

Green Valentine's Day

When it comes to Valentine's Day, green is the new red! Think local and organic when buying a gift for your loved one.

Many of the traditional gifts shared during this Holiday have significant environmental impacts. Here is a list of things you may not have known about traditional gifts and ways that you can reduce these impacts and celebrate an environmentally conscious Valentine's Day. Best of all, remember to emphasize romance, not consumption!

Chocolate

Chocolate has travelled long distances before it is conveniently available in most stores in Canada. Also, pesticides are widely used to grow conventional cocoa beans. In fact, according to [Pesticide Awareness Network](#), the amount of pesticide used to grow cocoa is second only to cotton. Not to mention the extravagant packaging!

Environmentally conscious chocolate:

Since cocoa is not grown in Canada, buying local is not an option. However, you can look for items that have little packaging and are preferably [Fair Trade](#) certified, organic and shade grown. Tip: If you purchase Fair Trade certified chocolate, there are pretty good chances it will also be organic and/or shade grown¹.

Flowers

Conventional flowers are grown in foreign countries and travel long distances to get here. Environmental standards may be less stringent in some of these countries which can result in heavy use of pesticides, harming the environment, the workers' health and your own.

Environmentally conscious flowers:

To reduce the environmental impact, you can purchase organic, locally grown flowers this Holiday. Better yet, why not offer your loved one a potted plant for a longer lasting gift? If local flowers are not available, you can always purchase Fair Trade certified flowers.

Wine

Depending on the wine you choose, it may have travelled long distances to get to your local liquor store and pesticides may also have been used during production.

Environmentally conscious wine:

To reduce the environmental impact, choose a local wine. Consult the [Wines of Canada](#) website for a list of wines available in your province. Buy organic wines; Wines of Canada also lists the organic options available in different provinces. If the selection of local wine is not to your liking, you can always purchase Fair Trade certified wine.

What about wine packaging?

An interesting debate on wine packaging is currently taking place... [On one hand](#), bag-in-box wine seems to be the best choice since the packaging takes less energy to produce and transport which results in a much smaller carbon footprint. [On the other hand](#), end-of-life recycling options for bottled wine seem to be the better of the two. When in doubt, buy local!

Candles

Conventional candles are made with paraffin wax which is a petroleum by-product, and is therefore non-renewable. Furthermore, these candles produce black soot when they burn which affects the air quality in your home. Depending on where your candle was produced, some candles may have a lead wick that further decreases indoor air quality.

Environmentally conscious candles:

Soy bean candles and beeswax candles are made with renewable resources and they burn cleaner and longer. Many stores offer alternative candles produced in Canada.

Jewelry

Why buy new jewelry, when you can choose pre-owned jewelry from a vintage shop or pawn shop? Another option is to buy recycled jewelry, such as jewelry made from post-consumer gold.

Keywords: valentine's day gift; valentine's ideas, green valentines, eco-friendly valentine's day

Related links

[Deep Green chocolate love](#)

[The footprint of flowers: carbon and social](#)

[Wines of Canada](#)

[How to go Green: Wine](#)

[Green Wine international competition](#)

[Green gifting guide: Eco jewelry](#)

¹ Shade-grown cocoa is grown under a canopy of trees; therefore it does not require the clearing of forests for cultivation. This method is also known as bird-friendly.