

## Caring For and Protecting Your Convertible Top

The sun's rays can harm your convertible top, and the rubber tire sidewalls. It is an accumulated type of damage, not a one time "flash". Over time the UV rays can dry out the vinyl top, and tires, and attack the cloth top. If you keep your car in a garage all of the time, then this is not a big worry to you. But some of us do not have a garage and we drive our Miatas every day, so this is an important issue to us.

I am not writing this to endorse any particular product, but to make you aware of the damage the sun can cause (If you don't already know). I wanted to highlight some options for you to consider as you try to protect your investment.

The two main line of items I am aware of are "303" Brand and "Ragg Topp" brand. I have been using the 303 line of products, and some forum posters on Miata.net like the Ragg Topp brand. Below are two links to the brand's home pages for your reference.

<http://www.303products.com/>

<http://www.wolfsteins.com/main.htm>

"303" company makes a vinyl top protectant that is great for rubber and plastics. It is water based, so there isn't anything in it to harm the items you want to protect. The water base may wash off after several rains, but the active ingredients are still on the top



protecting it. I used it once a month on the top and tires of my previous 2002 Miata. I use it now monthly on the tires of my current Miata and also 2 times a year on the interior plastic. You can use it liberally on the top and the tire side walls, but use it more sparingly on the interior. I spray some on a small piece of cloth and then rub this on the interior. "303" company also makes a Fabric Cleaner and Fabric Guard (not water based) for Cloth Tops. One would clean the cloth top with their Outdoor Fabric Cleaner and then treat it with their Fabric Guard twice a year.

I have never used the Ragg Topp Products, so I can't tell you anything about them. But I can say they are also popular with some of the folks on Miata.net. They make a Vinyl Top Dressing as well as a Cloth Top Dressing. These must be good also, or they would not get regularly posted on Miata.net.



Vinyl Protectant



Fabric Protectant

The last product I want to tell you about is great for all smooth shiny Plastic, Plexiglas, and the rear windows on Miata Soft Tops. It is called “Star Brite Marine Polish with PTEF” (Teflon). This is a “chemical” based cleaner and polish, NOT an abrasive based cleaner and polish. The Teflon coating left on the surface helps keep dirt from sticking to it also. When I bought my earlier 1996 Miata, the rear window was so fogged I could hardly see thru it. I did the inside and outside of the window with 2 applications, and it was amazingly better. I could actually see the cars behind me, and what they were! You wipe on an application, let it dry, and buff it off like any wax. But it will not scratch the surface. I also use this on the “Piano Black” center panel on the dash of my 06 Miata. I buy my “303” and “Star Brite” at the local “Conestoga Marine” boat Shop.



I have attached some pictures from the internet to this article so you can see what the containers look like. Again I am not trying to promote any particular products, but my goal is to make you more aware of the damage the sun can do, and some ways to protect the top and tires of your “pride and joy”.

ZOOM – ZOOM!  
Bill Latsha