

# **Fairview Cemetery and Arboretum**

**1100 East Broad Street, Westfield, NJ 07090**

## **Plant Collections Policy**

### **Introduction**

The grounds at Fairview serve a dual purpose, the primary purpose being the interment of individuals on the site as a cemetery, the secondary purpose being home to a collection of plant species (specifically but not necessarily limited to trees) that comprise an arboretum to be enjoyed by visitors and used in educational programming. Regarding function of the grounds as an arboretum or “public garden,” the purpose of this document is to establish guidelines to inform and limit what constitutes an appropriate specimen in our collection and to guide development and management of plant collection(s) at Fairview.

In as far as plants are subject to matters of ethics, we are committed to maintain a healthy and respectful condition for specimens present. Plants that are experiencing rapid health decline and imminent death should be removed in a timely manner and proactively when possible and when unlikely to survive. As well, plants with catastrophic damage, such as due to wind or snow, and that have become unsightly and now detract from the beauty and interest to the grounds should also be evaluated in a timely manner for possible removal. (Despite that a plant “survives” catastrophic damage and may continue to live, it should be considered whether it will be capable of reaching its potential and continuing to contribute positively to the collection.) Lastly, we must consider that the plant collection exists within the context of a cemetery. Any plant that is damaged or otherwise poses a threat of potential harm or injury to any visitors, monument, structure, etc., should be immediately addressed and evaluated for precautionary treatment or removal.

The Collections Committee responsible for the implementation, interpretation, and review/revision of this collections policy shall initially include:

- Clayton Leadbetter, Arboretum Coordinator
- Richard M. Ralph, Executive Director
- Jeff Dodgson, Grounds Superintendent
- Hunter Adams, Arborist
- Tom Ombrello, Botanist, Union County College Professor
- Barbara Vincentsen, Chair, Grounds and Strategic Planning

In the case that any member is unable to continue serving on this committee, new members will be determined by the remaining members.

### **Purpose**

“The mission of Friends of Fairview is the enhancement and preservation of Fairview as a place of natural beauty, serenity, and historic significance through charitable donations. In addition, Friends of Fairview will offer opportunities for community engagement, scholarship, and cultural growth that will keep Fairview Cemetery actively participating with its surrounding communities for generations.”

The plant collection, and by extension the arboretum, is an integral part of the natural beauty and serenity referenced in the Friends of Fairview mission statement. As well, it provides a fundamental component of

community engagement and scholarship, in terms of programming related to or revolving around the plant collection. It is therefore an essential part of the mission to “keep Fairview Cemetery actively participating with its surrounding communities for generations.”

With these things in mind, it is the purpose of this collections policy to support this mission by maintaining the plant collection in a way that will allow it to continue to provide natural beauty and opportunities for community engagement and scholarship, as well as to increase and improve the potential to do so. Above all, when considering any change or addition to the plant collection on the Fairview grounds, we must consider whether doing so supports this purpose and falls within our current theme.

## Acquisition

Although modern and ornamental species have been added to the collection over the years, there is a strong fundamental element of native species and older specimens of historical significance. At present (as of June 2022), Fairview’s single “collection” is comprised of trees and shrubs. As a “theme,” we can consider this “trees and upright shrubs of native and/or ornamental interest.” Until such a time when our collection is expanded to include other specific plantings, groupings of plants, or particular types of plants—i.e. other “collections”—acquisition of new plant material should fit within this existing framework. One important aspect of the existing collection is that the plants generally are not low-growing or spreading, such as by suckering roots, in a way that would obscure monuments or create impassable areas. Any new acquisition needs to respect the primary use of the grounds as a cemetery. (So for example, under our current theme, the addition of herbaceous perennials may not make sense, until such time when a perennial garden bed or special planting might be established.) As a general guideline, following are recommended considerations for selecting additions to the collection(s):

1. Upright, single- or multi-stem trees and shrubs with foliage that would not generally obscure view below eye level.
2. Specimens whose sizes are appropriate for their respective sites and whose habits require little to no maintenance beyond light or selective pruning are preferred. Suckering, spreading, or fast-growing specimens that require constant trimming and shaping are discouraged except where appropriate, such as in a hedge, where minimal maintenance is still valued.
  - a. Specimens outside of these parameters—for example those with a short, dense, or weeping habit—should only be considered for specific locations in which they will be the least intrusive or problematic.
3. Given the large number of native species, specimens that are native to the area but not currently represented are encouraged if not preferred.
4. Specimens with large and/or messy fruits, flowers, or seed pods should be avoided, so as not to create a mess on roadways and monuments, cause visitors to stumble, or result in animals making a mess (such as the staining, purple bird droppings associated with mulberries).
5. Any specimens widely considered weedy or invasive in this area (such as Euonymous, Mulberry, and Barberry species) should be avoided when possible, although occasional use may be considered if deemed appropriate. Existing specimens need not be removed until or unless they prove problematic.
6. Any species known to be highly susceptible to disease and insect pests should be avoided, such as Florida dogwood (dogwood anthracnose), Ash (emerald ash borer), Elm (Dutch Elm disease), and *Prunus* species highly susceptible to black knot.
7. Attention should be given to range and hardiness of any prospective addition, so as to avoid premature death and replacement. Specimens of borderline hardiness, for example, should be avoided.

8. Ornamental specimens should be chosen, when possible, to compliment and expand the current collection in terms of underrepresented colors, bloom periods, or genus/species in the collection.
9. Any new acquisition should be valued for benefit to pollinators and for multiple seasons of visual interest.
10. Any new acquisition should be of known genus and species, as well as cultivar name if it has one. Unknown or unidentifiable specimens should be avoided.
11. Extra consideration and controlled planting should be exercised for any proposed additions with notable potential health concerns, such as sharp thorns or known toxicity. Specimens that are known to be problematic in these ways should be avoided as possible, unless they are deemed worthwhile for a suitable reason.
12. New acquisitions should be of reasonable size at the time of planting. Small saplings that are easily overlooked, especially subject to accidental damage by maintenance equipment or wildlife, or of questionable robustness should be avoided.

At time of planting, proper measures should be taken to protect from damage by equipment or wildlife.

On a strictly limited basis, gifts and donations may be accepted, although preferably in monetary form. A suitable specimen can be selected by the Collections Committee, or a delegate of the committee may work with the potential donor to help select an appropriate plant. Donation plants (or plants purchased with donated funds) may only be planted in limited areas, at the discretion of the committee, and not in already developed grave areas. Gifts and donations are considered unconditional and are subject to the same criteria as any other acquisition, including the possibility of eventual removal due to change in land usage needs, damage, illness, or death—or at the discretion of Fairview for any other reason—with or without replacement.

“Acquisition” is simply the act of *acquiring* a plant. Any new acquisition intended as a permanent or long-term addition to the collection will be added to the plant database and assigned an accession number, becoming a part of the plant records and an “accession.” While a variety of details about a new accession’s provenance, characteristics, and procurement will be recorded, of utmost importance are the minimum categories described, along with further details about this process and the requirements, in Plant Records System, below.

As areas of the grounds are developed, the Collections Committee—in consultation, when possible, with landscape designers and cemetery planners who help design areas and plantings—will establish plans to add new acquisitions to the grounds. Areas not slated for development in the same way as other parts of the cemetery (such as along the banks of the pond and brook) will be available for the committee to add new specimens as they see fit.

After approval of the Collections Committee, and upon planting, details of any new acquisition and the minimum categories described below should be reported to the Arboretum Coordinator for accessioning.

### **Plant Records System**

Fairview Cemetery and Arboretum is committed to maintaining a comprehensive plant records system. The Arboretum Coordinator is responsible for the administration and accuracy of the plant records database. Until such time as Fairview adopts programs or practices requiring accessioning of temporary plant material, unplanted plant material, or any plant material not intended to become a permanent part of the collection(s), only those permanent additions will be added to the plant record database and accessioned.

While additions to the plant database may include a number of possible categories of information, Fairview’s Plant Collection Policy designates the following minimum categories:

1. Accession number
  - a. Fairview's accession numbers are comprised of 8 digits, where the first four digits represent a chronological identifier and the last four, separated from the identifier by a dash, represent the year planted.
  - b. Any preexisting accessions, some of which may not have been intentionally planted, or those for which record details are lost to history are designated with the last four digits "0000."
2. Latin name (genus and species)
3. Common name
4. Cultivar name (when applicable)
5. Planting location
6. Information about donation, gift, or memorial specimens, when applicable.

Each accessioned plant for which records are kept is to be identified with a durable display label. It is Fairview's practice *not* to include accession numbers on plant labels; however, because the identifier digits are never duplicated (i.e., they don't reset by year, and no two plants that exist simultaneously in the collection share the same identifier), they are used colloquially as a "plant numbers" (without the leading zeros) on labels and maps, while still uniquely identifying each accession for the foreseeable future, up to 9999. Display labels include the Latin and common names (and cultivar, when applicable), the Latin and common plant family names, plant number, native range, and a QR code that links to the plant's entry on the website.

Labels in the collection(s) should be placed on the most visible side of the plant, attached either to the plants (at approximately eye level whenever possible) or to a stake beside the plant as appropriate for the type and size of the plant.

While a plant is never removed from the database, it is *deaccessioned* upon confirmed death or removal from the grounds. Because location and other relevant information is already part of the accession entry in the database, deaccession records include minimum additional categories:

1. Date of death, or as accurate as known, to month or year.
2. Cause of removal:
  - a. Cause of death, if known
  - or
  - b. Reason for removal.
3. Date of removal.

After deaccessions, accession numbers are not technically reused. However, in the case of replacement by an identical specimen, discretion may be taken to re-use the first four identifier digits, replacing the last four digits with the year that the replacement specimen was planted. This would necessitate a new entry in the plant database and be considered a new accession number, but the colloquial use of the identifier as the plant number allows the plant label to be reused as long as any associated data is updated (such as on the website). As well, existing map data remains accurate as long as replacement is planted in the same location. In the case of a non-identical species or cultivar replacing a deaccessioned specimen, a completely new accession number with the next chronological identifier would be assigned.

Death, destruction, or removal of any accession, whenever possible, should result in replacement of the same or similar species. In cases where identical replacement is impractical—such as if widely unavailable, exorbitantly priced, now deemed invasive, etc.—replacement specimen should be of similar or greater beauty, interest, and intrinsic value to the collection.

It is the responsibility of the Arboretum Coordinator to assess condition of accessions twice yearly and to conduct periodic inventory as needed. Observation of problematic conditions or concerns should be noted by any grounds crew during routine maintenance and reported to the Grounds Superintendent.

### **Care of the Collection(s)**

Plant health and appearance, as well as safety and liability concerns, are the primary interest of collection maintenance. The details of maintenance procedures are outlined in the maintenance procedures manual. Grounds staff and the Executive Director all observe specimens routinely during daily activities for potential concerns.

Minimum standards of maintenance:

- A LEVEL ONE tree inspection will take place on a year-round basis.
- Post-storm inspections.
- Pre/post construction mitigation.
- An insect and disease control program will be maintained, including broad Plant Health Care (PHC) practices.
- Tree fertilization and watering will take place as required.
- Pruning and cabling will be implemented where required.
- Removal when required.
- Safety supersedes all standards or guidelines.

Fairview Cemetery and Arboretum will take all reasonable measures to secure the plant collections and collection records from loss or harm.

Evaluation also assures continued relevance and adherence to the stated purpose of the collection. As part of the Arboretum Coordinator's assessments of accessions, evaluations will be made, in collaboration with a sub-committee of the Collections Committee, for recommended maintenance, new accessions, and deaccessions. This sub-committee will have the power to approve maintenance and deaccessioning recommendations.

As described in more detail in Plant Records System, when a specimen dies and is replaced, this constitutes a new "accession," which is assigned a new accession number. Because our current signage includes a plant number and not an accession number, this allows reuse of existing plant labels on replacement specimens of the same species and requires updating of data on website and in any plant records.

### **Access to Collections**

As all specimens in the collection are in public areas open to visitors, access to the collection(s) is available to the general public during normal visiting hours.

Access to full collection records is limited to employees, although public access to significant information about accessions is available on the website. The Tree List on the Arboretum page includes an entry for every accession, listing its accession number and extensive botanical details. The botanical details available on the website are all part of the accession records; however, not all data about accessions is part of these public entries. Anyone with questions about an accession record may contact the Arboretum Coordinator via the website for additional information.

As per Fairview's visitor rules, it is prohibited to "pick, cut, or remove flowers, plant material, or wildlife of any kind from the grounds." As such, seeds, fruits, flowers, or propagative materials are not to be removed from the plants or from the premises. Permission may be sought to remove plant material from the grounds by contacting the Arboretum Coordinator, although this is generally only granted for educational purposes and where the removal of requested material is minimal, does not adversely affect the health or appearance of the specimens, and is not for profit. It should be noted that removal of seeds or propagative or reproductive tissues from any accessions protected by patent will not be allowed.