

**Basic Do's and Don'ts of Historic Graveyard Maintenance**  
**"A GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION PRIMER"** by Lynette Strangstad  
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- Don't mow immediately next to stones. Do use a nylon whip for close trimming
- Do equip the mower with rubber guard and blade guard
- Don't use commercial herbicides around stones
- Do plant small, close lying clovers and groundcovers near stones and in other hard-to-mow areas
- Do remove scrub trees and prune shrubs to prevent damage to stones
- Don't remove stones capriciously (to make straight rows for easier mowing, to create paths, or to "correct" a stone's facing orientation)

### Tips on Gravestone Cleaning

#### Procedures to Avoid:

- Avoid acidic cleaners on marble or limestone
- Avoid sandblasting gravestones
- Avoid high-pressure spraying
- Do not attempt to clean any stone that is unstable
- Do not attempt to clean stones without first receiving proper direction
- Never use wire brushes or any metal instrument in cleaning stone
- Do not substitute household cleaners for those listed here
- Do not clean stones often. Even the most carefully cleaned stone loses stone particles with each cleaning. DO not plan to clean stones more often than once every several years or longer
- Avoid treating stone with "protective" coatings that are impermeable to water vapor. Such coatings can actually be very harmful to stones in years to come.

#### Tools for Stone Cleaning:

- Plastic pails
- Goggles
- Rubber gloves
- Natural bristle or plastic scrub brushes
- Toothbrushes
- Smooth wooden sticks suc as ice cream sticks or tongue depressers
- Q-tips

- Spray bottles
- Water source

### Recommended Cleaning Solutions

*(always use the weakest cleaning agent that cleans stone effectively – do not increase recommended strengths of a given solution, use only those solutions recommended for the type of stone being cleaned)*

### Marble and Limestone

- Water only
- Non-ionic detergent such as Photo-Flo (available from photographic supply stores), Triton-X 100 or Igepal (available from conservator's supply house) and water. Use 1 ounce to 5 gallons of water
- Vulpex (a soap appropriate for stone cleaning available from conservators' supply house) and water. Use 1 part Vulpex to 2-4 parts water.
- Household ammonia. Use 1 cup to 4 cups water.
- Calcium hypochloride. Use only to remove biological growth. Available as swimming pool disinfectant. Use 1 pound dry to 4 gallons of water. Must be dissolved in warm water.

### Soapstone

- Water only

### Slate

- Water only
- Non-ionic detergent and water (see marble)

### Sandstone

- Water only
- Non-ionic detergent and water (see marble)