



Green Gifts for the Holidays

Many "green" gifts are **intangible presents** that deliver green long after the holidays and won't end up in a closet. Some ways to give back to the earth

+Donate time or money to a charity in honor of the gift recipient Heifer <www.heifer.org>,

OxFam <www.Oxfam.org>, Médecins sans frontières <www.msf.org>,

+Buy carbon offsets in the recipient's name.

+Give a parks pass or a membership to botanical garden, etc.

Some green **stocking stuffers**:

Energy-saving light bulbs. The technology in these earth-friendly bulbs has leapt ahead, and they now come in a range of shapes and sizes The DVD "An Inconvenient Truth"; \$19.99 at amazon.com and at bookstores and video stores

Chocolate — fair trade and organic is better for the environment. Mass-produced cacao beans are typically grown with heavy use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers on clear-cut forest land. Organic beans are cultivated without use of chemicals, and shade-grown beans help preserve the forest canopy that shelters migratory birds and butterflies.

Organic cotton toys and clothing A sampling of items made with good-for-the-environment organic cotton. See http://www.organicexchange.org/consumer_marketplace.php for a list of companies that sell organic cotton products.

Children's books

Instill the three R's (recycle, reuse and reduce) early and have fun while doing it with *Recycled Crafts Box* by Laura C. Martin. Learn how to make Milk Carton Cottages, Socks the Puppy Dog Puppet, Boot-i-ful Shoes, among other artful creations for kids.

Dr. Seuss' rhyming classic *The Lorax* spins an unforgettable tale of a world once lush with truffula trees. A greedy manufacturer turns them into "thneeds, which everyone needs," and customers can't get enough. But the story ends with hope and is a whimsical way to introduce complex environmental ideas to young children.

Groundhog's Garden, "where Squirrel teaches Little Groundhog—and us—the many benefits of growing one's own vegetables"; *The Sea, the Storm, and the Mangrove Tangle*, which shows us the intricate workings of an underappreciated ecosystem; or *Making a Difference in the World*.

Clothing and accessories

Billions of plastic and glass bottles and tons of paper end up in U.S. landfills every year — each American produces on average about 4.6 pounds of garbage per day. A sampling of items that reuse materials otherwise destined for the trash heap:

- Ecoist handbags are fashioned out of misprinted candy wrappers, food labels and packaging. Order from <http://www.ecoist.com/>.
- Patagonia's Capilene layers (pants, tees, pullovers and jackets for outdoor and aerobic activities), fleeces and shells are made out of recycled soda bottles and recycled clothing.
- Get a list of resources for greener clothing <http://www.ecomall.com/biz/clothing.htm>.

For cooks, sustainable food cookbooks

What we eat, the way our food is grown or caught, and how far it is transported can have a profound effect on the environment. From buying locally grown, organic produce to choosing fish caught or farmed in an ecologically responsible way, there is a range of food choices that go easier on the earth.

Get a list of more sustainable cookbooks at the Sustainable Table

<http://www.sustainabletable.org/kitchen/cookbooks/index.html>

Women's Bean Project (Denver based)

<http://www.womensbeanproject.com/whatwedo.html>

Gardeners and outdoor enthusiasts

Yard trimmings and food scraps make up about a quarter of the waste U.S. households generate. Composting can greatly reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills or incinerators. This controlled decomposing process of leaves, grass and food scraps produces an earthy nutrient-rich material that you can then use in your yard to make it healthier. Consider a compost bin.

Other ideas for gardeners, hikers, bird watchers and bicyclists: gardening tools, binoculars, bird-lovers handbooks, bicycle accessories and portable solar battery packs.

Imaginative wrapping: Think outside the box

- Wrap gifts with **colorful newspaper "funnies," candy wrappers** or **mail-order catalogs**. If you've got more time, create personalized collages and get your children involved.
- Re-use those **old linens** in your drawer with holes that you will never use again. A vintage cloth can make a beautiful wrapping, particularly if you are giving to a quilter or someone who crafts items from scraps of materials. (Or if you are very crafty yourself, make puppets or potholders from scraps or old linens.)
- Instead of bows and ribbons, attach a **spring of berries** or some pretty leaves or shells.

More ideas/sources for green-gift ideas

- fair trade/organic coffees and teas (or chocolate!)
- a fun water bottle or coffee mug to avoid buying bottled water or using paper or styrofoam
- organic, sweatshop-free clothing--or fleece made from recycled plastics

<http://www.newdream.org/holiday/giftideastaff.php>.

Green Dimes (www.greendimes.org) sign up to stop junk mail AND they will plant trees.

<http://www.eco-artware.com>

<http://www.nrdc.org/cities/living/ggift.asp>

<http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2006/11/21/gifts/>

Books

McKibben [The \\$100 Holiday](#)

Pritchard, Thomas. [Natural Christmas](#)