Accessible text for infographic, [The Environmental Impact of Funerals](https://www.talkdeath.com/environmental-impact-funerals-infographic/),

Embedded as an image in 4.2 Environmental Impact of Embalming, Burial, and Cremation subchapter in On Death and Dying by Jacqueline Lewis

All cemeteries in the United States take up an estimated 1 million acres of land. Buried within them are:

* over 800,000 gallons of formaldehyde annually. That’s enough to fill 1.2 Olympic swimming pools.
* 115 million tons of casket steel, enough to build over 2000 Empire State Buildings. That’s almost all the high rises in Tokyo.
* 2.3 billion tons of concrete from burial vaults which can build 36.8 Three Gorges Dams, or pave a sidewalk to the Moon, 28 times.
* Casket wood equivalent to 4 million acres of forest (mostly tropical and previous wood).

Imagine New Jersey covered entirely in forest. All that wood could build 4.6 million single-family homes. That’s over one-third of all homes in Canada.

* And remember all that concrete? It’s enough to build a swimming pool for each house.

Think cremation is more environmentally friendly? According to the United Nations, 0.2% of global dioxin and furan emissions are produced by cremation. Cremation emits into the atmosphere: carbon monoxide, mercury, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, hydrogen fluoride (HF), hydrogen chloride (HCl), Non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs) as well as other heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants (POP). North America uses enough fossil fuel for cremation to drive you halfway to the sun every year.

So what can you do?

* Consider a green burial
* Use an Indigenous rock or plant as a grave marker
* Choose non-toxic, organic embalming fluid.
* Choose a biodegradable casket or locally sourced all-wood casket.
* Request donations to a carbon fund.

Logos:

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References:

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