

Burial Shrouds

Shroud n. 1: burial garment 2: shelter, protection 3: something that covers, screens, or guards

As the dictionary indicates, a shroud can serve a number of purposes. Still, at *The Forest* we'd like to suggest that you consider an additional purpose as you determine what you'd like your body, or a loved one's body, to be wrapped in after death.

A shroud may also connect death with a particular life as it was lived.

It can reflect connections to one's family and those left behind. It can be a reminder of an interest, a style, a value of the deceased. It can signify a memorable achievement or identity during life.

To that end, please give some thought to what you, or your loved one, have valued in life and consider whether there is a textile you associate with those values. For example, a tablecloth might bring to mind dedication to family and participation in holiday gatherings. Bed linens, including quilts, bedspreads or blankets, might carry memories of ancestors, hospitality, home life, or tastes. Motifs on textiles (prints, embroidery, drawings) might capture memories of or wishes for the deceased. A textile in a favorite color could be meaningful.

Please consider personalizing your choice of this final wrap.

If there is a fabric or textile that might be appropriate, please check a few things to make sure it will provide adequate "shelter, protection." A shroud for natural burial must be biodegradable (cotton, wool, or linen), at least two feet longer than the body it will wrap, and at least 1.5 times wider than the body's circumference. You might fold and stitch one end of the shroud closed to serve as a kind of hood or enclosure. Finally, select four strong ties (e.g. cords, ribbons, belts) two feet longer than the body's circumference to secure the shroud snugly around the body.

If you don't have or cannot find a fitting textile, *The Forest* has for sale antique linens that have been repurposed after their use on tables and beds. They have been laundered, pressed and packaged for storage or immediate use. They vary in size, price, and detail, and have slight imperfections reflecting their original use. Each is special.

Burial Container Options

A burial container is any rigid material containing a body. For those who wish for their loved one to be buried in a container, as opposed to a shroud, these are the requirements and options:

- Container must be biodegradable such as unfinished wooden caskets (no metal or toxic glues) or cardboard caskets.
- Native, sustainable-produced wicker, willow or reed containers are also permitted.
- Containers should be made from untreated sustainably-produced biodegradable materials.
- Families may build their own burial container, but no plywood or pressboard, please.
- Cardboard caskets may be purchased from a funeral home and decorated by the family.
- Coverings or linings must be made of all-natural fibers, as should the clothing of the deceased.
- No imported caskets are allowed, nor are exotic hardwoods, plastics, metals, or concrete.

Please share your questions regarding shrouds and burial containers with cemetery staff. The Forest may have caskets made from wood sustainably-harvested on site available for purchase.