

# *Catholic Cemeteries – Caretaker Notes*

## **TREE, SHRUB, BUSH AND** **PERENNIAL PLANTS**

It is always difficult to make rules and regulations applicable to a wide and diverse group of persons. Catholic Cemeteries rules are the standard regulations of the vast majority of cemeteries. The goal of these regulations is to make the cemetery grounds neat and clean with an atmosphere of simplicity and elegance. These regulations also ensure that the cemetery grounds are a safe place for both visitors and workers. We certainly appreciate and commend the love shown for these types of plantings.

Over the years we have experienced many problems regarding the placement of bushes and other perennial plants placed on or near the grave monuments. These bushes often grow beyond their original size and encroach on adjacent lots and become obstacles to machinery. Another problem arises when some lotowners keep adding shrubs and perennial plants on the grave. This condition grows worse as other people follow this practice. As a result there are sections of the cemetery where there are so many of these bushes on the graves that other lotowners and visitors have complained and have demanded that the cemetery enforce the regulations.

For several years we reminded visitors of this rule (bulletin notices and/or tags were distributed in many if not all sections). The cemetery staff when possible continues to arrange to tag most items placed in violation as a reminder of the cemetery rules and regulations. These tags have helped us to educate the public on the cemetery rules. On occasion, items not allowed were placed after the tagging process was completed, and at times inquiring visitors remove tags. The cemetery had made and continues to make every effort to enforce rules and regulations uniformly and with compassion. We acknowledge and regret instances that appear contrary to this act.

Many families wish to decorate their loved one's burial place as an expression of love and care. Management must balance these desires with concerns for the common good, safety, overall appearance, and the practicalities of maintenance. The placement of cemetery tributes, whether floral or of some other type, is strictly regulated for the common good of all gravesites and crypts. **No placed tribute, whether floral or otherwise is considered permanent to the site.**

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These rules and regulations play a most important part in the beautification and preservation of the sacred resting-place of the faithful departed. They are intended not as restraining, but rather as defining an orderly plan of operation, care and permanent maintenance.

We are aware that regulation enforcement will not be pleasing to some people but we sincerely trust that all will understand the necessity of complying with the regulations.

In compiling the regulations and in considering revisions, we try to strike a balance between the natural desire of family members to decorate individual gravesites and the overriding obligation to maintain the appearance of the cemetery with the resources at our disposal.

**Unrestricted plantings of shrub and perennials present two serious problems.** In most cases, a gravesite is less than a three feet by nine feet area. Except for the space occupied by the headstone, all the rest of the space is needed for interment use. *It is neither practical nor possible to transplant shrubs and perennials whenever there is an interment. The second problem is insurmountable. We have several thousand graves in the developed part of the cemetery system. We would either need to add a dozen or more new employees whose sole job would be to trim shrubs or allow the cemetery to become overgrown and unkempt.*

Our resources do not permit the first alternative and we cannot abdicate our responsibility to maintain the cemetery. On larger graveholdings (three graves or more) have sufficient land that can be dedicated to plantings, and for which families may receive permission, under these circumstances we do allow limited plantings in the belief that, just as with trees and shrubs we plant, they do add to the overall beauty of the cemetery.

## **Infractions and Corrections – No Notice given and No Compensation Permitted**

The cemetery reserves the right to remove decorations that have deteriorated, as well as decorations that do not meet the guidelines in order to maintain the beauty, dignity, and safety of the cemetery grounds including gravesites, shrines, chapel and mausoleum areas.

The cemetery cannot be responsible for decorations that are removed. Damage resulting from improper decorations cannot be covered for reimbursement nor can the cemetery assume responsibility for decorations disappearance. Rectification of any damage shall be the grave/crypt/niche-owner or the heirs of the grave/crypt/niche-owner.

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The general beauty and maintenance of the cemetery grounds (gravesites and the mausoleum areas) naturally suffers to the extent that time and labor is consumed in correcting infractions of the rules. If infractions are permitted or overlooked, it would tend to result in increased infractions.

The Cemetery staff does dispose of decorations placed at the gravesite or crypt that are in violation of the published rules. The cemetery staff is often instructed to take these materials away from public view to discourage others from placing similar items at the grave or crypt.

Comments and suggestions are always welcomed. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this or other matters, feel free to contact the cemetery office.

## Shrub and Bush Maintenance Program

*(This is a paid service offered by Catholic Cemeteries)*

Catholic Cemeteries feels strongly that a well maintained, balanced shrub or bush not only enhances the natural qualities of the plant -but will add to the over-all beauty of a family lot, compliment a family monument, and make this place a well-kept cemetery.

While it might be the intention of the Certificate-holder of the lot to keep it well maintained, it is generally agreed that over the years this does not always take place.

We therefore recommend to the Certificate-holder and their heirs to consider the Cemetery's Shrub Maintenance program.

The cemetery staff can help trim the following types of shrubs and bushes at your family lot:

### **Approved Plantings**

- Dwarf boxwood
- Alberta Spruce
- Skyrocket dwarf Junipers
- Other dwarf style bushes

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## **Problems with plant maintenance**

Families invest a significant amount of money into a family memorial to honor their loved ones buried at the cemetery. Shrubs and bushes placed without a maintenance plan can lead to over-growth that becomes unattractive and covers a beautiful family monument.

- *While shrubs and bushes can be trimmed practically any time of the year, if planned for and done properly on a regular basis the plant's best shape or form can be displayed.*
- *Well selected material will add to the beauty of the monument, its color contrast and shape.*
- *Unattended shrubs and bushes require severe pruning to conform with regulations.*
- *Severe pruning can threaten the life of the plant whereas constant and consistent maintenance of the plant material can result in a beautiful shape, balance, complimentary, plant fitting to the lot and its surrounding area.*
- *Regular trimming maintenance goes hand in hand with a routine visual inspect for good plant health. With regular maintenance throughout the growing season, early detection of growth related problems are possible. A treated bush can be saved when early detection occurs.*
- *Wild life, Birds, & other Animals are likely to be attracted to a seldom maintained plant.*
- *Discolored Yellowish or brown bushes look unsightly in color.*

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## **Why have this Service completed?**

- Any trimming process used on bushes and shrubs is time consuming.
- It is the type of work that should not be rushed.
- Knowledge of trimming tools and the plant product is essential.
- The trimming process itself can damage or hurt the plant.
- The severity of some pruning activity products can be dangerous to the pruner or the plant.
- Certain chemicals used in spraying plants and treating cut branches can be flammable, hazardous and can injure the user or damage other plants and grass if improperly used.
- Proper tools and clean up procedures must be followed

*Service is subject to weather conditions, age of plant material, extent of pruning desired as well as extent of work to conform plant to permitted regulation size  
Contact the cemetery office for pricing information .*

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*Where permitted:* The following Planting and Decorating Rules and Regulations:

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## **Shrubs & Bushes?**

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*Did you know you should obtain Permission to Plant Shrubs?  
Here are the Planting and Decorating Rules and Regulations for this:*

1. Shrubs and bushes are permitted on three grave (wide) lots and larger. To avoid constant trimming, slow-growing shrubs such as dwarf boxwood, Dwarf Alberta Spruce (*Picea glauca Conica*), or *Ilex Crenata Convera* (Butter Scotch) are recommended. No permanent plantings are allowed on single or double graves. These plantings will be removed without notice.
2. No shrub or bush is to exceed the following height restrictions, preferably they should be kept four (4) to six (6) inches below the maximum size permitted. The height restrictions are as follows: Three feet for a lot that consists of three graves recorded on the same Certificate. Four feet for a lot that consists of four graves recorded on the same Certificate. Five feet for a lot that consists of five graves recorded on the same Certificate. Six feet for a lot that consists of more than five graves recorded on the same Certificate. No shrub or bush is to exceed the height of the door on a family mausoleum. The cemetery management shall be the sole judge to the design or shape and portion of the maintained shrubbery.
3. Shrubs and bushes are planted on the sides of the family memorial only. Never in the floral placement or planting area. Placed shrubs may extend the width of the memorial plus 16 inches in front and the rear (if same lot). **At no time shall the planting encroach upon any other lot.** Other Perennials, vines, climbers, hedging or rose bushes are not permitted.
4. The maintenance (care) for the plantings remain the responsibility of the family. Failure to maintain the plants shall be deemed as sufficient and final notice to cemetery management authorizing their immediate removal without notice or compensation to the certificate holder or the certificate holder's heirs or anyone.
5. Cemetery personnel take reasonable care to safeguard all plantings. Nevertheless, due to the great number of visitors to the cemetery, it is impossible to guarantee these items from theft, damage or loss. Items placed in violation of these rules will be removed and disposed of without notice or compensation.

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6. Plant at your Own Risk. The cemetery may require the temporary removal of shrubbery from the planted area to accommodate a burial within the lot or at times the adjacent lot. Due to conditions and equipment surrounding burial procedures families will not be notified of the plant's removal. The plant may remain unearthened for a period of several days subject to all types of weather conditions.

For this reason the cemetery accepts no responsibility to the vitality of the plant nor guarantee its vitality upon replanting thereafter.

7. Garnishments - Glass jars, statues, shells, vigil lights, marble chips and bric-a-brac of any description are not permitted. Lot owners should review the general planting and decorating regulations for the restrictions placed on silk and artificial floral arrangements. Any articles of this nature placed on lots or in the bushes or shrubbery will be removed.
8. The cemetery reserves the right to remove and dispose shrubbery whereas in cemetery management's judgment infestation (poor health), safety, overall appearance, or lawn damage can or has occurred. Plants that stain monuments or lawn areas may also be removed without notice.
9. Consent to plant is granted to the lot owner or the lot owners heirs only. Firms (Contractors) are prohibited from planting or maintaining the shrubs unless serving as an agent of the family. The cemetery will not be a third party to a contract or agreement expressed or otherwise stated by a landscape contractor, florist, or nursery. All work completed on cemetery grounds must be approved by cemetery management with proper insurance coverage on file.
10. Certificate holders and their heirs should report a Change of Address to cemetery authorities. The cemetery management deems legal and other notification final to the last record of address on file.
11. A full and complete copy of the current and dated Rules and Regulations and current price lists will be available for inspection at Catholic Cemeteries' offices located in each cemetery during regular office hours. In order to prevent confusion and misunderstanding as to which version of the *Rules and Regulations* is current and is in force, the entire *Rules and Regulations* document shall remain on a Cemetery's premises, shall be available to the Certificate holder, appropriate contractors and vendors, as well as the general public. These rules are subject to change without notice for the overall beauty of the Cemetery or any other reason that the Cemetery Authorities deem sufficient for the good of the majority and the proper maintenance of the Cemetery.

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