

### Plants for the cemetery

Deer do not like fuzzy leaves, strong fragrances, or bitter-tasting plants.

- Perhaps you would like to mix low-growing small flowers among the grass, so keep sage, rosemary, thyme, hens and chickens, dwarf heliotrope in mind.
- Close to a gravestone might be alyssum, zinnias, marigolds, lobelia, all colorful and lasting well into the fall.
- Is your plot in the shade? Consider lilies of the valley, lamb's ear, sweet woodruff, lungwort, yarrow, white brunnera.
- For full sun try coreopsis, sweet William, foxglove, coral bells, lavender, campion, salvia, black-eyed Susans, heather, sea holly, verbena, catmint, columbine, veronica, campanula.

The library has many garden books for pictures of some of these selections. Also use Google: type in "flowers deer do not like." or "picture of a [name of one of the flowers listed here]."



### Cleaning gravestones

Perhaps, when you visit your cemetery plot to plant flowers for Memorial Day and clear the area of winter's twigs and branches -- and last year's vases, as well -- you discover that the stone itself has suffered during the fall and winter. Some soil may be from dirt and mud left by the snow, or air pollution; some lichens or mosses may have begun to grow on the stone. Bird droppings and tree sap may have adhered to its surface. What to do, and how to do it?

- First, use the gentlest available method: a soft brush, like a toothbrush, or vegetable brush, and enough clear water both for cleaning and rinsing -- you'll need more water than you think. Be prepared with at least a pail full.
- Soak the stone thoroughly with water first. The stone will absorb the water and you will be able to brush minerals, salts, and some algae from the stone more easily.
- Brush carefully over a small area, starting from the bottom up, then rinse that area before moving to the next one. Treat the areas on the entire stone that way.
- If you see no difference, it may be that you will need some mild cleaner to add to the water treatment.

Members of the Town's Cemetery Committee are researching the best kind of cleaning agent to use on gravestones.

### Cleaning gravestones (cont.)

On June 3, 2015 the Landscape subcommittee of the Cemetery committee was host to Mr. John Coleman, superintendent of the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in South Portland. He made a tour of our cemetery and talked to us about mutual problems and solutions.

We were very interested in what he had to say, and he will be back to see us again in the future. Among other topics, Mr. Coleman spoke to our concerns about the removal of algae and lichen on our tombstones. He recommended a product called D/2 Biological Solution, a safe, easy-to-use, liquid. It can be applied with a short fibered scrub brush, toothbrush, nothing metallic, after first soaking the stone in plenty of water, to help moisten its surface. Scrub the fungi or algae while the surface is covered with D/2, for 1-2 minutes, then keep the surface wet with more water and D/2, and continue to scrub. (Scrub, apply, wait, reapply, mist with water, scrub again, rinse with more water.) We found D/2 on Amazon.com and LimeWorks.us, but it's quite pricey at \$59.99/ gallon.



Mr. Coleman impressed upon us the need to avoid wire brushes, acidic cleaners, and household cleaners like Ivory soap, liquid or powder detergents, Clorox, Formula 409, Spic and Span, Borax or any other abrasive cleaner in treating marble, limestone, and granite. The "black stone problem" is mildew. While Mr. Coleman did not name a product, one we plan to try soon is Wet & Forget - Outdoor. Ask for it at Skillin's in Falmouth, or Coastal Hardware in Yarmouth, and read its directions. It is safe on all surfaces if it does not contain bleach, and it has a ph level of 8.