

Going Down Green



What is a natural burial?

Natural burial, or green burial, is the act of burying the body as naturally as possible. It is the most eco-friendly manner of caring for our dead.

Natural burial grounds offer a sanctuary for both the dead and the living. Below ground, the un-embalmed body is placed in a biodegradable casket or shroud and buried without a vault so decomposition can occur. Above ground, the land is restored to its natural habitat, and individual tombstones are replaced with a communal marker.

Natural burials grounds are growing in popularity, particularly in the United Kingdom and United States. There are now over 250 natural burial sites across the UK, and nearly 100 in the US.

People love the idea:

Your final act is giving back to the earth.

With green burial, your body naturally decomposes, allowing the nutrients from your body to contribute to the earth's renewal.

Your final resting place is among nature.

Imagine a beautiful Ontario meadow. In the summer butterflies and bees fly among the wildflowers, and birds build nests in the trees. It may be a cemetery, but its full of life. In the winter, the snow brings calm.

A natural burial does not pollute.

It's apparent how polluting conventional burial is, with the hardwood and metal caskets, vaults and bodies embalmed using toxic formaldehyde. But many don't know that cremation is not eco-friendly either. A cremation retort operates at 760 to 1150 degrees Celsius for one to three hours and releases carbon dioxide and other toxins into the atmosphere.

A natural burial embraces a traditional approach.

Remove the embalming fluid, ornate casket, and concrete, or cremation, and you're left with a burial closer to what for many, our grandparents' grandparents would have considered the norm, and some faiths still practice today.

Your presence in the ground protects the land forever.

Once a body is buried underground, you are essentially acting as a permanent security guard, ensuring that no one can build on that habitat.

Natural burials and funerals

Whether it be big or small, religious or secular, a ceremony is compatible with natural burials.

A service may be held before or after the burial, at a place of worship, funeral home, family home, or even outdoors at the burial site. Because embalming doesn't occur with a natural burial, the burial will preferably be held within a few days following the death. There are circumstances that may require a longer delay between the death and burial and there are facilities where the body may rest in a cool environment until burial.

Costs

Most natural burial sites try to keep the price as low as possible, in an effort to make this environmentally friendly option accessible to everyone.

The cemetery will typically offer eco-friendly burial containers, like shrouds or biodegradable caskets. Because these options are less ornate than conventional caskets, they are less expensive. Natural burial is usually more expensive than cremation, but people find value in this incremental expense because of the good they are doing for the planet.

Other common questions

No worries: diseases don't leach into the soil, water isn't poisoned, and animals have no interest in us.

Cemeteries in Ontario are highly regulated and approved by a medical officer. It's perfectly legal and safe for everyone.

Tell your family

If you are interested in your final rest being in a natural burial ground, the most important step is to share your wishes with your family or friends.

It can be a difficult conversation, but your family will be glad to know that they are fulfilling your wishes. This document may help prompt the conversation.

Guelph gets a natural burial ground!

Woodlawn Cemetery has a natural area at the corner of the original cemetery. It's a lovely 3 acres housing trails that wind around the mature maple trees. They hope to open the natural burial site in the fall of 2021.



About NBA

The Natural Burial Association is a volunteer run non-profit helping communities across Ontario create natural burial grounds. We are motivated to take care of our planet, and offer eco-friendly people an option at death that aligns with their values.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.naturalburialassociation.ca
to learn more about natural burial.

A Green Funeral Home in Guelph

Passages Cremation and Burial is an independently owned funeral home serving the Guelph community. We support families interested in eco-friendly end of life options. Please reach out to Jeff Robinson with any questions:

519 767-2221

jeff@passagescb.ca

www.passagescb.ca