



# LIVING GREEN

ONE + ONE + ONE = A MOVEMENT

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# WEDDING SCENE GONE GREEN

**T**here were more than 2 million U.S. weddings in the past year. That's a whole lot of eating, drinking, and merriment for the happy couple and their guests, resulting in a whole lot of waste generated in wine bottles, beer and soda cans, paper use, flowers, favors, leftover food, and energy.

The good news is that more and more people are realizing the incredible amount of resources that go into a wedding (food, travel, energy) and taking steps to reduce waste, which, in turn, ensures the longevity of the planet for future generations.

"In the last year and a half or so, there have been more people open to green events," says Laura Fryberger, owner/event designer at Flings Event Design, a local company with a green focus. "When I used to tell people that I did green events, they worried that I'd be putting some kind of hippie spin into [their party]. Now people are happy to hear that their event can be more eco-friendly."

Fryberger says any event can be green, from graduation parties to baby showers, wedding celebrations to big corporate bashes. And even if you are only able to incorporate a few environmentally sound elements into your event, some is better than none.

"Don't be discouraged if not everything is green. There has to be a balance," Fryberger says. "Anything you do with the environment in mind is a step in the right direction."

## TIPS ON HOW TO PLAN A PARTY THE GREEN WAY:

### INVITATIONS

- For more casual events, consider an evite invitation.
- For more formal events, use 100 percent recycled paper and soy-based inks (Fryberger recommends local company Lunalux Letterpress Stationery).
- Instead of a response card with an envelope, use a postcard.

### VENUE

- Look into venues such as museums, arboretums, and art galleries, where by renting the space, you're also supporting a nonprofit.
- Hold the ceremony and reception at the same site, or within walking distance.
- Use shuttles or hybrid rental cars to bring guests from the ceremony to the reception.

### FOOD

- If you find a venue where you can bring in your own caterer, find a company that supports local farms, uses organic ingredients, and serves seasonal fare (Fryberger recommends Chowgirls or Rachael Rubin Catering).
- Ask your caterer if they can prepare an organic menu, and if so, put out table cards explaining to guests why you felt it was important to serve an organic meal (and where the food came from).
- Set up glass, plastic, and cardboard recycling stations for your caterers and figure out where the recycling will go after the event.
- Donate your extra edibles to a local food bank or food recovery program such as Second Harvest Heartland.

### FLOWERS

- Order potted plants instead of cut flowers and give them to guests at the end of the evening, or donate them to nursing homes or hospitals.
- If you have your heart set on cut flowers, find a local, independent florist and request flowers that are local, fair-trade, or pesticide free.

### ATTIRE

- Borrow accessories instead of buying new, or wear vintage jewelry.
- Let your bridesmaids know about organizations that give dresses to underprivileged teens at prom time (glassslipperproject.org or fairygodmothersinc.com), in case they'd like to donate their dress.

### BEVERAGES

- Buy organic wine and spirits (Fryberger recommends local company Etica Fair Trade Wine).
- Support local breweries such as Summit, Surly, August Schell's, Finnegan's, or any of the beers listed as members of the Minnesota Craft Brewers' Guild (mncraftbrew.org). Make signs explaining that the beer is local.
- Skip bottles or cans and buy kegs. Beer or root beer from the tap saves bottles and caps and reduces shipping impacts. Use reusable glass instead of plastic cups.

### OTHER

Work with your photographer to create a digital album rather than a printed proof book; use real linens instead of paper tablecloths or napkins; use soy-based candles (they burn longer and cleaner); rent whenever possible (Apres Party and Tent Rental and Midway Party Rental are great local sources); use glasses and pitchers of water instead of plastic water bottles; plan a daytime event to utilize natural lighting; cut out favors altogether.

*For more information about Flings Event Design, visit [www.flingseventdesign.com](http://www.flingseventdesign.com) or call 612-789-1205.*

