

Valentine's Day



How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I can buy buy buy you.... cards, flowers, chocolates, jewellery, dinner.....

Or let's see how we can avoid going into the **red** and takes steps to **go green**...

On the one hand Valentine's Day is an opportunity to show your partner that you love him/her, or to hint to someone that you have a crush on him/her.

On the other it's an excuse for consumerism and consumption – a chance to buy cards, chocolates and gifts.

With a little bit of effort and preplanning you can do your part to limit the environmental impact of Valentine's Day and make it a green event.

On this day of **love** let's give some thought to the Planet, and how we can show our care and love for Earth too. An opportunity to double the **love**...

Here are some ideas on how to have a green Valentine's Day with green gift ideas.

Cards

- Statistics say that there are approximately one billion Valentine cards sent out each year. That's a lot of paper! A lot of trees that needed to be cut down.
- If you're going to buy a card – purchase those made from recycle paper, and those made locally (to minimise the cards carbon footprint).
- Create your own card using recycled paper or re-usable paper, using magazine cuttings or ribbons you've previously received.
- Reuse old cards from previous years. Either cut them up and create new cards; or resign them.
- Create a collage using photo of you and your loved one.
- Send e-cards using one of the free e-card services.
- Create your own Valentine's Day wishes email.

Gifts

- Instead of giving flowers, give a plant that will last a lot longer than a few days.
- Give seeds or flowers that can be planted in the garden.
- Give a single flower instead of a bunch.
- Plant a Tree in someone's name www.greenworks.co.za/plantatreepage.html
- Make a donation to an environmental organisation on behalf of your loved one (www.greenworks.co.za/respectpage.html)
- Purchase a gift certificate for an experience – like an holistic therapy e.g. massage, naturopath, health spa.
- If you're giving jewellery – consider purchasing a previously owned piece from an antique or thrift store.
- Give organic chocolates.
- If you're giving perfumes, select natural perfumes and fragrances or essential oils. Many perfumes have many products that aren't friendly.
- Give organic and natural beauty products and oils.
- Find things at home that haven't been used or have been forgotten and re-give as a gift.
- **Valentine's Day Coupon Book**
 - Put together a list of things you'd be willing to do for your partner.
 - Write them up on recycled paper or off-cuts of paper that you've used, or into a recycled paper notebook.
 - Put each "to do gift" on its own page.
 - Your partner can then redeem each voucher.(You can make it valid for a time period if you so choose)
- **Valentine's Day Poetry Book**
 - Put together a selection of your favourite love poems. Either handwrite each one on a separate page or print it onto recycled paper or stick it into a recycled paper notebook.
- You may have a number of notepads at home that haven't been used which can be used for either of the above projects.

- Gifts packaging – check it's recyclable or made from recycled material before purchasing.
- Wrap your gifts in wrapping paper you've previously received or in gift bags that can be reused.
- Keep your gift bags and wrapping for future use.

Food

What would be an occasion without food...

- Breakfast in bed – be sure to use free range eggs and organic tea or coffee.
- Select a local restaurant for lunch or dinner (to minimise transport footprint).
- Select a restaurant that promotes local and organic ingredients.
- Cook a meal at home, using organic ingredients. Or make a vegetarian meal. Use soy-wax candles to add a romantic ambience.
- Have a picnic – either in your own garden or somewhere else.
- Create a hamper made with organic and natural food items, including organic juices or wine.
- Create a vegetarian hamper.
- For a night picnic, light up the garden with solar lights or soy-wax candles.
- If you're getting take-aways – do so from a restaurant that uses biodegradable take-away containers or take your own containers to the restaurant.

Other things to do

- If you're going away book somewhere that supports a conservation project e.g a wildlife experience
- Take an outing to the zoo or animal parks – supporting conservation.
- Share a bath – light candles (use beeswax or soy-wax candles that burn cleaner than conventional candles) and open a bottle of organic wine. (if you've got a solar water heater – even better!)



Respect Yourself Respect Others Respect our Environment

