

5 Inexpensive Ways to Give Green Gifts for a Healthy Planet

It's easy to spend lots of green going green. Everywhere you turn someone is selling the latest organic, natural, free-range, eco-friendly products at not-so-friendly prices. These green gifts are guaranteed to be good for the earth and easy on your holiday budget.

1. Go green with digital cards and gifts.

It's wonderful to hear from family and friends at the holidays, but all those cards, letters, and envelopes do generate piles of trash. Electronic cards and letters also convey your love and friendship, along with your concerns for the earth. Some digital gifts are totally waste-free, such as music, video, and book downloads that you order online with an electronic gift card.

2. Go green with reusable bags.

Bags are big business these days - just check out www.reusablebags.com/. You can buy bags of every size, shape, and design and probably match them to any wardrobe from sleek black to wild animal prints. You don't need to spend a lot of green here either. Visit this site for big, strong bags made from recycled bottles for only \$6 each www.pattyreeddesigns.com/instatote/.

3. Go green with a waste-free lunch.

There is every reason to cut back on the lunch box/bag waste, since the EPA estimates that we toss over 380 billion plastic bags, sacks and wraps every year. The cool new lunch box options for under \$25 come in every color, shape, and material, including insulated bags, plastic laptop boxes, and stainless steel containers, plus washable sandwich bags.

4. Go green with recycled fun for kids.

Let your imagination go wild with this one! The basic idea is to create a customized gift box of re-purposed items for a special child on your gift list. Create a dress up treasure chest for a little princess with gently worn fancy clothes, boas, costume jewelry, and other sparklers. Or put together a puppet show box with all the materials to make puppets and their props.

5. Go green with gardening stuff.

The dark days of mid-winter are a delightful time to start thinking about spring planting and summer harvest. There are obvious choices, such a new tools or a sun hat, as well as many gardening books. Check out the free, online handouts at <http://gardenguide.montana.edu/>) and share those of interest along with a few seed packs and maybe a pair of gardening gloves.