

What Is a Grave Blanket?

John A. Gentleman Mortuaries and Crematory in Omaha, NE



The term grave blanket can have different meanings depending on the region of the country you are in. In the Southern region, the term usually refers to the blanket of flowers placed over a grave after burial. At funerals, it is customary for funeral goers to purchase flower arrangements for the funeral ceremony itself. Once the funeral is over these flowers can be placed on the grave. If the flower arrangements are the larger freestanding ones, they will be laid down over the grave to cover it.

In more Northern regions grave blanket refers to a handmade or commercially made arrangement of evergreen boughs. Typical fresh flower arrangements cannot withstand the colder northern temperatures, so the evergreen blankets are designed to last longer. These evergreen boughs may be decorated with ribbons, flowers, or pinecones. Often the materials are attached to a foam or wire base that can be attached to the ground to keep the grave blanket from blowing away. They come in many different shapes and sizes.

Why are grave blankets used?

The tradition of grave blankets is thought to have originated from the Scandinavians. Grave blankets were typically placed over graves before the first snow to keep the deceased warm during the winter. Today they are also used to honor and remember a loved one who has passed. Grave blankets can be purchased commercially, but often they are made by hand, giving family members an opportunity to come together in an activity to remember and honor their loved one. Grave blankets serve as a physical way for families to express their emotions.

Originally most grave blankets were used throughout the Christmas season, which is why many incorporate the use of seasonal evergreens. Now, however, it is becoming more common for grave blankets to be used to commemorate other events such as birthdays or anniversaries.

Can anyone put down a grave blanket?

If you wish to create or purchase a grave blanket for a loved one's grave, it is important to talk to cemetery director first. Some cemeteries have restrictions about what can be placed on a grave. It's also important to make sure your arrangement isn't so big that it encroaches on someone else's grave. You will also want to ensure that your grave blanket is properly secured so that it doesn't blow away.