

How to be buried green?

Request Green Burial in your living will.

Consult www.greenburialcouncil.org for information about green burial cemeteries near you¹

If you are a landowner and would like to contribute land for green burials and open spaces, consider a conservation easement and contact your local land trust for assistance.

Support land use policies that encourage habitat conservation and green burial.

GREEN BURIAL

What is it?

Why be buried green?

How to be buried green?

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¹ Currently the only certified Green Burial cemetery in California is in Joshua Tree

What is green burial?

Green burial is a way to return human remains directly to the earth so that they will biodegrade naturally and become soil. It is a way to deal with human remains with as little resource use, energy use, and land disturbance as possible.

Green burial simplifies and detoxifies human burials:

- Using only very simple, biodegradable containers or shrouds for the body.
- No embalming
- No concrete grave liners²
- Simple, natural grave markers such as a small local fieldstone or planting a native tree or flowers.

² Grave liners are not required by law, but most cemeteries require them in order to prevent the earth caving in over the decaying coffins and making the lawn difficult to mow. Concrete is a very high energy product, significantly increasing the energy impact of a conventional burial.

Why be buried green?

Smaller carbon footprint

Local green burial uses considerably less energy than either conventional burial or cremation. The embodied energy--the energy to mine, log, manufacture, package, and distribute--all the resources sent underground in a conventional burial are roughly equivalent to driving 300 miles in a 15mpg SUV. The energy to cremate a body is even greater, equivalent to driving that same SUV for 450 miles.

Less toxic

Green burial involves no embalming fluid, no wood varnishes or metal polishes, and it does not add particulates to the atmosphere as does cremation. Soil organisms biodegrade the body quickly, even destroying disease-causing pathogens, making Green burial safer for groundwater than conventional burials.

Closes the loop

Green burial allows humans, who have drawn sustenance throughout their lives from the bounty of earth, to contribute their earthly remains to the continuation of that bounty.

Why be buried green? (cont)

Preserves habitat and biodiversity

Green burial cemeteries can co-exist with open spaces and habitat. The endowment care funds that in a conventional cemetery go toward mowing lawns and poisoning weeds would go instead toward land stewardship, restoration and species protection. In combination with conservation easements, green burial cemeteries can help protect land in perpetuity.

Green Burial is easy

Green burial requires no lifestyle changes in order to reduce the carbon footprint of your final arrangements.