

# Green Burial Is Friendlier to the Earth



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Green burial allows us to say goodbye to our loved ones without leaving an excessive ecological footprint in an ever more crowded Earth.

In green burial the body is embalmed with plant-based compounds instead of artificial chemicals, protecting the environment and workers. It is placed in a simple shroud or casket made of rapidly replenishing woods, such as pine or willow, and buried without a vault in a manner that minimizes impact on the landscape.

It minimizes impact by embalming without chemicals; burying in a shroud or renewable woods and without a vault, using simple preparation.

Green burial does not create greenhouse gasses, as does cremation. And the preparation for a green burial is minimal.

Green burial also carries economic and spiritual benefits. It cut costs significantly and since the body and the materials used decompose more quickly, two people can be buried in the same grave if enough time has passed. (While I was administrator of Mt. Carmel Cemetery in Wyandotte, Mich., we buried a woman in a shroud in our green section followed by her son 20 months later).

Green burial is not a new concept to Orthodox Jews, Muslims and Trappist monks, among others. There can be great spiritual depth as families gather around the graveside and help lower the body into the grave and take turns with the shovel as they toss dirt and/or flowers into the grave.