

Human Composting (Natural Organic Reduction)

A gentle return to the earth—an environmentally thoughtful choice that transforms our bodies into life-giving soil through nature's own processes.



What Is Human Composting?

Human composting, or Natural Organic Reduction (NOR), is a transformative process that allows the body to return to the earth naturally. This science-guided method harnesses the power of microbes, organic plant materials, controlled airflow, and time to gently break down human remains.

The result is nutrient-rich soil that can nourish new life—completing nature's cycle in the most meaningful way possible.



Natural Process

Uses nature's own decomposition methods



Science-Guided

Carefully monitored microbial activity



Life-Giving Result

Creates nutrient-rich, usable soil



Why People Choose Natural Organic Reduction

Environmentally Thoughtful

Significantly reduces carbon footprint and supports ecosystem regeneration

Chemical-Free Process

No flames, embalming fluids, or concrete vaults needed

Naturally Meaningful

Honors the body's return to earth in the gentlest way

Urban-Friendly

Ideal for metropolitan areas where traditional burial space is limited

The Natural Organic Reduction Process

From beginning to end, the NOR process typically takes 30–60 days. Each stage is carefully monitored to ensure safety, respect, and optimal transformation.



Preparation

Gentle washing and biodegradable covering



Vessel Placement

Body placed with organic materials



Microbial Work

Natural decomposition begins



Curing Stage

Soil stabilizes and matures



Final Soil

Nutrient-rich earth ready for use

Step 1: Preparation & Placement

The process begins with care and dignity. The body receives a gentle washing and is wrapped in biodegradable materials—often natural fibers like cotton or linen.

Next, the body is placed inside a specialized vessel on a bed of organic materials including wood chips, straw, and alfalfa. These carbon-rich materials provide the perfect environment for microbial activity to begin.

This careful preparation ensures the process proceeds naturally while maintaining the utmost respect for the deceased.

Natural Materials

- Wood chips
- Straw
- Alfalfa

Biodegradable Coverings

- Cotton shrouds
- Linen wraps
- Natural fibers

Step 2: Microbial Transformation

Nature's Workers

Aerobic microbes—the same organisms that break down plant matter in forests—begin their transformative work. These microscopic helpers are nature's recyclers, breaking down tissues naturally and safely.

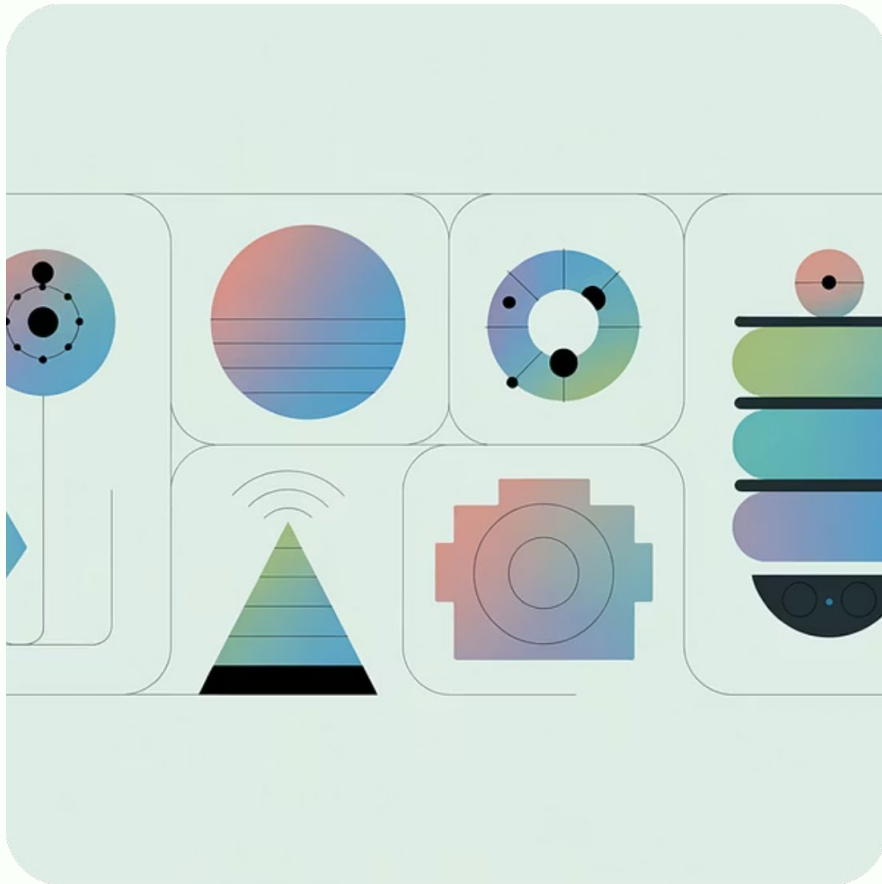
Controlled Conditions

The vessel's temperature rises to 130–160°F through natural microbial activity. This heat is essential: it accelerates decomposition while eliminating pathogens, ensuring the final soil is completely safe.

- ❏ The elevated temperature occurs naturally as microbes work—no external heat source is needed. This is the same process that heats up compost piles in gardens.



Step 3: Monitoring & Turning



Precision Monitoring

Advanced sensors continuously track temperature, airflow, and moisture levels throughout the process, ensuring optimal conditions.



Expert Supervision

Trained staff oversee every stage, making adjustments as needed to support the natural transformation.



Gentle Aeration

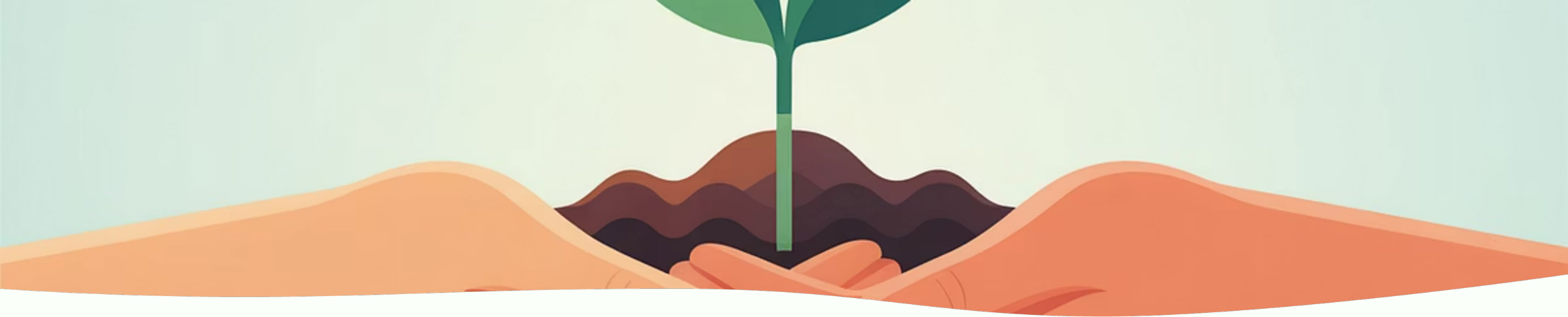
Some vessels rotate periodically to ensure even airflow, while others remain stationary with internal aeration systems.

Step 4: Curing Stage



After the initial transformation, the soil-like material is moved to curing bins where it continues to mature. During this 2–6 week finishing period, the microbial community stabilizes and the material completes its transformation into rich, stable soil.

This curing stage is essential—it ensures the final product is fully decomposed, odor-free, and ready to support plant life. The process mirrors how compost matures in nature.



Step 5: The Final Soil



Generous Amount

Each person yields approximately 1–3 cubic yards of nutrient-rich soil—enough to nourish a small garden or several trees.



Family's Choice

Families can keep all the soil, take a portion, or donate it to conservation projects and forest restoration efforts.



Living Legacy

The soil can support memorial plantings, restore habitats, or enrich gardens—creating new life from loss.

Environmental Benefits

Natural Organic Reduction offers significant environmental advantages over conventional burial and cremation methods.

Lower Carbon Footprint

Reduces carbon emissions by up to 87% compared to conventional burial and cremation, helping combat climate change.

No Harmful Chemicals

Eliminates embalming fluids containing formaldehyde and other toxins that can leach into groundwater.

Zero Land Consumption

Requires no burial plots, concrete vaults, or permanent grave markers—preserving natural landscapes.

Soil Regeneration

Creates life-giving soil that can restore degraded lands, support reforestation, and nourish ecosystems.

Comparing Eco -Friendly Options

Natural Burial

- Body placed directly in earth
- Biodegradable materials only
- Requires burial land
- Traditional grave site
- Lower cost option

Natural Organic Reduction

- Controlled microbial process
- Produces usable soil
- No land needed
- Portable remains
- Urban-friendly

Aqua Cremation

- Water-based dissolution
- Produces bone fragments
- 95% less energy than flame
- Sterile liquid byproduct
- Moderate cost

Each option offers environmental benefits—the right choice depends on personal values, location, and what feels most meaningful.

Legal Status in the United States (2025)



Where NOR Is Legal

As of 2025, Natural Organic Reduction is legal in the following states:

- Washington
- Colorado
- Oregon
- Vermont
- California
- New York
- Nevada

More states are expected to legalize NOR soon as awareness grows and legislation advances.

Costs & Transparency

\$5,000-\$7,000

Typical Cost Range

Comparable to cremation, often less than traditional burial

What's Included

Core Services

- Transportation of remains
- Vessel placement and monitoring
- Complete transformation process
- Curing and soil finishing
- Soil return to family

Optional Additions

- Visitation before placement
- Memorial ceremonies
- Expedited soil shipping
- Additional soil containers
- Tree planting services

 Choose providers that offer transparent, all-inclusive pricing with no hidden fees. Ask for detailed cost breakdowns upfront.

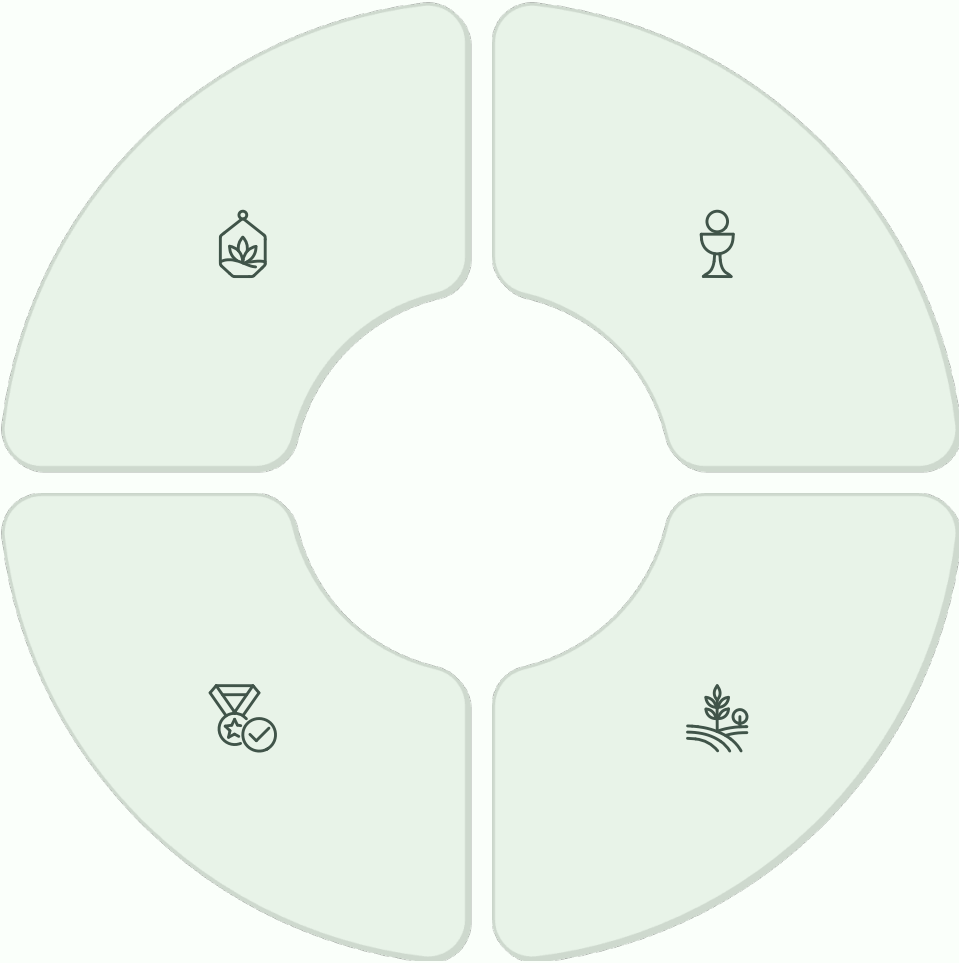
What Families Receive

Soil Options

Families can keep all the soil, take a portion for memorial plantings, or donate to conservation projects.

Documentation

Families receive certificates and information about the process, soil safety, and suggested uses.



Memorial Opportunities

Many providers offer optional ceremonies, visitation periods, and gatherings to honor your loved one.

Planting Support

Some facilities assist with memorial plantings or connect families with reforestation organizations.

Common Questions About NOR

Is the process safe?

Yes. High temperatures eliminate all pathogens. The soil undergoes testing to ensure it's safe and sterile.

Does it produce odors?

No. The controlled, aerobic process prevents odor. Facilities have air filtration systems as an extra precaution.

What about medical implants?

Metal implants, pacemakers, and prosthetics are removed before the process begins and recycled appropriately.

Can I visit during the process?

Some facilities offer viewing before placement. During transformation, visits aren't typically possible, but updates are provided.

Is the soil really safe to use?

Absolutely. The soil is tested and certified pathogen-free. It's nutrient-rich and safe for gardens and plantings.

Is this respectful?

NOR is conducted with utmost dignity. Many find it deeply meaningful—returning to earth naturally feels peaceful and purposeful.

Is Natural Organic Reduction Right for You?

Good Fit If You:

-  **Value ecological impact**
You want your final act to benefit the environment and support regeneration.
-  **Prefer gentle, natural methods**
The idea of returning to earth through nature's processes feels right to you.
-  **Live in urban areas**
You appreciate an option that doesn't require burial land or long-term plot maintenance.
-  **Like soil regeneration**
Creating life-giving soil that can nourish plants and forests resonates with your values.

May Not Be Ideal If:

-  **Prefer traditional burial plots**
You value having a permanent grave site to visit and maintain.
-  **Religious restrictions apply**
Some faiths require specific burial practices—check with your spiritual advisor.
-  **Discomfort with soil-based imagery**
If the concept of soil transformation doesn't feel peaceful, other eco-options exist.
-  **Not available in your state**
Check current legal status—though more states are legalizing NOR each year.

How to Choose an NOR Provider

Selecting the right provider ensures a smooth, respectful experience. Here are key factors to consider:

01

Verify Licensing & Certification

Ensure the facility is fully licensed and follows all state regulations. Ask about staff training and credentials.

02

Review Pricing Structure

Look for transparent, all-inclusive pricing. Understand what's covered and what costs extra.

03

Understand Soil Return Options

Clarify how much soil you'll receive, delivery methods, and whether partial return or donation is possible.

04

Ask About Ceremonies

Find out if visitation, witnessing, or memorial services are available before or after the process.

05

Check Transportation Details

Confirm service areas, pickup procedures, and any geographic limitations or additional fees.

06

Read Reviews & Testimonials

Learn from other families' experiences. Look for providers with strong reputations for care and communication.

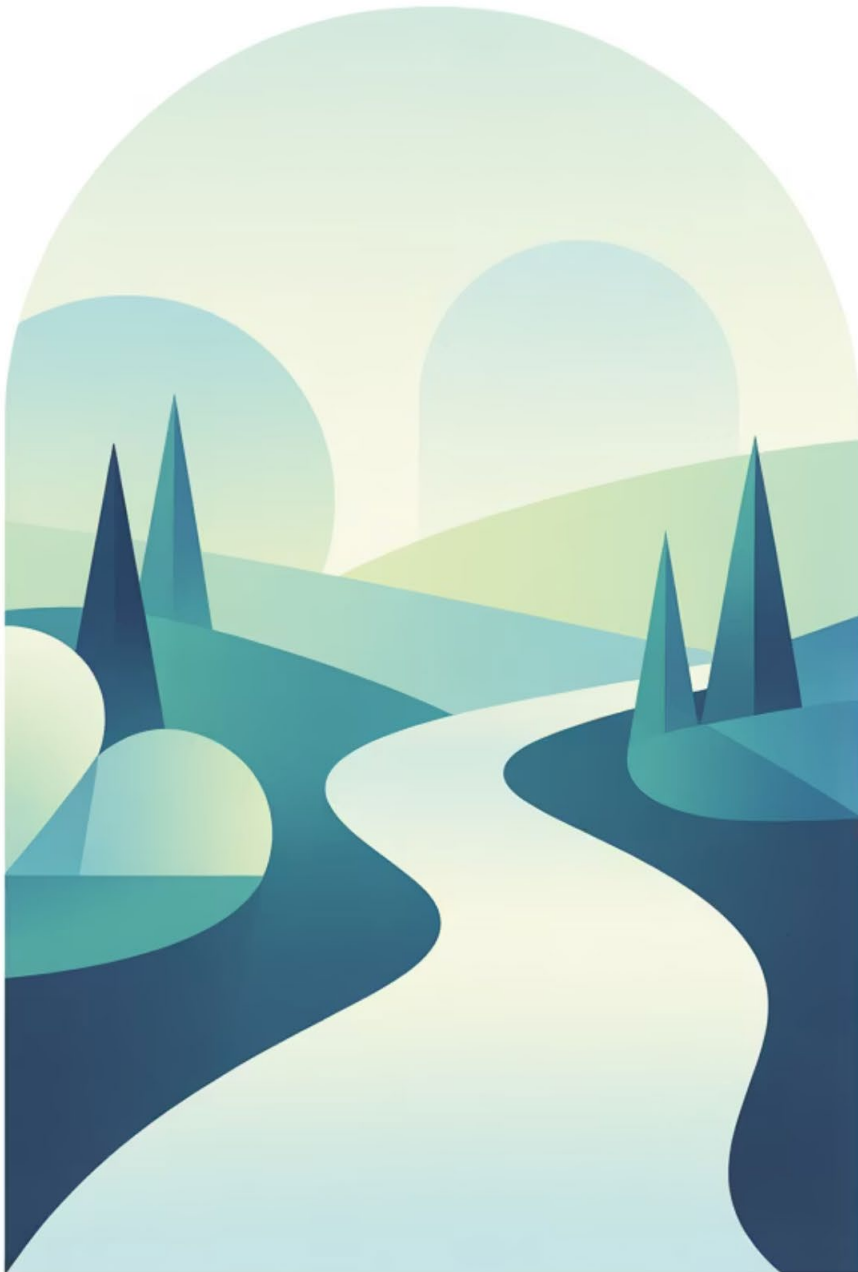


A Gentle, Meaningful Return to the Earth

Natural Organic Reduction offers a path back to nature that feels both ancient and innovative. It honors the body's natural cycle while creating something life-giving—rich soil that can nourish forests, restore ecosystems, and support new growth.

For those seeking an environmentally conscious, gentle alternative to conventional burial and cremation, NOR provides a meaningful choice. It's a final gift to the earth, transforming loss into renewal and allowing us to become part of the natural world once more.

"We return to the earth not as an ending, but as a beginning—nourishing the soil that will sustain future generations."



Learn More at EcoBurial.org

For more information about Natural Organic Reduction and other environmentally thoughtful end-of-life options, visit EcoBurial.org.

Discover detailed guides, provider directories, state-by-state legal information, and resources to help you plan a meaningful, eco-conscious farewell.

Explore Options

Compare natural burial, NOR, and aqua cremation

Find Providers

Locate licensed facilities in your area

Plan Ahead

Access planning guides and checklists

[Visit EcoBurial.org](https://EcoBurial.org)