

West Parish Garden Cemetery & the Chapel at West Parish

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West Parish Garden Cemetery

Back to Nature

The Legacy of William M. Wood's garden cemetery...

In 1908 William M. Wood, President of American Woolen Company, envisioned the creation of a garden cemetery in Andover. He had visited local garden cemeteries, which were very much in vogue at the time, such as Mount Auburn in Cambridge and Forest Hills in Jamaica Plain. Wood and the West Parish Church Board of Directors took a trip to Woodlawn Garden Cemetery in Brooklyn, NY. The concept was that the creation of a beautifully landscaped and aesthetically pleasing cemetery in a natural environment would provide solace, peace and spiritual respite for those who were grieving and healing from the death of a loved one. In addition to the existing 5 acres, Wood purchased 45 acres from an adjoining property owner and landscaped these New England rolling hills. He planted hundreds of flowering bushes, perennials and tree varieties, added two ponds and constructed our lovely historic chapel, granite arch, and stone bridge and walls.

West Parish Garden Cemetery is committed to maintaining the spirit of Wood's original mission. We are surrounded by protected AVIS properties, town trails, koi ponds and our Children's Garden. Our landscaping crew is busy year-round beautifying the property. One can see a variety of animal life including the white squirrels, ducks, turtles, fish, foxes, birds, deer, and rabbits etc. We are dedicated to creating an environment that honors the deceased and provides comfort to living relatives of all ages.

Attached please find our updated policy regarding planting, decorations and upkeep of lots in the cemetery. We as the caretakers respect that grieving is a many faceted process. In the best interests of the West Parish Garden Cemetery community, we encourage as much natural beauty as possible.

Please take the time to consider your gravesite - minimize artificial mementos, tributes, and trinkets and maximize live annuals and perennials for aesthetic purposes and ease of maintenance.

"There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature – the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter."

-Rachel Carson

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Policy on Plantings, Decorations & Maintenance of Lots

As a garden cemetery, West Parish prides itself on the natural beauty of the stately trees, mature plantings and manicured shrubs on the scenic grounds. The policies of West Parish Garden Cemetery are in place to protect the beauty and serenity of our cemetery grounds, and for the benefit of all lot owners so that visitors can mourn their loved ones in a dignified and respectful manner.

We ask for your patience and understanding as we return to more natural and aesthetically pleasing grounds. The Board of Directors of West Parish Garden Cemetery thanks you for your cooperation in honoring William M. Wood's vision when he created this tranquil community space.

The Cemetery permits:

- Live annual or perennial plants or flowers
- One standard American flag, national flag, and/or veteran's flag
- Holiday decorations - We welcome wreaths, baskets and small evergreen decorations during the winter holidays. All winter decorations should be removed **by March 1**, weather permitting. After March 1, any items left behind will be removed by cemetery staff.

The Cemetery does not permit:

- Shrubs, trees, hedges or vines
- Artificial or silk flowers
- Stones used as ground cover or decoration, as they pose a safety hazard to cemetery staff and visitors
- Solar lights, eternal lights, vigil lights
- Shepherd's hooks, spinners, pinwheels, balloons, wind chimes
- Glass of any kind
- Mementos or tributes that impede cemetery operations or detract from the natural beauty of the grounds

Rules regarding planting at West Parish Garden Cemetery:

- The planting area cannot exceed the width of the base of the monument and can only extend 12 inches out from the front of the monument.
- Do not plant on either side of the monument or in the back of the monument of a single or 2 grave lot.
- The cemetery is "carry in, carry out" so please take your trash.

West Parish Garden Cemetery Staff reserves the right to remove tributes, plants, flowers, shrubs, or decorations that pose a safety hazard, impede the mowing and trimming of lots, no longer contribute to the beauty of the grounds or encroach on a neighboring gravesite.

The Superintendent and his staff are following the policy guidelines as determined by the Board of Directors of West Parish Garden Cemetery. Please call the office at **978-475-3902** should you require assistance.

Respectfully,

The West Parish Garden Cemetery Board of Directors

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