



## philosophy

Royal Oak Cemetery is located in the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone, with the surrounding forest characterized by a mix of Douglas fir, Grand Fir, Arbutus, Red Alder, Bigleaf Maple, and Western Red Cedar. *Forest Rooms*, Royal Oak's Green Burial area, will reflect and build upon this existing forest ecosystem. An informal framework of trees and shrubs has been planted to divide the area into five sections. Rather than a road, an unpaved access path will be provided, and graves will be arranged according to the natural character and configuration of the site.

After each burial, a selection of native trees, shrubs and perennials and spring bulbs will be planted in clusters on and around the grave site. Families are invited to choose what will be planted from a range of native plant palettes offered by the cemetery. Small trees may also be selected from the adjacent tree nursery. Over time, each of the areas will develop into a distinct "forest room," each with its own unique aspect and character, yet reflecting and merging with the surrounding natural environment. A small footpath and seating will be maintained in perpetuity, along with memorialization provided on simple stone boulders from local sources. The adjacent open space will be restored with native grasses and wildflowers.

## burial requirements

1. No embalming fluids;
2. Biodegradable fabric shroud and/or casket made of entirely natural materials (willow, bamboo or wood but no endangered tropical woods, metals etc.);
3. No vaults or grave covers;
4. Graves to be planted with native plant species only, and
5. No individual grave markers.





## ecological benefits

- Minimized fossil fuel consumption through reduced excavation, mechanical mowing and maintenance, and the use of local materials.
- Biodiversity and habitat enhancement through the use of indigenous plant species (habitat for nesting birds or food sources for birds and other animals)
- Natural stormwater permeability and retention through the reduction of impermeable materials associated with conventional burial (concrete, asphalt, fiberglass, steel etc).
- Elimination of the toxins and contaminants that can be released into the soil, air and water with conventional burial and cremation.
- More efficient land use through higher density burial vs. conventional burial.
- Restoration of the area over time to return visually and functionally to the surrounding landscape.

## markers

- Families have the choice of no marker or a common marker in each of the forest rooms.
- Common markers are made from the local 'green stone' found on site or from a similar local geologic formation.
- Each marker is associated with a particular native plant palette.

