



# Bluestem

## CEMETERY RULES AND GUIDELINES

*Revised 11/1/22*

BLUESTEM's conservation cemetery is where people and pets are simply returned to the earth, wrapped in biodegradable unfinished materials. All burials must follow green burial principles of no embalming, no metals, steel, or plastics, and no vaults.

Gravesites at BLUESTEM are natural spaces within restored grasslands and woodlands. No framing of graves is permitted. If stones, or logs, or other natural materials are assembled on gravesites, they will be removed. No plantings are permitted on the gravesite nor on the property except for those that are supplied by staff and support BLUESTEM's ecological diversity.

After burial, staff will replant gravesites with native plants and seed appropriate to the grave location and seasonal timing. Families are invited to participate in these experiences.

BLUESTEM's trail network is designed with respect for the ecological values on the property. It is managed for privacy, sustainability, and utility. No cutting of trees, moving of existing rocks or boulders, or building of throughways to gravesites is permitted.

Headstones are not required at BLUESTEM.

Gravestones are modest and lie flat to the ground. No outside stone material may be used. For individuals desiring a gravestone, BLUESTEM provides a selection of stone from which individuals can choose. Engraving of the stone occurs offsite and is arranged by the individual/family.

Gravestones can be cleared of leaf, tree or plant matter, but the site itself is to remain unadorned and natural.

Every grave is marked with an aluminum disc and recorded by GPS coordinates.

No non-decomposable materials are permitted inside the grave or on gravesites. Flower arrangements placed in the grave must be all natural and devoid of styling materials. Any nonbiodegradable materials left at a site or on the property will be removed by staff.

Visitors are permitted to pick wildflowers from BLUESTEM fields to place on gravesites. BLUESTEM is currently building a list of native plants that support the cemetery's land restoration and stewardship plans. In the future families will be invited to make selections from this list in honor of their loved ones.

On an annual basis, BLUESTEM will manage the native species of the grasslands and portions of the woodlands with controlled burns and some mechanical mowing. These prescribed fire events play a critical role in controlling invasive species and encouraging key grassland species. They do not negatively impact graves or gravestones.

BLUESTEM supports local makers producing biodegradable materials such as wooden or willow caskets, and cotton, linen or wool shrouds. We have some examples onsite available for viewing. For more info contact us at [info@bluestemcemetery.org](mailto:info@bluestemcemetery.org).