# How to properly *bury your pet* to protect wildlife

Pets are like family members to many, and whether they pass away at a veterinarian's office or at home, it's certainly a difficult time. No one wants to think about laying a beloved pet to rest.

You might be surprised to know that laying your pet to rest properly is important to help protect other animals, especially wildlife, as well as the environment. **How you bury a deceased animal is actually regulated by Florida statute.**

## Marion County
### FLORIDA

**MarionCountyFL.org/SolidWaste**
**Phone: 352-671-8465**

## Options for your pet's burial

- If your pet is put to sleep, the veterinarian or animal shelter can often handle disposition. You may want to check, as this may incur additional charges.
- Cremation. Some private companies offer cremation, and you will be given the ashes to keep.
- Burial in your yard or pet cemetery. You may opt to handle the burial yourself.
- Burial in the landfill. Some people don't have a place to bury their pet, and choose to bring their pet to the landfill.

## Follow these rules

- If completing the burial yourself (regardless of location), you must bury the body **at least 2 feet deep** in the ground (FS 823.041). It's also recommended that you wrap it in a blanket or plastic prior to burial.
- **If bringing your pet's body to the landfill, you must alert the staff at the scale that you are bringing a deceased animal.** Staff on the landfill will ensure additional burial requirements are met. The landfill operates under strict guidelines from state and federal agencies that aim to protect wildlife and domestic pets. **Alerting staff of a deceased animal in a waste load helps Solid Waste meet these guidelines and protect our community's wildlife.**

## Why?

Deceased animals can become food for wildlife and domestic animals if not buried properly. Sometimes, especially if the animal has been euthanized, the body can contain substances that can sicken or even kill the wildlife that has unearthed the body. **It's extremely important you follow Florida statute if you choose to bury your pet yourself or if you bring it to the landfill.**