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FRIDAY FUNNY: Dying Green

By [Heidi Schwartz](#), on July 1, 2011, at 10:30 am



The concept of **sustainability** has made its way into almost every aspect of life. Companies, universities, and even individuals are trying to find ways to live "greener." And now even death is getting a **green** tint as well.

Usually when we discuss green and sustainable issues, "[they apply] to things that make our lives healthier [and] more prosperous, with a reduced impact on the environment," according to **Stephen Ashkin**, president of [The Ashkin Group](#), and green leader in the professional cleaning industry. Now it appears green and sustainable also apply to dying.

According to new research presented at the international conference of the **Royal Geographical Society**, which promotes the study of geography, Britain now has more **green burials** and more green burial sites than any other country in the world. In 1993, there was only one green burial site in the U.K.; today there are more than 200. In the United States, where green burials are also becoming more common, there are about 20 green burial sites currently operating or under development.

A green burial ensures that interment of the body takes place in a biodegradable casket or shroud or even a favorite blanket of the deceased. No embalming fluid, concrete, or similar materials that might harm the environment and are customarily used in a conventional burial are employed. The body is laid to rest in what is termed a green cemetery, which is more like a forest preserve than a traditional cemetery. According to Ashkin, a green burial is not a form of cremation; instead, the body is kept intact and simply laid to rest underground.

"The growing interest in green burials should not be surprising," adds Ashkin. "As more people become concerned about the environment and sustainability, it's only natural that they would want their final resting place to be green and sustainable as well."

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