

A Guide to Home Burials

It is always difficult to say goodbye to a beloved animal companion. If you have chosen to bury your pet at home, there are a few important things to consider. Once an animal has been euthanized, their body will contain a small amount of the medication used in that procedure. This can pose a threat to other animals and humans if care is not taken in selecting the appropriate burial site and method.

Often, animal burial is not permitted in urban and suburban areas, so please check your local bylaws before proceeding. If you are renting or leasing a property, you will likely need a landlord's authorization. In urban areas where water is supplied by the city, there is less concern regarding burying animals near sources of drinking water. However, the Nova Scotia government advises burial away from property lines or in any areas that you will be undertaking backyard composting or gardening.

For rural areas, an important consideration is selecting a burial site an appropriate distance away from any wells or watercourses on the property. For residents who use on-site wells, 30 meters is a commonly used separation distance from wells and any other watercourses such as lakes, ponds, or streams. The depth of the burial site should be at least 60cm (2 feet), and burial should take place within 48 hours of the euthanasia. It is also recommended that you do not wrap the body in any materials that are slow to break down such as plastic bags, boxes, or heavy blankets. Consider covering the area with stone slabs or gravel to limit scavengers. Always verify the location of utilities before digging. Try to avoid tree roots as damage to roots may kill the tree. Avoid floodplains – the burial spot should be level or slightly higher than other surrounding areas to avoid pooling water. Finally, if you ever sell your property, it is important to notify future buyers of the presence of any animals that may be buried on your land.

Animals provide companionship, acceptance, emotional support, and unconditional love during the time they share with you. So when your beloved pet dies, it's not unusual to feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your sorrow. Holding a small memorial service during the burial can offer comfort and acknowledge your special relationship with your pet. It is a chance to celebrate the life of your pet and to remember all of your wonderful times together. There are many online resources available to assist in planning such memorial ceremonies. Furthermore, a grief counsellor is a good option to help you cope with and manage your feelings during the grieving process. Please contact us for a list of online grief support groups and mental health hotlines.

Please accept our most heartfelt sympathies for your loss.

Our thoughts are with you and your family during this difficult time.

