



Committed to Green

Tips for planning your eco-conscious wedding or commitment ceremony

What is green?

Going green promotes the balance between humanity and nature. Green products are eco-friendly, produced in a socially responsible manner, and enrich local or indigenous communities. Green also endorses sustainable farming, with an emphasis on local and seasonal produce, which minimizes depletion of natural resources.

Getting started

Think small

The tough part first — the more people you invite to your ceremony, the more resources will be used – from paper to fossil fuels, it just takes more ‘stuff’ to do a bigger wedding. The good part – a smaller wedding will make your life simpler and rest lightly on the earth.

Keep it local

From invitations to food and beverages to party favors, the closer to home these items are made, the less they’ve traveled. Plus you’ll create a unique bash to remember, replete with the unique flavors of your special wedding location.

Talk it up

From the invitations to the thank-you notes, you can share your eco-conscious values with your family and friends by educating them about your green choices – but don’t preach... it’s a party after all!

With thisring...

Going green begins when you pop the question!

- Choose vintage rings, whether a family heirloom or an antique find. If you don’t like the style, old gold may be melted down and refashioned to your liking.
- Go synthetic. Lab-created diamonds are conflict free, free of toxic chemicals and are manufactured in an eco-friendly way.
- If nothing but a diamond will do, choose stones that have been mined in peaceful Canada or Australia. Or look for diamonds certified "conflict-free" under the Kimberley Process, an ongoing effort to reform diamond mining in Africa.



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Invitations

- Look for 100% post consumer waste recycled paper that's processed without chlorine.
- Encourage guests to recycle their invitations, or have seeds embedded in the paper so that guests can plant the invitations and enjoy the flowers that grow from them.
- Use a reply postcard instead of a card and forgo the inner envelopes — you'll save paper and money.
- Choose a small simple design, or a self-mailer to save on paper.
- Create a website with details about your wedding — directions, hotels and other weekend events to avoid having to print this information out for everyone. Just remember you may need to print information for family and friends who do not have Internet access.

Choosing the Perfect Location

- Consider an outdoor wedding at a favorite natural spot to add to the beauty of your celebration and to remind yourself why you make environmentally responsible choices every day.
- Have the ceremony and reception at the same location, or at least near to each other to avoid having your guests drive between the two.
- Choose a location that will work with you on your eco-conscious goals.

What to Wear

- Go vintage — Choose a vintage dress and tuxedo from a resale clothing store and remember you can have it tailored or redesigned to fit your style.
- Choose eco-friendly fabrics when buying a new dress — Look for organic fabrics from silk to cotton and bamboo to hemp.
- Simplify — Choose a dress or suit that you can wear again.
- Rent — Not just for tuxedos anymore! Renting dresses has become oh so eco-chic.
- Donate your wedding dress to charity so the cycle can begin again.

Finessing the Food

- Find a caterer who will provide vegetarian, organic and locally sourced entrees. Outpost Natural Foods Catering provides these items along with food for special dietary needs.
- Rent or use your own real glasses, dishes, cloth napkins and table linens.
- Use biodegradable, compostable dishes and flatware made from cornstarch, sugar cane or tropical leaves.

Flowers

- Find a florist that sources flowers from local, organic and/or fair trade sources.
- Find a wildflower grower at your local farm market to create bouquets and table arrangements.
- Use potted plants in place of cut flowers for centerpieces. These can then be given as gifts or enjoyed in your home. If you plan ahead, you can even grow them yourself.

Pretty as a Picture

- Say goodbye to the harsh chemicals used to develop film. With today's options of digital photography and videography, not only are you cutting out chemicals and other harmful substances, but you can share your photos and videos more easily. Plus, you can print only what you need.
- If you're tied to traditional film, look for vendors who use less harmful developing processes.

Rice Throwing Alternatives

- Throwing rice is not harmful to birds or wildlife. Rice however is notoriously hard to clean up and guests can slip and fall on the grains!
- Throwing birdseed is a good alternative to throwing rice only if you are having a city wedding, or will be tossing birdseed in a manicured, non wild yard. Standard birdseed mixes contain invasive plants not native to your area, and throwing birdseed in a natural wedding spot, like in a nature preserve or state park, can cause havoc to that ecosystem.
- Alternatives to rice and birdseed include throwing native wildflower seeds or petals, ringing hand bells or blowing homemade bubbles from recyclable containers.

Gifts

- If you are already settled into a home and do not need kitchenware or furnishings, you may prefer to state on your invitations: "Please no gifts" or "Your presence is your gift to us", or recommend that guests donate to your favorite environmental group in honor of this special occasion.
- If you are still establishing a home, think about registering with an eco-conscious retailer to minimize receiving unnecessary trinkets from guests who aren't sure what you need.
- If you are going to be buying gifts for the people standing up in your wedding, consider non consumptive options like massage therapy gift certificates, useful gifts like wine, soap, fair trade coffee, gift certificates to locally owned businesses (like your local food co-op), or 100% recycled or tree free gifts.

Programs

- The first rule of thumb is to consider whether or not you need a program. One nicely printed larger posting or a chalkboard and easel can get the information out in a eco friendly way.
- Have your order of service printed on 100% recycled post consumer waste paper that has been processed without chlorine.
- Use your program to let your guests know how important the environment is to you, and all the ways you have considered the Earth in planning your wedding. Collect programs at the end of the ceremony and recycle them.

Favors

- Instead of favors, let your guests know in the program that you have donated \$1-\$2 per guest to your favorite environmental organization.
- To counteract all of the carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere (contributing to global warming) by your guests traveling by plane or car to your wedding, give each guest an 11-watt compact fluorescent bulb. For each 50-watt incandescent bulb your guests replace with their wedding favor, 685 pounds of carbon dioxide will be kept out of the environment.
- Give a recycled handmade paper bookmark with wildflower seeds which can then be planted for even more enjoyment. In place of a bookmark, give a small envelope of wildflower seeds to your guests.

- Give tree saplings from the National Arbor Day Foundation.
- Go handmade, but think useful. Items like hand made soaps, candies and other consumables are thoughtful and will be used up.

Ah, the Honeymoon!

- Look for a travel agent who specializes in socially and environmentally sensitive vacations that feature green hotels that recycle and reduce the amount of unnecessary laundering. Also look for vegetarian, holistic and off the beaten path adventures and electric/hybrid car rentals.
- Be an eco-tourist and choose a trip that gives back. From counting sea turtles to helping preserve natural habitats, these sorts of vacations can be both romantic and green!
- Stay closer to home. The further you travel, the larger your eco-footprint. The Midwest offers many romantic getaways and the best part — you'll get there sooner because it's close by!

Creating Your Sustainable Future Together

- Practice making sustainable choices in your daily life together. Simple things like recycling, car pooling, walking or biking to the store and choosing eco friendly home products all add up.
- Invest in socially responsible companies when planning for your retirement and financial well being.



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Learn More!

General information on green weddings

www.greatgreenwedding.com

www.treehugger.com

Conflict free diamonds

www.kimberleyprocess.com

www.conflictfreediamonds.org

Local green ceremony locations

www.schlitzauduboncenter.com

www.urbanecologycenter.org

Natural wedding dresses

www.threadheadcreations.com

www.mycorset.com

www.getconscious.com

Organic flowers

www.organicbouquet.com

Natural & Organic Catering

www.outpostnaturalfoods.coop

Honeymoons

www.ecotourism.org

Socially responsible investing

www.socialinvest.org

www.greenmoneyjournal.com

An Engagement to Remember!

Outpost offers a full range of catering services for weddings and commitment ceremonies. By choosing Outpost Catering, you're not only supporting the planet but giving your guests an event to remember!



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CATERING

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(414) 755-3202 x452
or visit us at outpostnaturalfoods.coop

Catering Services from Outpost Natural Foods

We'll bring 37 years of natural food expertise to your next gathering through our fresh and artfully presented catering offerings.

We're proud to offer vegetarian and vegan fare as well as free-range natural meats and sustainable fish based entrees. We use only the highest quality organic and all natural ingredients and support local farmers and businesses. We can customize your menu to meet your specific dietary or taste preferences.

We also offer a full range of catering services from business lunches to weddings. When you choose Outpost Catering, you are supporting the planet and giving your guests an event to remember!

Contact

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