



[Natural Burial Program](#)

Testimonials

Don Tarbutton: A Natural Choice



Just about everything in Don Tarbutton's life pointed him towards arranging his future burial at River View. A hospice chaplain who lives in an eco-friendly cohousing community, Don says, "The values I've been accumulating over the past decade opened me to more participatory forms of end-of-life care and celebration – and natural burial became the obvious end point."

Don first learned about River View's natural burial program when he was invited to provide input on the development of the program through a community focus group. Keeping up with the program primarily for his chaplaincy work, he also shared the information with those in his personal life. When two dear friends from Tacoma called to say they had decided to explore the option, Don accompanied them on a tour. "We all came to the same conclusion," Don says, "sweetened by the knowledge that we would become next-door neighbors with plots beside each other."

On their second visit to finalize their arrangements, Don asked what would happen to his body when it arrived graveside. "I was told that the grave would have been hand dug to a shallower depth than 6' so that my body would decompose more rapidly. The grave would be lined with straw, my body would be placed therein and covered with straw, then compost, and finally soil. This is the way we plant at the Ecovillage, and that made total sense to me, that my body would serve to enrich the soil it was planted in."

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Don's advance arrangements allow him to have his house in order when he dies, as he puts it, to minimize the time, energy and money his executor will have to spend in winding up his affairs. At the same time, the location of his future burial remains flexible. He explains, "By buying my natural burial plot, this guaranteed that I will have the option of selecting another plot within the dedicated natural burial garden when it becomes available. When the time comes to make a decision, I will consult with my two friends. We are all comfortable not having an identifiable grave with headstone if that becomes an option, with our graves in a wooded area with walking paths and benches that family and friends could wander through and enjoy."

Living in an Ecovillage where one of the overarching values is sustainability, Don is committed to encouraging members of his community to consider this option for themselves. He hosted River View to screen A Will for the Woods for his community and is planning a repeat event for his larger neighborhood.

Along with honoring Don's commitment to sustainability, Don appreciates that River View "is a cemetery with a long community history, a non-profit, and located in a beautiful setting along the Willamette." He says, "As a chaplain, I've had very positive experiences with River View as a funeral home and burial ground for several of my hospice patients. All of this contributed to the ease of my decision."

[Learn more](#) about River View Cemetery's Natural Burial Program.

