

Catholic Cemeteries – Caretaker Notes

SPRING TIME

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE

March

Flowers

- Plant pansies, snapdragons, calendulas, and other cool loving annuals.
- Clean up the perennial bed by cutting back foliage and removing winter mulch layer. Divide and plant perennials in the garden.
- If dry, prepare soil for planting by adding compost or other organic matter.
- As growth begins, fertilize flower beds with a balanced fertilizer.
- Plant new roses. Remove winter mulch from existing roses and prune.
- Cut ornamental grasses back to within 3 to 5 inches of the ground.
- Fertilize spring flowering bulbs such as tulips and daffodils.
- Cut seed pods from spent bulbs.
- Help control iris borers by destroying old foliage before new growth begins.

Lawns

- Spot spray for dandelions, henbit, and chickweed.
- Apply crabgrass preventer in late March through mid April for best results.
- Seed thin areas in bluegrass and tall fescue lawns.
- If no fall application of fertilizer was made, fertilize bluegrass and tall fescue.
- Mow grass ½ inch lower to remove winter debris. Do not scalp.

Trees and Shrubs

- Pruning
 - Prune trees, except birch, maple, and walnut, which are best pruned after leafing out.
 - Wait to prune spring flowering shrubs until after they bloom.
- Mulch tree and shrub plantings up to 4 inches deep, keeping mulch away from trunks.
- Fertilize trees and shrubs.
- Plant new trees in the landscape.
- Remove tree wraps from young trees for summer growth.
- Rake and clean groundcover planting.

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April

Flowers

- Remove winter mulch from perennial garden
- Cut back last year's growth from perennials
- Remove seed heads from spring bulbs
- Do not remove foliage from spring flowering bulbs as growth is needed for next years flower
- Fertilize spring flowering bulbs
- Add organic matter such as compost before planting new flowers
- Divide perennials
- Plant new roses
- Prune rose bushes
- Fertilize rose bushes for spring growth
- Plant annuals from seed and transplants

Lawns

- Apply crabgrass control by mid month
- Mow lawn as needed, bluegrass 2", tall fescue 3"
- Fertilize cool season lawns with slow release nitrogen fertilizer
- Do not fertilize zoysia this early in spring, nutrients go to weeds not dormant grass
- Spot treat broadleaf weeds such as dandelions, henbit, and chickweed
- No need to catch grass clippings if mowing frequently
- Do not water unless extremely dry, early irrigation sets turf up as high water user in summer

Trees and Shrubs

- Prune spring flowering shrubs such forsythia and lilac after flowering
- Prune trees as needed, and repair winter storm damage
- Topping is not pruning, never top a tree
- Plant new trees and shrubs
- Remove grass from base of young trees and shrubs to prevent lawn mower and line trimmer damage
- Apply mulch layer around plants
- Keep new trees and shrubs watered
- Fertilize young trees to promote growth

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May

Flowers

- Plant annual flowers for summer color
- Continue to plant and divide perennials
- Mulch perennial and annual gardens for weed control and moisture retention
- Begin pinching chrysanthemums for bushier plants
- Do not remove foliage from spring bulbs until it dies down naturally, this develops stronger blooms for next year
- Keep a garden journal for permanent reference

Lawns

- Reduce thatch layers from zoysia by verticutting or core aerating
- Sod or sprig zoysia lawns to fill in bare areas
- Fertilize zoysia lawns with high nitrogen to promote green up and summer growth
- Mow zoysia at 1 to 2 inches tall
- Apply slow release nitrogen fertilizer to bluegrass and tall fescue to promote summer growth if watering during the summer. Lower maintenance lawns skip this application
- Mow bluegrass and tall fescue at 3 inches
- Spot treat broadleaf weeds
- Withhold early summer watering until needed to promote more drought tolerant lawns

Trees and Shrubs

- Plant new trees and shrubs
- Prune spring flowering shrubs after bloom to shape plant and encourage flowers next year
- Mulch around young trees and shrubs to conserve moisture and control weed growth
- Water young ornamentals as needed
- Remove tree wraps for summer growth
- Remove tree stakes that have been in place more than one growing season
- Fertilize trees to help increase growth rates
- Caution, use line trimmers around trees and shrubs so as not to damage tender bark

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Our General Cemetery Clean-up generally takes place during the months of March, April and May (as weather permits). **During these times, all grave and mausoleum decorations are recommended to be kept to a minimum** as we prepare the grounds and lawns for the busy season of turf work.



Some Visiting, Decorating and Planting Reminders:

- The cemetery shall remove all Palm /Easter Decorations a week after Easter Sunday.
- In general, a week after Easter Sunday, the cemetery staff continues to remove all artificial flowers and other items out of season or items placed in violation of the published rules and regulations.
- The cemetery's exterior water system is turned on at this time (temperature permitting). At all other times, during cold weather, water can be obtained from the exterior faucets adjacent to the sides of the buildings often located near the public restroom facilities.

The general removal of decoration items takes a 2 to 4 week period. Families wishing to remove these items sooner may dispose of them in the cemetery's trash receptacles located in each section.

Each year during the spring season, the cemetery staff arranges to remove all items placed in violation of the rules and regulations. Each area is cleared row by row, section by section. Sometimes items are tagged to remind families of the violations. Sometimes labor and time constraints make tagging violations impossible. Regrettably, items can be placed after the tagging process is completed, and these items are removed without warning by our tag notification program. The cemetery 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.

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Grass Growth and Maintenance

From mid-March to mid-May the cemetery staff top-soils and seeds all sections. On occasion, gravesites settle (sink) after recent burials (sometimes up to one year after burial), this situation is especially noted following a heavy rain storm or after the first spring thaw. These areas must be top-soiled and seeded once again. Sometimes the newly placed soil covers areas where seed germination has already taken place.

During the majority of the grass growing season, mowing will typically take place on a weekly basis. Because of the unpredictability of weather, it is impossible to guarantee that the same section will be mowed on the same day of each week during the growing season. Items placed at the gravesite should be approved items from the rules and regulations and should be placed at the gravesite in the designated areas as outlined in the rules and regulations to avoid removal by staff or damage from maintenance equipment.

Why the cemetery has these rules?

Our goal is to:

Foster cooperation between the cemetery and those who visit here.

Insure the continuation of the general plan set forth for the cemetery grounds.

Design rules that protect visitors and workers from harm.

Design rules *not as retraining* but as defining an orderly plan of operation.

The cemetery's management is committed that Catholic Cemeteries are well maintained and image the Church's respect for the dignity of each individual human person.

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.

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.

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