldspar & mica. Granite is created if molten rock doesn't reach the surface as volcanoes, and solidifies underground.

Because the overlying layers of rock act like an insulating tea-cozy keeping the molten rock warm it allows the crystals to grow to a much bigger size giving granite its speckled appearance.

Metamorphic



slate

Taking sedimentary rocks and adding a mixture of extreme heat, pressure & new minerals forms metamorphic rock. These changes may result in a new vein, texture or color.

Slate is the most common kind of metamorphic rock. Pressure causes new minerals to grow in parallel a sheet - which is what makes slate split so easily. Marble is simply squashed and heated limestone. Serpentine is squashed and heated basalt.

Variations in natural stone

Every stone is a unique, natural creation containing unique mineral combinations that were bonded under unique conditions. Some types vary more than others, but the range of colors, variation of pattern & texture are inherent and must be expected. Although each rock is quarried out of a specific area, no two pieces will be exactly alike. The key to identifying them is both the general characteristics and also knowing the less frequent (yet distinct) markings that appear in each stone.