



<http://www.halloween-online.com/sfx/halloween-tombstones-2.html>

HALLOWEEN TOMBSTONE IDEAS



Buying and/or making your Halloween tombstones is only the first step in creating the ultimate atmosphere for your yard haunt or haunted graveyard. But there are many more things you can do to add realism and heighten the effect your tombstones and graveyard will have on your visitors on Halloween night.

The placement and securing of the tombstones is very important, both for appearance and to keep them from falling over. We like to keep our cemetery looking old and foreboding. Use as many different styles of tombstones as you can and place them unevenly throughout your graveyard. Be sure to set some of them crooked or misaligned to give it that unkempt look.

When arrainging your tombstones remember that graves in a "real" cemetery are usually spaced about seven feet from row to row, but you can take a few liberties with distances. While you don't have to space them out just right, you do want to give the illusion of there really being graves there, so you want to space out your tombstones. Leave at least a foot or two between the stones side to side, and four feet or more from row to row. We like to tilt some of the tombstones so that the graveyard looks old and dilapidated.

Try to use a larger amount of classic style tombstones with some elaborate ones mixed in. We mixed one extra fancy tombstone in with every three classic style tombstones, so as not to over do it.

Obtained from
Omarshauntedtrail.com

Securing the Tombstones

We have used several different methods to secure our tombstones to the ground that work very well.

Method #1

First carefully drill two 3/8" holes into the bottom of the tombstone, a couple of inches from each end. Now take two 16" pieces of 3/8" dowel (sharpened at both ends) and carefully drive one end half way up into the bottom of the Tombstone. Lightly set the tombstone with it's spikes onto the ground to make an impression of where the spike holes will go. Using an extra sharpened dowel, drive it eight inches into the ground where your spike markings are and remove. You can now push the tombstone with spikes into the holes.

Method #2

At most hardware stores you can buy large steel spikes (they look like giant nails). Measure and cut a piece of 1/2"x 6" board so that it is four inches longer than the width of the tombstone, two inches on each side. Drill a centered hole four to six inches from each end one drill bit size smaller than the diameter of the spike. Hammer the two spikes through the holes. Set the bottom of the tombstone over the top of the spikes just hard enough to make indentations for drilling. Drill the two spike holes into the tombstone. Apply white glue (Elmer's) to the spikes and inside of the spike holes, and push the spikes into the tombstone holes all the way. To setup, dig a trench the same size as the wooden base and sit the base and tombstone into it. Cover the base with dirt just above the edge of the tombstone.

Below are some of the important final touches we do when setting up our tombstones and graveyard. But remember, if you want realism, too little or too much can spoil the effect. Its very important not to over do your tombstone enhancements or they will not appear to be the real thing.

Use as many different styles of tombstones as you can afford to buy and/or make. Try to buy better quality tombstones if you can, they look much more realistic than less expensive ones and will last longer since they can take more abuse. If this is your first year to add tombstones or a graveyard to your Halloween haunt start out with a dozen or more then add a few more every year. In a few years you'll have a very impressive graveyard filled with tombstones for your Halloween haunt!



Use dirt to make burial mounds where your tombstones will be. If you have a supply of dirt, you can build up six to eight inch high mounds in front of each Tombstone. If you don't happen to have any extra dirt yourself, you can have a small truck load brought in from a landscaping company for a small change. Just remember, you'll need to do something with all that extra dirt after Halloween. Scatter leaves,



twigs and branches around the area to give it an untended look.

For that really old, abandoned or overgrown graveyard feel, add Spanish moss, leaves and vines. Spanish moss adds a great effect when glued in bunches at the base of and on the tombstones. Next, drape and glue some Spanish moss and silk vines over the top of your tombstones. Make sure each tombstone is done a little differently than the others and be careful not to add too much or you will bury your tombstones! These can be found at most craft stores or your local nursery.



You can place small bouquets, wreaths or vases of wilted flowers at the base of a few of your tombstones and monuments. These can be real flowers that have been allowed to dry and wither, or you can buy artificial flowers from a local craft store. Autumn or winter flowers tend to look best. You can even find black or gray colored flowers and roses, which look especially ominous in a Halloween graveyard! Simple touches like this can really add realism to your graveyard.



Use a drill powered Cobweb Spinner or Stretchable Cob Webs to web some or all of your tombstones. We use a Cobweb Spinner to add cobwebs from the sides of the tombstones down to the ground. You can carefully place a few plastic spiders in the webs for an added scare. Cobweb Shooters and extra cobweb fluid are available from sources on line. Bags of inexpensive stretchable Halloween cobwebs are available at most stores during the month of October.



For an added effect we like to attach a artificial raven, crow or vulture to the top of a tombstone as though he is perched and watching over that particular grave. The ones we use have a metal wire sticking out from each foot allowing you to push these wires into the top of a tombstone to hold the bird in place. You can also position some artificial crows and maybe an owl in the trees as well. Artificial ravens, crows, owls and vultures are available from local craft stores.



You can hang spooky props and decorations from tree limbs for added atmosphere. The "Super Ghost" is a four foot tall prop, looks great and looks very ghostly when illuminated with a hidden black light. If you hang one over a tombstone it looks as though it is raising from out of the grave. You can also hang artificial bats from tree limbs using light-weight fishing line. There are lots of other props and decorations that can be used this way.



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Skeletons always look as though they belong in a graveyard. You can place a skeleton so that it is standing next to or behind a tombstone. Or you can have it sitting on the ground and leaning against a tombstone. You can have one or two skeletons sitting on a park style bench in the graveyard. The "Bucky" skeleton is very realistic and relatively inexpensive. Piles of skulls and bones can also make a great addition.



Remember, no matter how great your Halloween props and decorations are, they must be illuminated at night for people to see them! Colored outdoor flood lights are great for illuminating your graveyard. We place our flood light bulbs in a aluminum clamp-on housing that we have spray painted with flat black stove paint to better conceal it. Make sure you don't overload your circuit breakers! We like to use blue colored flood light bulbs to give a ghostly look to the area.



There's nothing like a layer of fog floating ominously through the night air and/or creeping over the ground to really give a scare to your trick or treaters. Use a fog machine or multiple fog machines to fill the night air with fog and put a real chill into your visitors. You can even build a "Fog Chiller" device that makes the fog hug the ground when it exits the fog machine for a really creepy effect. More information can be found about using fog machines and plans for building a "Fog Chiller" visit [Got Fog!](#)



Add a lightning generator to your yard haunt or the back of your graveyard. One of the most popular and effective special effects to add to a yard haunt is simulated thunder and lightning. Just imagine the reaction from your trick or treaters to a bright white flash of light in the night sky followed by the deep rumbling sound of thunder. Visit [The Yard Haunter](#) for more information on using a lightning machine.



If you plan on placing real or artificial Jack O' Lanterns in or around your Halloween graveyard we highly suggest that you do not use candles for obvious safety reasons. Instead, use battery powered LED lighting units meant to illuminate your Jack O' Lanterns instead of using candles. Another advantage is that they are unaffected by wind.