

## Natural Burial

is a sustainable way of caring for the dead that promotes the natural decomposition of the body with minimal environmental impact. Its ecological aims are to conserve natural resources, reduce carbon emissions, protect worker health, and to restore and preserve habitat.

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or

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Annually, the average U.S. cemetery buries 4.3 million gallons of embalming fluid (usually comprised of formaldehyde, the carcinogenic chemical that has been proven to pose health risks), 1.6 million tons of concrete, and 20 million board feet of high quality wood in just one acre of greenspace.

While cremation uses far fewer resources than just about any other readily available disposition option, it still burns fossil fuels and creates emissions. The average cremation in the U.S. releases between 0.8 and 5.9 grams of mercury. This amounts to between 1,000 and 7,800 pounds of mercury each year settling into air, earth and water. The energy used to cremate just one person is equal to driving a car about 4,800 miles. The energy used from all the cremations in one year in the U.S. is equal to traveling to the moon and back 83 times.

Natural burial favors biodegradable coffins, like those made of pine, and biodegradable burial shrouds, like those made of cotton, silk or wool, while also rejecting the use of embalming fluid, hardwoods, metals, and concrete.

The Town of Rhinebeck Natural Burial Ground is the second municipal natural burial ground in New York State. The Town is in the process of seeking certification from the Green Burial Council. For more information about standards and requirements go to [www.greenburialcouncil.org](http://www.greenburialcouncil.org).

For a full list of Cemetery Rules & Regulations: [www.rhinebeck-ny.gov/committees/town-government/town-cemetery-committee](http://www.rhinebeck-ny.gov/committees/town-government/town-cemetery-committee)