

Bluestem

ADDRESS AND DIRECTIONS

Bluestem is located at 1900 Hurdle Mills Road in Cedar Grove. The address is fully recognizable by Google and Apple maps. A flag, gate and sign are visible from Hurdle Mills Road.

There is no office phone at Bluestem. Cell service is strong at the front of the property. Please call your point of contact if you are lost.

WHAT TO EXPECT (*and how to dress*) FOR A GREEN BURIAL AT BLUESTEM

Bluestem staff and volunteers are ready to support family members with the natural burial service of their choice. Families craft the burial services on their own or with the support of ministers, chaplains, or friends. Staff and volunteers are fully committed to Bluestem's mission offering natural burial on conserved land that embraces simplicity, individuality and sustainability.

Bluestem is a natural area. We recommend dressing for the weather, with comfortable clothing and in sensible shoes. Once the date is selected, Bluestem staff conduct burial services in rain or shine. Please bring an umbrella if showers are predicted.

When you arrive at Bluestem, you will be directed by volunteers to parking in a designated area. They will then point you to the gravesite or to a gathering space selected by the family. Families account for the time it takes to walk from parking areas to the service. If you have mobility concerns, contact staff ahead of time so that we can assist you with golf cart transport.

Please note that Bluestem does not have bathroom facilities; only 2 porta-potties. One at the front of the property, the other in the interior.

The grass pathways at Bluestem reflect recent weather: generally dry in the summer and they can be muddy in the winter. Many have a slight slope to them. Woodland trails are established (see yellow trail on map) and frequently covered in leaves. Step carefully. Depending on the family's choice for the gravesite, expect the area around it to be all natural. A few benches may be placed at gravesites and guests should be prepared to stand. Please let staff know about accessibility needs.

The prepared grave is open and undecorated. Depending on the season, Bluestem provides wildflowers, grasses and/or cedar branches and other natural materials for laying in the grave. Families and guests can bring in flowers, however please note that no invasives, no plastics, foams, or other decorating materials are allowed in the graves. Biodegradable paper can be placed in graves.

The service is led by the family or by a leader of their choosing. Bluestem staff and volunteers maintain an outer circle of support. Staff can welcome guests with a few words about Bluestem if the family wishes, but otherwise the service is entirely of your own making.

All ash burials require an amendment process. Ashes are removed from urns, mixed with an amending soil, and placed directly into graves, by hand or spade. Families must review the sequencing of this process with staff, prior to the service.

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At the graveside, family and friends will experience the casket or shroud placed above the grave. In the case of an ash burial, the ashes will be in a galvanized tub.

Families are encouraged to participate in all ways: pallbearers for the casket or shroud, lowering into the grave, placing ashes into the grave, closing the graves with a shovelful of earth.

After the casket, shroud or ashes are in the grave, family and friends are invited to lay flowers or other natural materials on top of the vessel/remains. When they are ready, they can take a handful or shovelful of earth and begin the process of closing the grave.

Once the grave is filled with earth, staff hand out wildflower seeds to scatter in the grasslands. In the woodlands, a few ferns may be introduced at the grave.

Finally, family and friends are handed pine straw for covering the mound, at which point they can also add additional flowers to the mound. A grave marker is handed to the family for placement in the center of the grave.

Bluestem staff have recorded the grave, plot number, and GPS coordinates in our recordkeeping.

Families are provided with GPS coordinates after the service and invited to select a gravestone from our inventory onsite. Engraving the loved one's name and dates occurs offsite and is the responsibility of the family. Sample gravestones are located behind the cabin. When the engraving is done, family returns to Bluestem to place the stone on the grave.

No further decorating of gravesites is permitted. From the moment of closing the grave, we entrust its settling into nature.

On their return, families and friends are welcome to pick wildflowers and grasses to place at graves. They are also invited to seasonal Family Planting Days when staff will have prepared a selection of desired species for introducing at gravesites.

Bluestem encourages family and friends to arrange for and participate in the burial service of their choosing. As much or as little of the service can be performed by you. Bluestem staff and volunteers standby ready to attend to as much or as little as needed. If desired, staff can offer a few words of welcome and introduction, describing how the loved one's choice of a natural burial contributes to the sanctity of the cemetery and its community conservation mission.

Thank you for choosing Bluestem.