



# Natural Burial

**If we told you your death could protect the earth and foster new life, would you believe it?**

Without chemical embalming, the body is laid to rest in a biodegradable casket or wrapped in a shroud. Buried in this natural way, in nature, the body contributes to the soil's renewal.

Natural burial grounds bear little resemblance to today's cemeteries. Instead of manicured lawns and rows of tombstones, imagine a meadow of wildflowers or a quiet forest. Small flat stones or a communal marker commemorate the dead. The people who run these sites are passionate about both the planet and the families they serve. The land is restored and protected in its natural ecosystem.

Demand for natural burial grounds is growing worldwide, with over 300 sites in both the US and UK. Let's create sites in Ontario!

## Why people find natural burial grounds appealing:

***Your final act is giving back to the earth.***

The nutrients from your body enrich the soil, providing for new life. We bear witness to the cycle of life.

***Your final resting place is in nature.***

Imagine a beautiful Ontario forest, or a meadow. In the summer butterflies and bees fly among the wildflowers. In the winter, snow brings calm. It may be a cemetery, but it's full of life. Natural burial grounds are a sanctuary for both the living and the dead.

***A natural burial does not pollute.***

Many people are surprised to learn that cremation harms the environment. Using fossil fuel, the body is incinerated at about 800° Celsius for two hours, emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

***It's simpler, natural.***

You've heard people say "just throw me in a burlap bag". Natural burial is gentler, but it does do away with the bells and whistles.

***For some, natural burial is a traditional approach.***

Before funerals became commercialized, natural burial was the way many of our ancestors cared for their dead, and to this day, several faiths uphold this tradition.

***Your presence in the ground protects the land forever.***

Once buried, your presence ensures that nature is restored and protected. You are leaving future generations a legacy of nature.

## 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 natural burial is usually more expensive than cremation, however people may find value in this incremental expense because of the parting gift they leave the earth. Each cemetery sets its own prices.

## 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.

## Learn more

There's lots of information on our website.

Visit [www.naturalburialassociation.ca](http://www.naturalburialassociation.ca) to learn more about natural burial and see what sites are open or coming soon to Ontario. While you're there, please sign up to lend your voice. (By sharing your postal code, you support efforts in your community.)



## About NBA

The Natural Burial Association is a volunteer 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.

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[www.naturalburialassociation.ca](http://www.naturalburialassociation.ca)

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