

This year no artificial flowers and ornaments in cemeteries

By Gordon B. Seavey

In anticipation of the usual traditional influx of visitors to local cemeteries prior to Memorial Day (the actual date of which occurs this year on a Sunday) a crew of landscape workers is busy tidying up Westford's six public burying grounds.

Unless adverse weather interferes, Superintendent Wilfred J. Tousignant anticipates these grounds will be in readiness with their usual fresh spring appearance.

An extensive beautification program entered into last summer and fall has brought many compliments to the cemetery commissioners.

Scores of new plantings have been made of flowering shrubs, bushes and trees as well as the replacement of many older trees such as maples and evergreens which had outgrown their natural beauty. Many had died a natural death and few were killed by the gypsy moth invasion.

Tree Warden Roger Melancon plans to spray the trees this month for the caterpillars.

Most of the money for his project came from interested citizens who donated funds to purchase the nursery stock as memorial

gifts. This stock is locally grown.

Families, too, have been encouraged to replace overgrown or sickly ornamental shrubs lying next to gravestones. The department has been forced to cut down or dig up many overgrown, unsightly shrubs.

To create an appearance of naturalness and beauty, the commissioners will immediately enforce a rule that artificial flowers and ornaments will not be allowed in the cemeteries at any time, summer or winter. This ruling has overwhelming approval and is now being observed in most all graveyards in this area.

Another rule which is in effect is that all free standing urns, tubs, potted plants and baskets will be removed shortly after their placement on graves. These flowers dry out rapidly, often blow over, and most important, have to be moved repeatedly while mowing and trimming the grass, increasing labor costs.

Chairman Clayton Dearth suggests that the planting of flowers at the base of monuments is not only acceptable but practical as mowers can swing around to avoid them. These are left at the risk of the provider, and the department cannot take care of them.

For those who wish to replace old shrubbery, he says, alongside monuments with new nursery stock can have this done by the department at a reasonable fee. Shrubby however, is not permitted alongside flat or flush gravestones.

Following the trend elsewhere, a special section of Fairview is now being reserved which will permit only flush markers. At present, there is available space for those who wish to continue the practice of using upright stones.

The department encourages residents to purchase burial rights in advance of needs. Pre-

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