

# Forest Hill Cemetery Tree Care Plan

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## **Purpose**

The specific objective of the Forest Hill Cemetery Tree Plan will be:

- To obtain Tree Campus USA status
- To establish tree selection and planting guidelines
- To promote tree health and safety by following the International Society of Arboriculture and the ANSI Standards guidelines when maintaining campus trees

## **Tree Care Plan**

### ***Plant selection***

The selection of plants to be installed on the campus shall be approved by the cemeteries arborist installation. Diversity, site conditions, pest susceptibility, form, mature height, and longevity will be the factors that determine species selection.

When utilizing a contractor, the landscape plan shall be approved by the cemeteries arborist in regards to plant selection. The arborist as well as the cemetery superintendent reserves the right to make suggestions, refuse plant species, and request that substitutions be made.

### ***Recommended plant species***

As an Arboretum we strive for diversity among our collection of plants within the cemetery. This list contains the more common plants that are recommended for use in our landscape. In obtaining diversification on campus we are not bound to the plants only on this list. If a plant is recommended that is not on this list it must have the approval of the cemeteries arborist before it is installed. There may be different cultivars of the plants that are listed that may be installed with the approval of our Arborist.

### ***Planting***

Depending on the size of the project the plantings shall be completed by cemetery personnel or an approved outside contractor. The following guidelines shall be followed when planting at the Forest Hill Cemetery:

- When using an outside contractor, a cemetery employee shall be on site at the time of the plant delivery. Forest Hill Cemetery reserves the right to refuse any plant that is damaged, has signs of disease or insects, appears to be in poor health, poor form, poor structure, or does not meet the plant selection specifications.
- Forest Hill Cemetery also reserves the right to refuse a planting due to improper planting techniques at the time of installation if Forest Hill Cemeteries planting guidelines are not followed.
- All plants must be set with the root flare or bud union clearly visible above the soil grade. If the root flare or bud union is not exposed soil shall be carefully removed from the top of the root ball until it is exposed.

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- The planting hole shall be no deeper than the height of the root ball when measured from the bottom of the root ball to the bottom of the root flare. The planting hole shall be 2 to 3 times the diameter of the root ball. Upon placing the plant in the hole, all burlap, twine, ropes, wire baskets shall be removed from the top one third of the root ball. When possible the entire wire basket, twine, and burlap shall be removed. All containers shall be completely removed on containerized plant material.
- The planting hole shall be backfilled with the existing soil. If the existing soil is of poor quality, soil amendments shall be incorporated into the soil. After the completion of the backfill, the root flare or bud union shall be visible and exposed.
- All new plantings shall be mulched with a shredded hardwood bark mulch or wood chips to a depth of 2-4". The mulch shall not touch the trunk of the tree or cover up the root flare or bud union of the plant.
- Newly planted trees shall be watered right after installation and must continue to receive adequate watering weekly during the first growing season up until the ground freezes. Staking of trees at planting will only be done if the tree is unstable and shall be completed according to the most recent ANSI standard.
- All new plantings shall not receive any fertilization during their first year of growth. Broken branches and stubs shall be pruned at the time of planting. Structural pruning shall not take place until the plant has been in the ground for one growing season.
- When contracting out the tree planting, contractors shall provide a one-year warranty on all plant material against defective plant material and workmanship.
- All plant material shall be replaced if they are dead or growing poorly at no cost to the Cemetery. Replacement plant material shall be of a similar size and shall come with a new one-year warranty beginning at the time the replacement plant goes into the ground.

### ***Maintenance***

Maintenance of the plant material will begin the day it is put into the ground and continue until the plant is no longer viable or safe. Maintenance will be performed to provide a safe, functional, and visually appealing environment for the cemetery. All trees shall be inspected visually on an annual basis. All maintenance procedures shall be performed by the Grounds Department staff when possible. If cemetery personnel are unable to safely perform or does not have the necessary tools to perform the maintenance tasks, a tree company approved by the cemeteries Arborist shall be contracted to perform the tasks.

### ***Pruning***

All pruning shall be done according to the current ANSI standards and the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) guidelines. Preventative maintenance pruning will be done on an as-needed basis as determined by the cemeteries arborist. Trees will be inspected annually to determine their pruning needs. Trees will be pruned for safety first, then for tree health, and then for aesthetics. Trees shall be left low-branched and natural in appearance when possible.

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### *Tree removal*

Trees will only be removed when they are determined to be unsafe, dead, in poor health, or detract from the quality of the landscape. Before a tree is removed a thorough investigation will be performed by the cemeteries Arborist and a decision will be made whether or not to remove the tree. The tree shall then be marked with spray paint by the Superintendent indicating that it is to be removed. This is done so that the wrong tree is not removed. If the tree removal is too large or technical for the cemeteries crews to handle, it will be contracted out to an approved tree care company. Where possible the remaining stumps will be ground out below the soil level. The stump grindings will be raked back into the hole once the stump has been ground.

### *Mulching*

Trees and shrubs shall be mulched to a depth of 2-4 inches with shredded hardwood mulch or wood chips. Mulch shall be kept off and away from the trunks of the trees. There shall be no volcano mulching. As the canopy of the tree expands so shall the mulch ring where it is possible and within reason to expand. Additional much shall be added on an as-need basis.

### *Fertilization*

Fertilizers shall be chosen and applied with the protection of the environment first in mind. Fertilizers shall be applied by an approved tree fertilizer company.

### *Disease and pest management*

Trees and shrubs shall be monitored by the grounds crew or a Certified Arborist on a regular basis to scout for insect and disease problems.

An infected plant shall be monitored to determine when the plant has reached the injury level where a biological or chemical treatment is needed. When possible a biological control shall be used over a chemical treatment in order to preserve and lessen the damaging impact on the environment and beneficial insects that may be present.

### *Catastrophic events*

In the event of severe weather conditions that may cause harm to the cemeteries landscape the following procedures shall be followed:

- The Grounds Supervisor shall assess the damage and determine the resources that are needed to address the damage and safety concerns. If needed, a professional tree care company shall be called in for assistance.
- Roadways shall be opened and cleared first.
- Emergency exits and entrances to buildings shall be cleared next.

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- All other areas shall then be cleared in order of importance.
- All removed plant material shall be documented for replacement purposes.
- In the case of a catastrophic event pertaining to an invasive pest, the cemetery shall follow the guidelines that have been set forth by the USDA, Ohio State Department of Agriculture, or other government agency that is overseeing the situation.

### *Protection and preservation policies and procedures*

All construction projects that will have an impact on the cemetery landscape shall involve the Superintendent from the beginning of the project to the completion of the project. The protection and preservation of the plant material needs to begin with the design phase and continues through and after the construction is completed. The Superintendent shall be responsible for policing the site and making sure that the Tree Protection and Preservation Policies and Procedures are being followed.

A site survey map shall be completed at the beginning of the project, prior to any construction equipment arriving on site, that identifies all plants whose root systems may be impacted by construction (Critical Root Zone Area), showing cut and fill areas, utilities, walks, roadways, and foundations, staging areas. After the site survey map is completed it shall be determined which trees will require protection, which trees can be relocated, which trees will require pruning to prevent broken limbs, which trees will require root pruning, and which trees will require removal. All tree protection work, relocating of trees, pruning of remaining trees, root pruning, and removal of trees shall take place before any construction equipment arrives on site.

All trees remaining in the construction area must be protected with tree protection fencing following the guidelines stated below before any construction equipment arrives on the jobsite. Tree protection fencing shall be chain link or bright orange snow fencing. The orange snow fencing shall have a post at every 4 feet along the span of the fence. Tree protection fencing shall be a minimum of four feet in height. The tree protection fencing shall extend a distance from the trunk of 1.25 feet per each inch of trunk diameter at breast height or 6 feet, whichever is greater. The area within the tree protection fencing shall be mulched with wood chips to a depth of 4 inches. The Superintendent shall approve the installation of the tree protection area before any equipment is brought on site.

The fencing shall remain for the completion of the project and not be removed for any circumstances. The fence shall not be removed until all equipment has left the site and the cemetery has deemed the job complete. No equipment, vehicles, materials shall be inside the tree protection fencing at any time. No substances shall be poured or disposed of within the tree protection fencing. The contractor will be held liable and be required to pay tree replacement and/or soil compaction remediation costs determined by the cemeteries Arborist if the contractor is found to have been within the tree protection fencing.

Root pruning shall be performed by a Certified Arborist only. All tree pruning shall be supervised by the cemeteries Arborist.

### *Tree damage assessment*

Any damage to a cemetery tree or shrub shall be reported to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will then assess the damage and the action that needs to be taken. If needed the cemeteries Arborist may be brought in to provide an assessment of the damages. The assessment shall determine whether the plant should be removed, pruned, or require treatment. A cost shall be associated with the action that is taken and charged to the person or persons that are responsible for the damage. A copy of the assessment and of the cost that is to be charged to those found responsible shall be submitted to the Business Manager.

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### Prohibited Practices

- No work shall be performed or any plant disturbed in the cemetery the Superintendent.
- No plants shall be planted in the cemetery without the approval of the Superintendent.
- No signage shall be affixed to a tree in any manner.
- No topping or heading cuts shall be made to any cemetery trees.

### Goals and Targets

Our first goal is complete the based tree inventory. The second part of this goal is to rebuild Forest Hill Cemetery website utilizing the data to create an interactive website for visitors and donors to utilize. The ground work is currently underway for this project.

Our second goal is to increase public awareness and draw more visitors to the cemetery. This will be an ongoing goal for us. A Facebook page was launched in 2016 to reach out and increase awareness of the arboretum.

Our third goal was to continue with our annual Arbor Day tree planting ceremony. Our first Arbor Day tree planting took place on Arbor Day 2011. This event involves over 300 students and adults.

One of our other goals is to increase student participation in the arboretum and other activities supporting trees.

Our final goal is to develop a self-guided interactive tour of the arboretum that people can access via their smartphone, tablet, or PDA.