

Catholic Cemeteries — Caretaker Notes

Fall Time



Catholic Cemeteries of Long Island

Updated December 2018

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE

September

Flowers

- Plant spring flowering bulbs, tulips, daffodils, and others.
- Dig, divide, or plant peonies.
- Divide perennials, especially spring bloomers.
- Remove seedheads from perennials to prevent reseeding in the flower bed.
- Plant chrysanthemums for fall color.
- Dig gladiolus as foliage begins to yellow and air dry before storing for winter.
- Clean up flower bed areas to reduce insects and disease as plants dieback for winter.
- Enrich soil by adding organic matter such as peat moss or compost.

Lawns

- Plant or sod new bluegrass or tall fescue lawns.
- Renovate bluegrass or tall fescue lawns by verticutting.
- Core aerate cool season turf.
- Fertilize cool season grasses with high nitrogen sources of fertilizer.
- Mow turf at 2 to 3 inches and sharpen blade for a clean cut.

Trees and Shrubs

- Plant trees and shrubs, deciduous and evergreen.
- Rake up fallen leaves and compost.
- Prune broken and dead branches from trees.
- Avoid pruning spring flowering shrubs such as lilac and forsythia to ensure spring flowers.
- Hand pick bagworms to reduce problem in future.

September: Weather permitting, after Labor Day the cemetery staff resumes the practice of topsoil and seed for gravesites. Many requests for seed and topsoil dating back to Memorial Day are worked on at this time. For best use of personnel time and materials the work is generally completed not by filing date but by section location. It is possible that a work order requested last week could be filled before a work order requested the previous month due to work being scheduled for an entire section location rather than chronological order.

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- Plant spring flowering bulbs, such as tulips, daffodils, and crocus, for a splash of early season color.
- Remove dead annuals from the garden.
- Trim perennial stalks to tidy the flower bed for winter.
- Pot bulbs for indoor forcing.
- Clean up dead iris and peony foliage and destroy it to decrease the spread of disease.
- After a light frost, dig canna, glads, dahlias and other tender bulbs for winter storage.
- Make notes about the plantings to document successes and failures.

Lawns

- Continue to mow the lawn if necessary, bluegrass 2 inches, tall fescue 2½ inches.
- Core aerate turf to reduce soil compaction, improve drainage, break up thatch, and help nutrients move into the soil.
- Control dandelions, henbit, and chickweed with a broadleaf herbicide while seedlings are young.
- Keep fallen leaves removed from the lawn to prevent shading and dieback on grass.

Trees and Shrubs

- Plant new trees and shrubs and keep them watered during dry winter months.
- Once the leaves have fallen, transplant trees and shrubs.
- Trim dead, broken, or diseased branches from trees and shrubs.
- Enjoy fall leaf color, which normally hits its peak about the third week of October.

Miscellaneous

- Drain water lines and store water hoses and sprinklers for winter.
- Prepare the compost pile for winter. Add new materials and turn.
- Store unused seeds in a cool, dry location.

October:

Throughout the month of October the cemetery will continue to topsoil and seed gravesites. If we overlooked anything, telephone or call the office so an individual work order can be placed.

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- Clean up the rose bed to help reduce disease next season. Cut back tall rose canes to 24 inches to prevent winter breakage.
- Remove frost-killed annuals.
- Till annual flower beds and add organic matter to improve soil.
- Continue to plant spring flowering bulbs.
- Depending on your flower bed style, leave or cut back perennial stalks to 4 to 6 inches.
- Apply a winter mulch to perennials and roses after several hard freezes.

Lawns

- Rake fallen leaves from the lawn to prevent winter suffocation.
- Fertilize cool season lawns, bluegrass and tall fescue, with a quick release high nitrogen fertilizer to promote root development and early spring green up.
- If needed, water turf so its starts winter with ample moisture.
- Control dandelions, henbit, and chickweed before spring green up.
- Continue to mow into the fall at 2 to 3 inches.

Trees and Shrubs

- Water newly planted trees and shrubs.
- Plant new trees and shrubs.
- Rake leaves and place in compost pile.
- Check mulch layers and replenish.
- Prune dead or hazardous limbs.
- Wait to prune spring flowering trees and shrubs until after bloom.

Miscellaneous

- Drain water line system and store garden hoses and sprinklers indoors for increased life.
- Protect ornamental and fruit trees and young plants from rabbit damage by wrapping or enclosing in wire screen.
- Start a compost pile with fall leaves.
- Turn compost pile to hasten breakdown.
- Start planning for next year.

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As temperatures approach the freezing mark the cemetery's exterior water system is shut down for the winter. Water is available to lot owners and visitors at specific locations. Inquire at the cemetery office. For convenience, many visitors choose to carry water in a container from home during late fall to early spring visits.

Winter Preparation

Since winter snow is sometimes heavy in our area, we place wooden stakes along the road edge to guide snowplows. The stakes are placed approximately every 100 feet and are removed during the Spring.

Signs of frost generally note the end of our efforts to place topsoil and seed on gravesites. Requests for ground work are generally held from the period of October till the commencement of seeding in the Spring.

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