

# Green Burial

## Resources

1. <https://greenburialmaryland.org/resources/> Green Burial Association of Maryland: options, supplies, benefits of Green Burial.
2. <https://funerals.org/> Funeral Consumers Alliance seeks to ensure consumers are fully prepared and protected when planning a funeral for themselves or their loved ones.
3. <https://www.memorialecosystems.com/> Website of Ramsey Creek Preserve, a conservation burial preserve in Tennessee. Full body burials and scattering of cremated remains must be natural, “dust to dust” burials: no toxic embalming fluids, no vaults, and only biodegradable caskets.
4. <https://www.homefuneralalliance.org/> The National Home Funeral Alliance seeks to educate individuals, families, and communities about caring for their dead.
5. <https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/outreach-tools.html> Green Burial Council: Green burial is a way of caring for the dead with minimal environmental impact that aids in the conservation of natural resources, reduction of carbon emissions, protection of worker health, and the restoration and/or preservation of habitat.
6. <https://www.conservationburialalliance.org/> Conservation Burial Alliance is about the creation and support of multidimensional social and ecological spaces that sustain us as they sustain the planet and all who dwell on it.
7. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xEXM0xYpgg> Inside the not-for-profit funeral home revolutionising how we deal with death | Australian Story. A 30 minute film

Going through her mother’s funeral: “I’m quite a forthright person and I was surprised at the way I didn’t ask questions.... We did everything ourselves and we got a bill for something like \$10,000. “What helps the grieving process is the ability to stay present with it.”

“There’s just something about doing everything you can for the people you love.”

“Most people don’t know that they can do it themselves.”

“We always say to the people, would you like to come to the mortuary and wash and dress your person? And sometimes people say, no, we don’t want to do that. Then, they might ring back and say, actually we’ve thought about it and we would really love to do that.”

“There is something that happens when you put your hands on the body of the person who you loved that’s died. You can really understand that person is gone. The body is gone. It doesn’t mean you won’t miss the person. But I think this is helpful.”

8. <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2016-green-burial/?leadSource=uverify%20wall> Article: Green Burials are Forcing the Funeral Industry to Rethink Death
9. <https://www.orderofthegooddeath.com/article/whose-green-burial-is-it-anyway/> Article says the Green Burial movement may be oblivious to issues BIPOC experience.

“For example, we don’t often talk about why it might be hurtful to a Black family to denounce embalming and post-mortem restoration/reconstruction. We don’t often consider that it might be triggering to a Jewish or Armenian family when we suggest an unmarked grave in the woods. The Green Burial Movement has largely overlooked Indigenous people who have long been practicing burial in a sustainable way, and that their traditions are deeply rooted in the relationality of their cultures, which have since been erased in the name of science and environmentalism.”

“When describing natural burial we often revert to using language like ‘it’s burial just like it was before the Civil War’. We don’t examine that we talk about home funerals as if we’re *returning* to this type of deathcare, but there are cultures that have never actually *lost* home deathcare. A lot of traditional religions (whether it’s Islam or Judaism, and even aspects of Christianity) they still very much take care of the body themselves.

“The job of the African American undertaker was to take care of the body with dignity and respect. He/She had to make the police officer’s bullet holes disappear, hide the rope marks from the lynching, the infinite bruises from the KKK terrorists. An open casket funeral is a staple in the African American funeral tradition; funeral goers expect for their loved ones to look just like themselves” (Fletcher, [“Race and the Funeral Profession”](#)).

10. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-04-12/full-body-burials-at-sea-ocean-funeral> LA Times article on burial at sea.
11. <https://bartonfuneral.com/the-truth-about-green-cremation-burial-and-hydromation/>

#### The Truth about “Green” Cremation, Burial, and Hydromation

“The real assault on the environment is the environmental impact of transportation...going to the crematory or going to the cemetery. But what about the environmental cost of transporting a steel casket from the factory in Indiana to Seattle WA? This is done in the most economically way by rail and then the caskets are warehoused and distributed locally just in time for the funeral. Railroads are 3 times more efficient than trucks to move freight...Many of the so-called green coffins are manufactured overseas.”

“Cremation is as **GREEN** as putting 29 gallons of gasoline into your car. A Lexus gets 22 mpg in the city; a Prius may get up to 58 mpg; a Ford F150 claims 20 mpg in the city; A Hummer gets 10 mpg, but some Hummer owners brag about getting 12 mpg. So cremation is as **GREEN** as taking your Ford F150 from Seattle to Oakland, CA assuming you don’t get caught in traffic.”

12. <https://recompose.life/death-care/> Recompose is a licensed green funeral home in Seattle offering human composting to transform your loved one's body into soil.
13. <https://www.aroundtowndc.org/green-burial-options/> Around Town DC Youtube presentation (1:25 min) “Lily Talks Death” Green Burial options. “There are very few bonafide all green cemeteries in this area – there are many more hybrid cemeteries – and

even the bonafide green have different levels of green (headstone made of rock, no headstone at all).”

“In DC there are no true green cemeteries. I find the friendliest cemetery to meet a family’s wishes is [Congressional Cemetery](#) considered a hybrid – having a mix of green and not green. They really let families do whatever they want, shrouded with no casket, no liner, no embalming, beating drums, lowered with a rope...they are so much more laid back than any cemetery I’ve ever been to. There are no restrictions on green burial in DC as matter of law. But most cemeteries (except Congressional) will require you to purchase a grave liner or vault to support the earth. You’ll notice the grounds of Congressional are not perfectly manicured because the ground does not have the same support that it would at most cemeteries.”

14. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/06/church-of-england-to-consider-greener-alternatives-to-burial> Feb 2023 Church of England looking at greener alternatives to burial.
15. <https://www.theverge.com/c/23307867/human-composting-process-return-home> Inside one of the world’s first human composting facilities. “I was like, ‘Mom, it would be such a wonderful thing for me — to be able to just walk through [my garden] and be like, ‘Oh, hi, Mom,’” Gerberding, 48, said, recounting their conversation.
16. <https://www.theverge.com/c/23307867/human-composting-process-return-home>. Article about Return Home, human composting. “Truman, the founder of Return Home, ...speaks in zany constructions unlike anything you’d expect from ... a de facto funeral home owner: We shouldn’t get “airy fairy” about composting, he says. Bodies are just “squishies and hards.” The process at Return Home is “like a Disney ride, only weirder.” Truman is often crying — an occupational hazard.
17. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/wjgzwn/funeral-director-compassion-fatigue> Vice article about the mental toll on funeral home workers. “While many funeral homes offer grief and support services to their clients, very few offer these programs to employees. "This is an area where it's not encouraged to express one's feelings," Creedy says. "Just like soldiers coming back from a war, they're not really supposed to be affected, but they are. We all know they are."