



# AN INTRODUCTION TO GREEN BURIAL

Presented by Penn Forest Natural Burial Park

# WHAT IS GREEN BURIAL?

Green burial is a way of caring for the dead with minimal environmental impact.



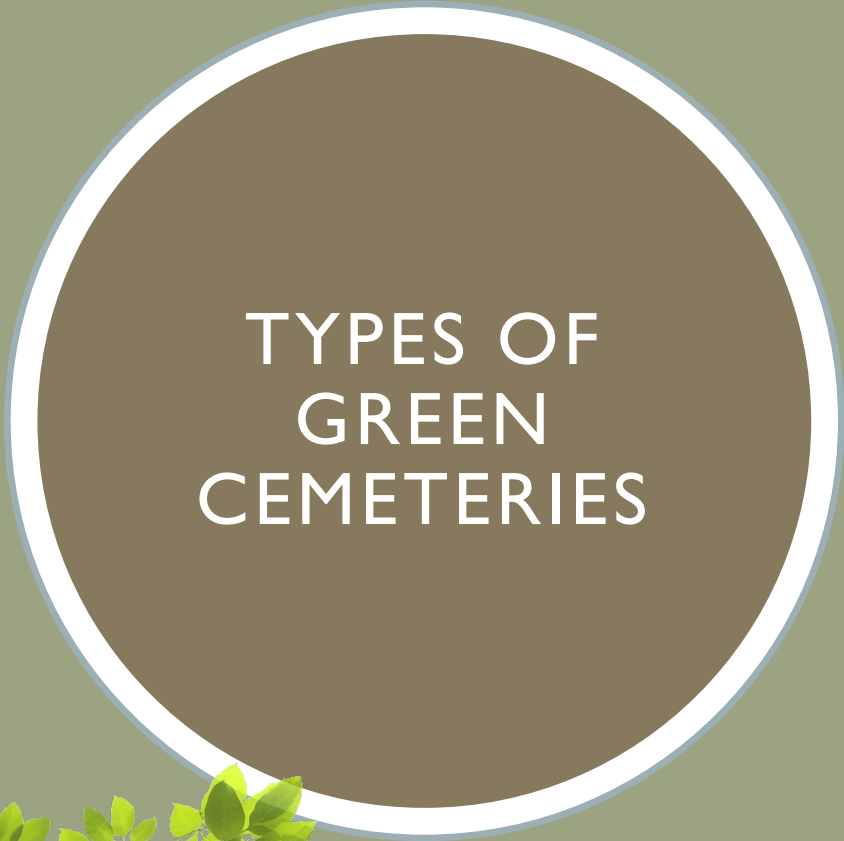
# WHAT IS A GREEN CEMETERY?



Green Springs Natural Cemetery Preserve - NY



Prairie Creek Conservation Cemetery - FL



TYPES OF  
GREEN  
CEMETERIES



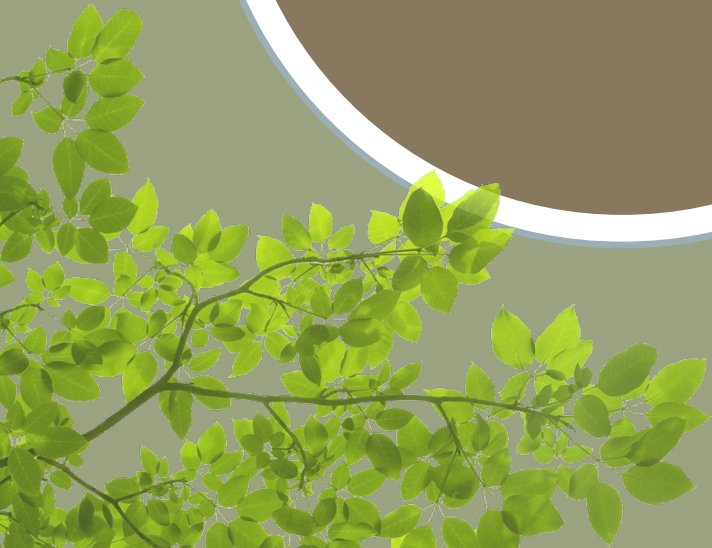
Hybrid Cemetery



Green Cemetery – aka Natural  
Burial Ground



Conservation Cemetery



# HYBRID CEMETERIES



Rosendale Plains Cemetery - NY



North Lawn Hybrid Cemetery - OH

# GREEN CEMETERY



Grasmere Cemetery and Natural Burial Ground - NY

# CONSERVATION CEMETERIES



Prairie Creek Conservation Cemetery - FL



The Forest Conservation Burial Ground - OR

# GREEN BURIAL COUNCIL

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Oversight





GREEN BURIAL  
CERTIFIED FUNERAL  
HOMES



# HOME FUNERALS



Colleen McGonigle (left) and Jamie Hahn (right) mentor mortuary students learning about home funerals.

- Body must be kept cold
- Body presented in either a shroud or casket



## MAIN REQUIREMENTS OF GREEN BURIAL

- Everything that goes into the ground must be biodegradable.
- The use of toxic embalming fluids on bodies is prohibited.
- Concrete burial vaults are not used.
- All grave markers, if desired, are made from local stone or wood and are placed in flush with the earth.

GRAVE  
MARKERS AT  
PENN FOREST



# GREEN GRAVES

- 3-4 feet deep
- Dirt mounded on top of grave
- Soil is a remarkable barrier and filter!





## BURIAL WITHIN 14 DAYS

Without embalming fluid, bodies can be kept in refrigeration for up to 14 days until the day of the burial.

# GREEN BURIAL AT PENN FOREST



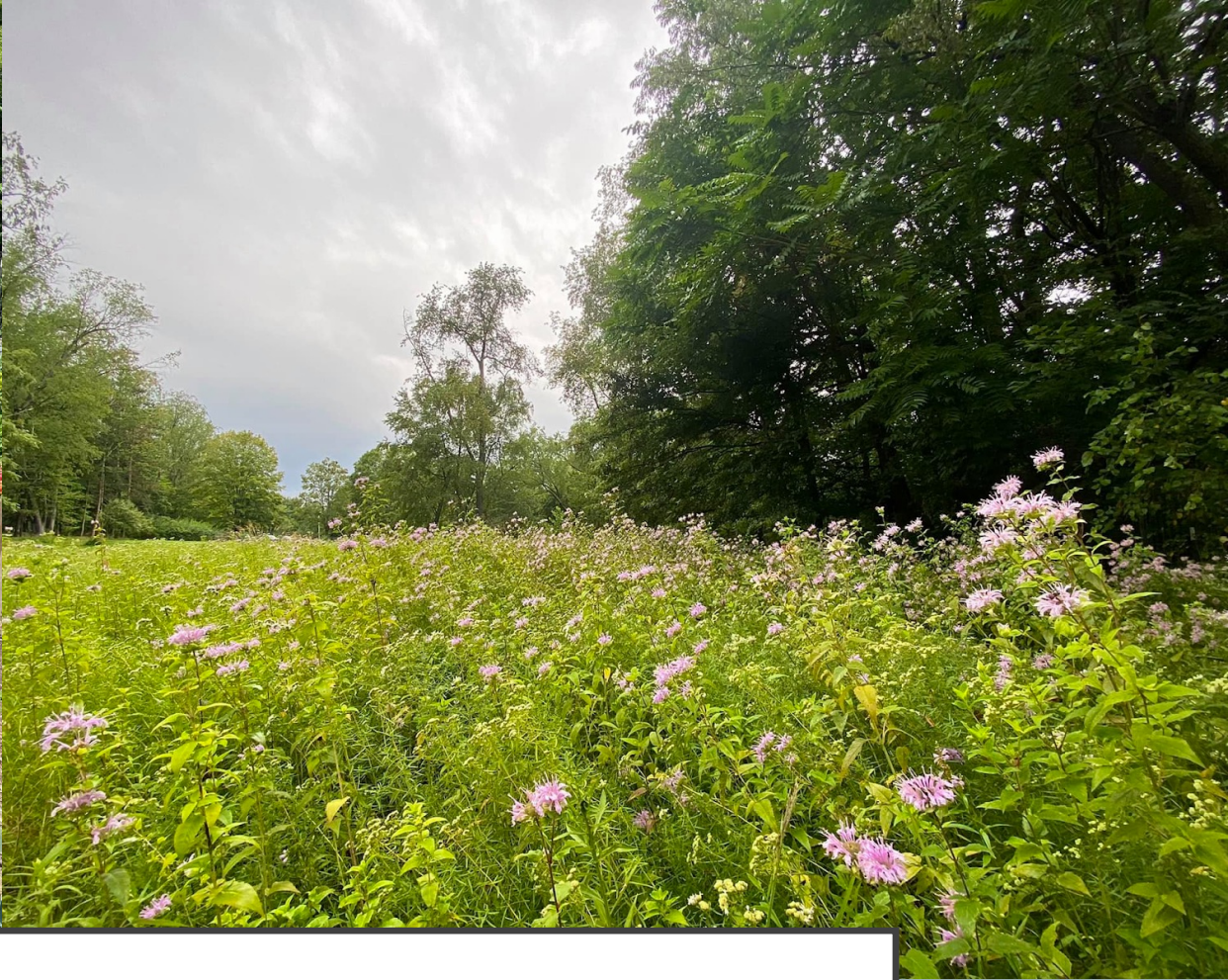


FRIEND AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT





## BURIAL SERVICES AT PENN FOREST



## FLOWER PICKING GARDEN & NATIVE WILDFLOWER MEADOW

# PROHIBITED MATERIALS

The use of chemical pesticides, fertilizers, and other toxic materials are prohibited on green burial grounds.





## ACCEPTED METHODS FOR PEST CONTROL AND FERTILIZATION



# GREEN BURIAL – A GROWING MOVEMENT



## WHY GREEN BURIAL?

According to National Geographic, conventional burials in the US each year use:

- 30 million board feet of wood
- 90 thousand tons of steel
- 1.6 millions tons of concrete for burial vaults
- More than 800 thousand gallons of embalming fluid which consists of formaldehyde, methanol, and benzene



## WHY GREEN BURIAL?

The cremation process in the US each year:

- 1.74 billion pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Releases large amount of fossil fuels
- By 2040, the cremation rate is projected to grow to about 78% - NFDA



# CONVENTIONAL BURIAL VAULTS

- Used to keep the land flat and even in a conventional cemetery.
- Price range between \$1,000 - \$10,000.
- Conventional burial vaults have drainage holes drilled into them which means they do not contain toxic materials leftover from the embalming process.







## HOW GREEN BURIAL HEALS

A close-up photograph of a pair of hands gently cupping a large, multi-layered flower with shades of pink and white. The background is dark, making the hands and flower stand out.

## END-OF-LIFE PLANNING

### **The 3 main parts of a Funeral Plan**

1. The final disposition method
2. The funeral service providers
3. The elements or rituals to include in a funeral service with the venues for those elements to happen



ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL  
END-OF-LIFE PLANNING

- Working with a Death Doula

- Attending a Death Café

Death Café Pittsburgh:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DeathCafePittsburgh/>

[www.deathcafe.com](http://www.deathcafe.com)

Pittsburgh Community Deathcare:

<https://www.facebook.com/PGHDeathcare>

# ORGAN DONATION

- CORE – Center for Organ Recovery and Education (412)-963-3550
- Register to become a donor
- Bodies can be buried or cremated after recovery



# WHOLE BODY DONATION

- Medical schools
- Scientific study
  
- Study donation organizations – Humanity Gifts Registry <http://www.hgrpa.org/>
- Forensic (scientific) study – The Forensic Anthropology Center, aka known as The Body Farm

Forensic Anthropology Center  
University of Tennessee (865)-974-4408  
[donateinfo@utk.edu](mailto:donateinfo@utk.edu)





## RESOURCES

- **Green Burial Council** [www.greenburialcouncil.org](http://www.greenburialcouncil.org)
- **Death Café** [www.deathcafe.com](http://www.deathcafe.com)
- **Death Café Pittsburgh**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DeathCafePittsburgh/>
- **Pittsburgh Community Deathcare**  
<https://www.facebook.com/PGHDeathcare>
- **Core** <https://www.core.org>
- **Humanity Gifts Registry** <http://www.hgrpa.org/>
- **Forensic Anthropology Center** <https://fac.utk.edu/>



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