



Natural Burial

Natural burial, or green burial, provides a gentler, simpler manner of caring for our dead, and natural burial grounds offer a sanctuary for both the living and the dead.

The natural burial movement began in the 1990's and has gained momentum as more people appreciate that their connection and responsibility to the earth does not need to stop at death.

Buried in a biodegradable casket or shroud, the body contributes to the earth's renewal. In a natural burial ground, tombstones are replaced with modest flat stones or a communal marker. The land is restored and protected in its natural eco-habitat, so one's final resting place is a beautiful Ontario meadow or woodland.

Why natural burial?

Your final act is giving back to the earth.

The body is buried approximately three feet below the surface, 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 it's full of life. In the winter, the snow brings calm.

A natural burial does not pollute.

Most of us are aware of the environmental cost of conventional burial (with hardwood caskets and vaults) but many don't know that cremation is not eco-friendly either. A cremation retort operates at 760 to 1150 °C for one to three hours, burning fossil fuel and emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Depending on the process, other toxic emissions are released too.

For some, natural burial is a traditional approach.

Natural burial isn't new, but it's an idea getting renewed attention from many who hold no value in conventional burial or cremation. Some faiths (eg, Jewish, Muslim) practice this today, while for others it's a return to a traditional, simpler approach.

Your presence in the ground protects the land forever.

Once buried, you are essentially acting as a land steward, ensuring that the nature is restored and protected.

natural burial
ASSOCIATION

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.

Eco-friendly burial containers, like shrouds or biodegradable caskets are less ornate than conventional caskets and therefore less expensive. A full body plot is usually more expensive than cremation, however people find value in this incremental expense because of the parting gift they leave 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.

A natural burial ground in Holstein!

Thanks to the gift of a farmer, one acre of land was donated to create a natural burial ground within Holstein Cemetery. It opened in May, 2022. Sheep maintain the pasture and keep the weeds at bay! Please contact Brian Stevenson, to learn more. 519-323-7904.



About us

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 people the option of a gentle goodbye.

We hope that one day, natural burial grounds protect hundreds of acres of Ontario nature.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.naturalburialassociation.ca

