



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Thomas Farley, MD, MPH  
*Commissioner*

April 6, 2011

**Maple Grove Cemetery**  
83-15 Kew Gardens Ave.  
Kew Gardens, NY 11415

Dear Cemetery Manager:

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is preparing for the re-emergence of the West Nile virus as part of a long-term, comprehensive approach to preventing mosquito-borne diseases.

Prevention can be achieved by eliminating mosquito-breeding sites, and by applying pesticide that kills mosquito larvae before they become adults. Your cooperation is required to successfully reduce the number of locations where mosquitoes can breed (standing water on cemetery premises).

Please be advised that you have an obligation under Articles 151 of the New York City Health Code and the enclosed Board of Health resolution to remove from your premises accumulated water. The Board of Health resolution declares an accumulation of water capable of breeding mosquitoes as "immediately dangerous to life and health." It orders persons in control of property to "forthwith abate such nuisances and conditions in effect dangerous to life and health by eliminating such accumulations of water and conditions conducive to further accumulation." Failure to comply with this directive may result in appropriate civil and/or criminal fines, penalties and forfeitures.

Please note that vases or other containers in cemeteries that hold water are a major source for mosquito reproduction and significantly increase the risks of transmission of West Nile Virus. We appreciate the sensitivity of people being able to place flowers in vases on the grave sites of their loved ones; however, we must request that all cemeteries:

- Either prohibit the use of all vases that can contain water (in the cemetery) from May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011 or
- Fill all vases in the cemetery with sand or soil and
- Fill all permanent vases or containers that can hold water with sand or soil

The sand or soil should absorb the water. Please ensure that there is no water accumulating above the surface of the sand or soil.

If you have questions about eliminating standing water from your premises, please contact Ms. Marcia O'Connor, Deputy Director, Office of Vector Surveillance and Control at 212-442-5327.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Waheed I. Bajwa".

Waheed I. Bajwa, Ph.D.  
Director, Vector Surveillance and Control  
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
40 Worth Street, Box 32 L  
New York, NY 10013