

# THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

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## Ferndale funeral home, memorial park work to meet green demand

CRAIG PARRISH - FOR THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

Moles Funeral Homes & Crematory in Ferndale has been in business 120 years, and Greenacres Memorial Park for 80. That's an impressively long history of community service.

To stay in business so long requires constant evolution - and part of that evolution is keeping an eye on environmental variables, said Brian Flowers, cemetarian and "green burial coordinator." Among the newest techniques are utilizing plant-based products for embalming and broadleaf control on the grounds; resulting in a less-hazardous environment.

"Stewardship is part of our value," Flowers said. "We're founded on a trust from past and future generations."



PHILIP A. DWYER | THE BELLINGHAM HERALD - Brian Flowers, cemetarian and coordinator of "green burials" at Greenacres Memorial Park in Ferndale, stands near some of the six natural burials that have already occurred in The Meadow burial grounds of the park. People are buried without using chemicals in burial shrouds or in plain wooden or cardboard caskets.

One of Moles' many ongoing projects is "The Meadow," a new section on the grounds that will provide a natural burial ground. The space will utilize biodegradable materials and an earth-friendly approach to excavation and technology. In response to the effort, Moles has been certified by the Green Burial Council ([greenburialcouncil.org](http://greenburialcouncil.org)).

Flowers said he's a firm believer that Whatcom County has high community standards and that the public's perception of a business hinges on those standards. Moles uses locally produced products as much as possible, Flowers said. Providing options such as green burial means a customer has more options and is therefore more comfortable, he said.

"We're able to take some away of the guesswork for the consumer," Flowers said.

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## **ABOUT BRIAN FLOWERS**

Age: 36

Occupation: Cemetary/Green Burial coordinator, Greenacres Memorial Park

Mode of transport: walking, car that rates 35 miles per gallon; company vehicles include funeral coaches and maintenance equipment

Average fuel bill: minimal

Eco-cheat: Out of necessity, the park uses tractors and other maintenance equipment, and Flowers says the park will use biodiesel in those machines as it becomes available.

Turning point: "One of our challenges is that this industry is very slow to change," Flowers said. "But we've been natural-burial certified, and that's one of the many ways."

Favorite green Web site: [sustainableconnections.org](http://sustainableconnections.org), [greenburialcouncil.org](http://greenburialcouncil.org).

Best tip: "Pay attention to what you're doing. We live in a community that's so supportive of cleaning up our environmental footprint."