



**American Shoppers Should Think Twice Before Buying From These 2 Stores**  
Online Shopping Tools

Ad  
[READ MORE](#)

Menendez Indicted | Fat Bear Week | Laughing Fugitive | Trump Investigations | CBS News Live | Managing Your Money | Newsletters

**CBS NEWS** NEWS ▾ SHOWS ▾ LIVE ▾ LOCAL ▾ [Login](#)

SUNDAY MORNING >

# Human composting: The rising interest in natural burial

**SUNDAY MORNING** BY BEN TRACY  
JUNE 18, 2023 / 9:43 AM / CBS NEWS



**Now Playing**  
Human composting: The rising interest in natu...



Sen. Bob Menendez indicted on fraud, extortio...



Deion Sanders: The 2023 60 Minutes Interview



Ophelia bears down on Atlantic Coast

## More from CBS News

Sacramento food scrap program teaches how to create compost for gardens

Gisele Bündchen opens up about modeling and divorce

Cassidy Hutchinson says Trump is "dangerous for the country"

Minnesota National Guard celebrates 50 years partnering with Norway

got yours?  
Learn more at [CDC's vaccines.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines.gov)  
[Schedule Now](#)  
  
© 2023 Pfizer Inc. All rights reserved.  
PP-CW-USA-2983-01 September 2023

In the garden of her home in Bellingham, Washington, Marie Eaton is always able to find something she lost. "When I come out to garden, he's there," she said. "And every time I'm under one of the maples, I think, 'Oh yeah, Wayne, you're here.'"

Her brother, Wayne Dodge, was also an avid gardener with a fondness for Japanese maple trees. But in 2021 he fell down the stairs and became a quadriplegic. A few months later, the 71-year-old doctor got pneumonia.

Eaton said, "As a physician, he knew what that meant; they call pneumonia the old man's friend. And he chose that way to leave. We were devastated to lose him, but understood that choice."

Instead of being buried or cremated, Wayne had chosen a relatively new alternative: natural organic reduction, more simply known as human composting. It's a natural process that transforms the body into soil.

Some of it is spread under the Japanese maples in Marie Eaton's yard. "It's beautiful, like beautiful, beautiful mulch," she said.





After death, Wayne Dodge's body was transformed into soil.  
CBS NEWS

Tracy asked, "What do you say to people who will hear this and say, "That just sounds a little creepy or a little strange?"



1:51



Eaton replied, "I might invite them to think a little bit about what traditional burial involves, which is embalming a body, putting it inside a lead-lined coffin, and putting it into a concrete vault in the ground, as though we were pretending the person's not dead. That, to me, is much more creepy than this process of naturally becoming part of the soil again."

For Eaton's brother, that process happened at Recompose in Seattle, the first human composting facility in the country.

Katrina Spade, the founder and CEO, showed Tracy the space where families can hold a memorial service, as their loved one is covered with organic plant material, such as straw and woodchips. "We typically have the person's body laid here, and at the end of the ceremony we pass the person's body through the threshold vessel."



At Recompose, in Seattle, loved ones can gather for a memorial as the remains are covered with organic plant material, at the beginning of the process of natural organic reduction.  
CBS NEWS

On the other side is an array of 8-foot-long stainless steel containers, in which more natural material is added to aid in decomposition.





Hot Temu Buys  
Temu



The process typically takes 30 to 40 days.

Spade said, "We're creating this perfect environment to facilitate that transformation into soil. Bone at that point is reduced mechanically to sort of like a sand-like substance."



Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ...  
CBS NEWS



Spade is a former architecture student who was instrumental in Washington State becoming the first in the nation to legalize human composting in 2019. Five other states (Colorado, Oregon, Vermont, New York and California) have followed, and there are now a handful of companies offering this service.

Human composting is considered an environmentally-friendly choice, a way to minimize death's carbon footprint. Today, according to the [National Funeral Directors Association](#), most Americans choose to be cremated (59%) or buried (36%), which involves burning fossil fuels and toxic chemicals.

Tracy asked, "Do you find that the environmental footprint of this is part of what's driving some folks' decisions?"

"Yes," Spade replied. "If you've lived your whole life thinking about that and trying to make a difference environmentally, it makes sense, too, to think about your environmental impact after you die."

But the New York State Catholic Conference opposes the practice, saying it is "more appropriate for vegetable trimmings and eggshells than for human bodies."



**Ad**

**Get your move on.**

Future-proof your new home's connection.

[Learn more](#)

**Move with Xfinity**

Don't just move into a new house. Move into the future with the Xfinity 10G Network

Xfinity [Learn more](#)

Spade said, "I know that this is an incredibly respectful process, and for so many people it's more than that. It's deeply meaningful."

"It is like giving your body back to nature?" said Tracy.

"We truly get to *be* nature eventually," she replied.


Simple natural burials were standard until the Civil War, when soldiers were embalmed so that their bodies could be returned to their families. Abraham Lincoln's funeral made the process popular, and luxurious caskets became the new standard.

Human composting is one of the few innovations in death care in more than a century. So far, about 300 people have used Recompose's services, which cost about \$7,000. The soil created, which fills the bed of a pickup truck, can be taken by the family, or donated to forest conservation efforts.

Marie Eaton's brother's soil was given to family and friends to sustain the trees he so loved. "Wayne is all over Seattle, planted under many, many Japanese maple trees," Eaton said.



She finds comfort in knowing that his death continues to create new life. "Every time I come outside here and see the maples, I'm reminded of this wonderful, wonderful man."



### Huge EV Clearance Sale

Incredible Deals On New EVs. Learn More With These Top Searches

CommonSearches [Open >](#)

For more info:

- [Recompose](#), Seattle

Story produced by John Goodwin. Editor: Ben McCormick.

#### More from CBS News



[Sacramento food scrap program teaches how to create compost for gardens](#)



[Gisele Bündchen opens up about modeling and divorce](#)



[Cassidy Hutchinson says Trump is "dangerous for the country"](#)



[Minnesota National Guard celebrates 50 years partnering with Norway](#)

In: [Death](#) [Funeral](#)

#### Ben Tracy



Ben Tracy is a CBS News senior national and environmental correspondent based in Los Angeles.



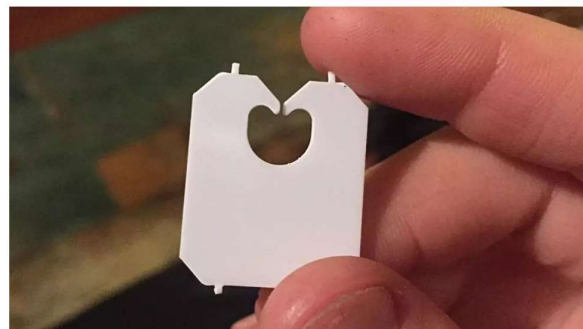
First published on June 18, 2023 / 9:43 AM

© 2023 CBS Interactive Inc. All Rights Reserved.



### Amazon Hates When Prime Members Do This, But They Can't Stop You

PAID CAPITAL ONE SHOPPING [Learn More](#)



### Airports Tell Passengers To Always Carry A Bread Clip

PAID STREETINSIDER.COM



### China Just Bought These Major US Companies

PAID STREETINSIDER.COM



### California: Program Can Cover The Cost To Install Solar If You Live In California.

Smart homeowners in California are using a tax



### Here is the real cost of full mouth dental implants in 2023

PAID SEEKIFY SEARCHES



### Here Are 29 of the Coolest Gadgets for This 2023

USA: 29+ best selling gifts you'll regret not getting before they sell out.



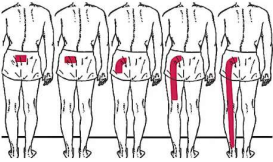
### California: Small New Volvo Cars For Seniors - Take A Look At Prices!

PAID VOLVO XC40



### Revealed: The Gorgeous Outlander P (Affordable)

PAID FAVORITE SEARCHES



### What Vitamin Causes Immediate Relief From Sciatic Nerve Pain?

Fortunately there is a vitamin that anyone over 55 can take for sciatic nerve pain

PAID SCIATIEASE Learn More



### Most Affordable Camper Vans

PAID CAMPER VAN WAREHOUSE | SEARCH ADS



### Here Is The Actual Cost Of Full Mouth Dental Implants In 2023

PAID DENTAL IMPLANTS



I picked up my truck with a... she had an appointment. Not 2 minutes after she got it, the cops pulled us over. They started asking questions, claiming that I picked up a lady of the night. My wife was silent the whole time. Finally, she's had enough. Her exact words were "You know what? I'm done with these

### "You Messed With The Wrong Dude" Stories

Times when the tables turned, big time.

PAID MONEYWAITS Click Here



### Visalia: Small New Volvo Cars For Seniors - Take A Look At Prices!

PAID VOLVO XC40



### California: Program Will Cover The Cost To Live In California.

Smart homeowners in California are using a tax incentivized solar program and other incentives to go solar.

PAID ENERGY BILL PROGRAM Learn More



### Look For Any High School Yearbook, It's Free

Rewind the good times. Every yearbook is a window into the past

PAID CLASSMATES Click Here



### He Inherited This Abandoned Trailer From His Father, Here's What He Found

PAID STREETINSIDER.COM



### People Unveil Their Most Gratifying Moments of Revenge

Tales of payback that are sweet, savory, and oh-so-satisfying.

PAID TRSD Click Here



### Costco Workers Reveal Things They Avoid From The Store

PAID STREETINSIDER.COM



### If you have a mouse, this game will keep you up all night. No Install. Play for free.

PAID COMBAT SIEGE



### Here Are 29 of the Coolest Gifts for This 2023

29 Insanely Cool Gadgets You'll Regret Not Getting Before They Sell Out

PAID TRENDING GIFTS Click Here



### JetBlue flights hit with lasers at Boston airport

CBS NEWS



### Police investigate house where murder

CBS NEWS



### The Visalia Power Company Is Begging You Not To Do This

PAID ENERGYBILLCRUNCHER SOLAR QUOTES



### Game shows what the world without US military interventions would look like

This strategy games makes you become a player in the crucial situations of history.

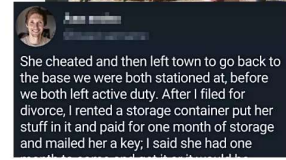
PAID GRAND HISTORIC STRATEGY SIM... [Play Now](#)



### Most Windows Users Didn't Know They Can Block Ads (Do It Now)

Chrome users can now block all ads and speed up their browsing; not only will you reduce you...

PAID SMART SECURITY TIPS [Learn More](#)



### People Share Their Most Savage Revenge Stories After Being Cheated On

Revenge tales of the betrayed and cheated

PAID TSD [Click Here](#)



### State Farm Hates When Seniors Discover This \$500k Life Insurance Policy

PAID LIFE INSURANCE



### This Year's Kia Lineup Is Turning Heads -- And Finally On Sale!

PAID SEARCH FAVORITES



### Tennessee teacher charged with raping boy at her home: "It's unspeakable"



### Bus carrying charter students crashes in N.Y.



### Man arrested after appearing to grope female reporter in the middle of her live report...



### The Biden administration is giving away free COVID-19 tests again: How to get COVI...

The U.S. government is once again offering free at-home antigen ...

