

Sustainability Newsletter Week 50: July 28-Aug. 1, 2008.

Topic: Green Weddings

If you or someone you know of is planning to tie the knot in the next year, pass these ideas along:

1. Watch the number of guests

-The biggest factor in the financial and ecological impact of a wedding is the size. Each person invited means more miles traveled, more food consumed, a larger venue, and more waste at the end. Invite close friends and family, but know when to draw the line.

2. Source locally

-Almost anything can be found on a local scale.

-Food and drinks are probably the most important items to buy locally.

Get food from local farmer's markets and co-ops. Check www.localharvest.org for nearby farms to purchase produce from. Flowers can also be sourced locally from farmer's markets, community gardens, and florists. Don't let those extra entrees go into the trash. Work with caterers to send leftovers to a food rescue group. These organizations pick up fresh, untouched but unwanted food and deliver it to local shelters and families in need.

3. Source green

- Everything bought or rented for a wedding will have an environmental and social impact, so keep this notion high on the list when planning.

-Questions to ask include: Can the caterers be encouraged to use organic produce? What is the dress made of? How was the gold in the rings mined? Did those tasty little gift bags of chocolate involve slave labor?

-A hemp suit is a good eco-statement, but if it is going to sit in the closet for most of the married life, anyone would be much better off with a rental service. Similarly, party rentals for things like linens and glasses provide the perfect means for getting the most use out of minimal resources.

-Don't forget the local thrift store—round jars or slightly used dresses can be a great and cheap addition to a wedding.

-Look for soy candles -- they're made from a renewable resource, are cleaner and longer burning than regular candles, plus spills are easy to clean (just use soap and hot water). They're available in nearly every size, shape, color, and scent you can imagine.

4. Choose a venue

-Choosing a location that is as close to as many of the guests as possible will reduce the wedding's impact in a big way.

-Once the party has done that, they might also want to consider what type of venue to use. If they are not tied to a particular church, synagogue, mosques,

or any other denomination, consider supporting the local community garden, farmer, or nature preserve.

5. Greening transportation

-Try to provide as much information on transport options as possible. Tell guests to try to arrive by train, bus, bike, or at least by carpool. Include a link to travel guides like www.seat61.com in the invitations. If the wedding is a little ways out of town, try to provide shuttle buses.

6. Personalize it

-Ask friends to grow and bring flowers. The bride and groom will end up with the most fabulous flower (un)arrangements ever seen, and the guests will appreciate being involved.

-Why not create a scrap book to which friends and relatives can add poems, drawings, pictures, or anecdotes. These are the things that most folks remember most fondly.

7. Perfect eco-invites

- Fortunately, there are an increasing number of suppliers of recycled, handmade, or tree-free invitations out there. Some may offer a self-assembly option, which saves on money but can take some work, others will put the whole thing together for you. If you are happy breaking from tradition, then electronic invites like [Evides](#) are also worth considering.

8. Gifts of conscience

-Popular eco-choices for gift registries include www.vivaterra.com , www.branchhome.com , and www.gaiam.com . Many local craft stores may also do registries, and even mainstream retailers now have many eco-options, such as organic linens, etc. Remember though, less is almost always more when it comes to being green.

9. Offsetting

-To be truly green, make every effort to cut emissions, waste, and other negative impacts of the wedding at the source.

-Offsetting can be a means of taking responsibility for that impact and channeling funds into some positive projects—as long as one picks the offset provider carefully. Popular choices include www.terrapass.com, www.nativeenergy.com , and www.MyClimate.org in the US, and www.climate-care.org in Europe.

-Native Energy even has an online wedding offset calculator. If someone can't afford offsets for the whole wedding, then why not offset a portion and ask guests to contribute to the rest? One can at least include information on offset providers on the invites so guests can choose whether to offset their travel.

10. Communicate

- Whatever someone does to green the wedding, make sure you tell people about it.

-Emphasize that the wedding treads lighter on the planet. Too many folks still believe environmentalism is all doom and gloom—this is the perfect opportunity to prove them wrong!

(Sources: <http://www.treehugger.com/files/2007/04/how-to-green-your-wedding.php>;
<http://www.grist.org/advice/possessions/2003/05/08/>).

-Good Wedding ideas can be found at:
<http://wedding.theknot.com/Related.aspx?type=tag&value=Green+Weddings>

*****If anyone would like to be the citizen member on the JOCS committee, please send me or Tim a letter of interest and information about yourself, and we will forward it on to the Committee for review.
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Events:

It is the quarter-century birthday of yours truly! YaHoo!!!

Have a divine weekend everyone! I know I will!