



Bluestem

Early Guide to Pre-planning for Burial at Bluestem

Winter 2023

While green burial is not new, conservation burial in Bluestem's cemetery is a novel concept. In a conservation cemetery, protection of the natural habitat occurs simultaneously with green burial. Decisions on where people can be buried are made deliberately and aligned with Bluestem's long-term management and stewardship of the property. Choosing a natural setting at Bluestem means that family and friends can be active participants in returning their loved ones to the earth. At the same time, Bluestem volunteers weave community service and action into the permanent care of this special Piedmont landscape with the restoration of its native grasslands, the protection of natural habitat and forest, and maintenance of the hiking network with trails and areas for reflection.

Get to Know Bluestem

We recommend planning a visit at your convenience. The address is: 1900 Hurdle Mills Road, Cedar Grove. Open every day from dawn to dusk, if the gate is closed, simply walk around it or through the opening in the cedar fence. Access is by foot. *If you have accessibility needs, please email us for an appointment at info@bluestemcemetery.org.* Before heading out we recommend reviewing information on Bluestem's website: www.bluestemcemetery.org

[Map](#)

[Explore Bluestem](#), an outline of what to expect

[Planning for Burial](#), worksheet with six important decisions

[Service Providers](#), contact information if you will need the support of a funeral home or from a home funeral guide; or for the purchase of caskets, shrouds and other biodegradable products

[Burial Costs](#), divided between full body and ash burial interment rights and burial fees

[Burial Areas](#), determine whether you prefer a woodlands experience or the grasslands

If You Wish to Pursue Bluestem

Bluestem staff are currently working with clients on Bluestem's Waiting List. The next round of sales will open late spring 2023. We can only accept full payment for burial. Credit card payments as well as a layaway plan will be available later this year (Summer 2023). Steps you can take today:

1. [Sign up for a guided tour](#) with one of our volunteers. Sign up online under the VISIT tab.
2. [Join us online by Zoom for Bluestem Conversations](#), held every Tuesday from 4-5pm to answer any questions about Bluestem or green burial. Register online under the COMMUNITY tab.
3. Share and discuss your wishes with family and friends.
4. [Review Bluestem's Cemetery Rules and Guidelines \(included here\)](#) with the important people in your life. Memorialization in a conservation cemetery is different from what's possible in a conventional cemetery.
5. [Complete a Burial Preference Form](#) online if you wish to be contacted when the next round of sales is open. Find the form under the GREEN BURIAL Tab.



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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.