



**Suzuki  
Elders**

## How about “going out green?”

Do you want your last act - - or perhaps it is your first post-death act - - to be one that pollutes the planet? Did you know there are ‘greener’ end of life options other than being embalmed and buried in a casket...even other than cremation...? Enter the term ‘green burials’ into Google and up comes information worth considering.

### **A few facts:**

\*conventional burials involve toxic embalming fluids including formaldehyde, 800,000 gallons of which is dumped into U.S. cemeteries each year. Not to mention the steel and lumber used for caskets, and the concrete used for vaults.

\*the flat lawns in conventional cemeteries are often the result of concrete vaults housing caskets in the ground. This does prevent soil settlement and allows for ease of lawn mowing , but takes up land and pollutes it at the same time.

\*research tells us that cremation emissions include mercury, heavy metals and the usual greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide.

### **What is green, or natural, burial?**

\*“an environmentally sensitive practice where the body is returned to the earth to decompose naturally and contribute to environmental renewal.”

### **What happens to the body at a green burial?**

\*a body is prepared for Green Burial without embalming, and is buried in a biodegradable shroud, a simple container or casket made from natural fibre, wicker or sustainably harvested wood.

### **Are there different types of green burial? Do green burial standards exist?**

\*The Memorial Society of BC has three requirement levels for a burial to be considered green. Minimum “green” level includes a biodegradable coffin and no embalming or grave liner. The second level includes the minimum as well as plantings of flowers or small shrubs next to graves. The highest level is the natural setting of a nature or burial park.

Suzuki Elders

c/o The David Suzuki Foundation

219-2211 West 4th Ave

Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6K 4S2

Email: [info@suzukielders.org](mailto:info@suzukielders.org)

Website: <http://www.suzukielders.org/>

*Bringing our wisdom and experience to critical environmental issues*



**Suzuki  
Elders**

\*The Green Burial Council of Canada describes three certification levels, Hybrid Burial Grounds, Natural Burial Grounds and Conservation Burial Grounds.

### **How do I find green burial 'sites' in Canada?**

\*The Natural Burial Society of Canada lists four green burial cemeteries:

-The Woodlands at Royal Oak Burial Park in Victoria, and,

-three cemeteries in Ontario: Union Cemetery in Cobourg, Meadowvale Cemetery in Brampton and Duffin Meadows Cemetery in Pickering.

\*Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver is recognized as a hybrid cemetery, offering options for ecologically sensitive burials. Denman Island – off the coast of Vancouver Island – has developed its own Natural Burial Cemetery – apparently the first contemporary cemetery in Canada that is exclusively green. Their website provides complete information on how they did this – plus “how to” advice for other communities interested in taking this action.

\*The Memorial Society of BC also provides its members with information about funeral providers who meet MSBC Green Burial initiatives, or are working towards doing so.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Memorial Society of B.C. [www.memorialsocietybc.org](http://www.memorialsocietybc.org)

Green Burial Society of Canada [www.greenburialcanada.org](http://www.greenburialcanada.org)

Natural Burial Association [www.naturalburialassociation.org](http://www.naturalburialassociation.org)

Green Burial Council (USA) [www.greenburialcouncil.org](http://www.greenburialcouncil.org)

Denman Island Natural Burial Cemetery [www.dinbc.ca](http://www.dinbc.ca)

Royal Oak Burial Park, Victoria B C [www.robp.ca](http://www.robp.ca)

Impact of cremation [www.sevenponds.com/after-death/environmental-impact-of-death](http://www.sevenponds.com/after-death/environmental-impact-of-death)

Suzuki Elders

c/o The David Suzuki Foundation

219-2211 West 4th Ave

Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6K 4S2

Email: [info@suzukielders.org](mailto:info@suzukielders.org)

Website: <http://www.suzukielders.org/>

*Bringing our wisdom and experience to critical environmental issues*