

## Green Weddings & Celebrations

### Why we care

Weddings are special events that bring family and friends together to celebrate a couple's lifelong commitment. They are also big business. Television shows, magazines and expos all promote extravagant weddings. The average number of wedding guests in the U.S. is more than 150, and the average budget is \$20,000. This can produce a carbon footprint bigger than an average couple's footprint for an entire year. Travel (flying and driving), and energy used in hotel rooms are the biggest contributors, followed by gold and diamond rings (one ring produces 20 tons of mine waste), wedding dresses, food, flowers (often flown in from developing countries with poor working conditions), and decorations.

### Simple, positive steps

- **Consider the location.** Bring the wedding to the guests. If families are on opposite sides of the country, consider throwing two smaller parties.
- **Think small.** A short guest list reduces travel, food, and waste, and is more economical.
- **Keep it simple.** Align the wedding with your values. A reception doesn't need to be in a rented space with a catered dinner.
- **Serve local, organic food.** Consider vegetarian food, and select local wine and beer.
- **Reduce, reuse, recycle.**
  - Exchange rings inherited from family or fashioned from already owned items ([www.greenkarat.com](http://www.greenkarat.com)).
  - Rent wedding and bridesmaids' gowns, or buy used from consignment shops.
  - Consider reusable tableware and decorations ([www.somethingborrowedpdx.com](http://www.somethingborrowedpdx.com)).
  - Have a system for reuse, recycling, and composting.
- **Use seasonal, organic flowers:** <http://earthleaders.org/ecotips/Fresh%20Cut%20Flowers.pdf>.
- **Instead of gifts, suggest charity options.**

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