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Eco-Chic Weddings: Simple Tips To Plan An Earth-Friendly, Socially Responsible, Affordable Green Wedding



Synopsis

Add Style to Your Wedding and Stay True to Your Beliefs Planning your wedding can be the best time to be eco-friendly. The wedding industry has a huge impact on the global economy and the environment, as wedding parties spend over \$125 billion a year in the U.S. alone. Eco-Chic Weddings presents the quick, simple, and easy-to-follow tips you need to make your wedding socially responsible. This indispensable guide gives you the choice, comfort, and chance to share your own unique style for a truly memorable wedding. Going green doesn't mean you need to spend the green. Eco-Chic Weddings provides all the resources you need to create your environmentally friendly and fun celebration on a budget, such as:

- * Use in-season flowers to save on price and reduce the environmental cost of shipping in non-local flowers.
- * Skip the save-the-date card and save some trees and a lot of hassle.
- * Don't purchase items you will only use at the wedding; instead, invest in dresses, shoes, or glassware you will alter and reuse.

From the location to the dress to the menu, there are dozens of easy ways to make your wedding beautiful and still reflect your personal beliefs in sustainable living. Eco-Chic Weddings will show you how to craft your perfect day.

Book Information

Paperback: 168 pages

Publisher: Hatherleigh Press (January 2, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1578262402

ISBN-13: 978-1578262403

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.5 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,683,680 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #72 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Weddings > Budget #4327 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Sustainable Living #32425 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design

Customer Reviews

Emily Elizabeth Anderson is a freelance writer, certified yoga instructor, and an advocate of sustainable style. She has worked for Vanity Fair, Donna Karan New York, and Martha Stewart Living, where she was the Event Director. Emily also studied interior design at the Parsons School

of Design. Eco-Chic Weddings is the result of Emily's background in fashion, beauty, and design, and her passion for conscious consumerism. She lives in New York City with her husband David.

INTRODUCTION: Your wedding, Your world Welcome to Eco-Chic Weddings. I'm glad you're here. Eco-chic is the belief that you can have a beautiful, stylish, well-designed life, and also make good consumer choices. Choices that will benefit the environment and society, as opposed to purchasing items that are produced at the expense of under-paid or mistreated workers, or were made using a toxic or damaging production process. Eco-Chic Weddings is the first comprehensive guide for the soon-to-be-married set interested in making chic, stylish buying decisions that are also eco-minded and socially responsible. Eco-chic buying decisions, to be specific. And as the amount of money spent on weddings increases year by year, more and more products and services are available for these couples. And the growth in weddings each year is indeed dramatic – there have been 200 million more weddings in the past year than there were in the year 2000. According to a recent survey by The Condé Nast Bridal Group, the amount of money we spend on weddings has increased by 100% since 1990. There are many possible reasons for this increase in wedding spending. Books and magazines encourage us to create special, unique events for our families and friends. Indeed, for many people, planning a wedding can be one of the most creative, exciting projects in their lives. Choosing the colors, the dress, the flowers – this is a lot of fun, and it isn't something most of us get to do on a regular basis. While the wedding business has become such a prevalent part of today's marketplace, there has also been another consumer-trend taking place – the eco-friendly, sustainable movement. With the popularity of the "green" movement, every day we see more and more options and ideas that are environmentally and socially conscious, ideas with style and integrity. And yes, many of the ideas are perfectly suited for your wedding. Eco-Chic Weddings has gathered these ideas, products, and resources to make it easy for you to make your wedding as environmentally responsible, socially aware, and eco-chic as possible. Because I believe that you can have it all – the look and the style that you want, and better choices about where you spend your money that help you feel good about how you impact the global community. Planning your wedding is a great time to make the decision to be more sustainable – the decisions you make now can continue into your married life, when and if you become parents, and so on. Eco-Chic Weddings sees this moment in your life as the ideal time to take a critical look at your purchasing choices, where your dollars are

going, and your impact on the world. The goal of this book is to help you lay a solid groundwork for your future by guiding you through the wedding planning process. This book will answer two very important questions: WHY should you have an eco-chic wedding, and HOW can you be eco-chic? Well, we all know that planning a wedding means spending money. The average cost of the American wedding is now \$27,825 (in 1990, it was \$15,208). So let's take a quick look at where you might be spending your cash:

Category	Percentage
Reception	42%
Engagement/Wedding Rings	20%
Honeymoon	12%
Photo/Video	8%
Bride and Groom	7%
Apparel	7%
Flowers	7%
Invitations	5%
Cake	3%
Music (Ceremony/Reception)	3%
Ceremony	1%
Transportation	1%

Based on this breakdown, most couples spend the largest portion of their dollars on the Reception, but a hefty sum is also spent on just the engagement ring. In the three categories of Reception, Rings, and the Honeymoon, the total amount spent on weddings in the U.S. are:

Category	Amount
Honeymoons	\$8 billion
Diamond Engagement Rings	\$7 billion
Wedding Registries	\$19 billion

[Source: Condé Nast Bridal Group's American Wedding Study 2006]

You might be shocked to learn that, according to a recent survey by the Fairchild Bridal Group, wedding spending in the U.S. has gone from \$5 billion in 2002 to \$125 billion in 2005, with 295 million wedding guests attending the nation's 2.1 million weddings this year. It stands to reason that weddings have a unique impact on the environment and the global economy. So while you may think that this is a really bad time for you to be a responsible global citizen, it actually is the perfect time. Perfect because you are planning your wedding, but you're also planning your future—so many decisions are being made, such as where you will live, how you will live, what sort of things you will have in your new married life. This is the deal—as we, the consumer, demonstrate a demand for more sustainable products in the marketplace, businesses will pay attention, and wanting to get our business, they will be encouraged to adopt better, healthier ways of producing and selling goods. Some people refer to this as “voting with your pocketbook,” which is exactly what it is. You, bride- or groom-to-be, can start by choosing products for your wedding made by companies and countries that practice conscious commerce, that participate in fair trade, and who are making a difference in the world—whether through making contributions to environmental efforts or supporting emerging economies. And selfishly, this will be a better, healthier path for you to take, because your unique, non-typical choices will result in a wedding that truly is a reflection of who you are, what your values are, and what you believe in. It is my hope that this book will help you see that there really isn't a right or a wrong way to have a wedding—what it all comes down to is personal choice. With Eco-Chic Weddings, I offer to you the simplest ideas that you can

incorporate into your wedding, so that you, busy bride or groom, don't have to do a lot of work to make a difference. To help you make eco-chic decisions as you plan the wedding of your dreams, this book is organized into 3 key areas: ways to reduce, ways to reuse, and ways to recycle. Thus, each chapter includes simple ways to reduce your impact on the environment, such as not wasting food or simplifying the amount of flower arrangements you have; how to select items that can be reused after the wedding, such as selecting shoes you can wear for other occasions after the wedding (go ahead, get those Manolos if you will wear them for years to come); and finally, ways to recycle items you use at the wedding or how you can purchase items that have been recycled, such as using recycled paper for your invitations or purchasing a vintage dress you have a seamstress refashion to suit your style. Each person on the planet has their own "footprint" that represents the amount of energy they consume, waste they produce, and impact their buying decisions make on the global community. By choosing sustainable products, fair-trade items, or locally produced goods, you can reduce your individual "footprint." You can reduce the amount you consume by simplifying your choices, staying within your budget, avoiding going into debt, and reusing items you purchase for your wedding rather than buying one-time-use things. An example of a one-time-use item would be wedding shoes you will only wear once and then throw away. You can also ensure that items used for your wedding are recycled, rather than thrown away. Let's talk about specific ways you can Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle for your wedding.

Reduce According to the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), the U.S. is producing more landfill waste now than ever before. One estimate shows that between the years 1960 and 1997, total U.S. Municipal trash, or landfill waste, increased an astounding 146.5%. What are some basic ways you can reduce the amount of trash you produce?

- Simplify:** Whenever you can, wherever you can, without compromising your style, know that fewer details to attend to will translate into more fun, more time for your guests, less stress, and less over-consumption. Avoid buying products with excess packaging, including gifts. Did you know you can request no wrapping paper for your gifts?
- Be an Individual:** Opt out of the idea that you "have" to do anything—for example, the wedding favor. The often-tacky, one-time-use wedding favors have become commonplace, and 99.9% of the time, the guests toss the favor in the trash post-event. I myself did not give my guests a favor; instead, we made a donation to Habitat for Humanity. Upon arrival, our guests read about this donation on a little sign at the seating card table, which made them smile, and that is something they won't throw away.
- Prioritize:** Decide what your priorities are and where you want to focus your resources. Want that fabulous Carmen Marc Valvo? Then maybe you can

reduce in other areas—like the flowers or your transportation. Whatever you do, don't go into debt for the sake of having an over-the-top wedding. For instance, I made sure to choose a location that had a décor we found pleasing, eliminating the need to spend extra money, time, and resources decorating the space.

Reuse When you buy items that can be reused in their present form, you are practicing what experts refer to as the "cradle to cradle" philosophy: Make sure what you purchase can be reused and is of good quality so as to have a long and useful life. Important steps you can take to reuse as much as possible:

- **Borrow:** Check to see if you can use borrowed, rented, or secondhand items before you purchase new ones. I borrowed a beautiful pearl bracelet from my good friend Tara—which was even more special because she couldn't be at the wedding.
- **Make Style a Priority:** Timeless, classic design is an excellent way to select items for your wedding that won't go out of style.
- **Avoid Wedding-Themed Items:** For more than one reason, not the least of which is the fact that "wedding" items (shoes, bags, shawls, etc.) automatically cost more money than non-wedding items. Another reason to avoid wedding-centric goods: with almost 100% certainty, you will never use that item again. Stick to pretty, tasteful, well-designed items that are perfect for a "wedding" because you say they are.
- **Recycle** Recycling is the process of making something new out of an old item or material, such as turning discarded wine bottles into drinking glasses, or taking an old wedding dress and remaking it into a new design. Buildings and other structures can also be recycled, such as turning an old school into a hotel, or transforming a trolley car into a bus. Be a champion of recycling and follow these basic tenets:
- **Check for the Recycling Label:** Buy recycled products and products that are made out of recyclable materials. Always check for the recycled/recyclable label.
- **Set a Good Example:** Ensure your reception location, florist, caterer, and anyone else involved with producing your wedding practices good recycling behavior.
- **Support Businesses Doing the Right Thing:** You can make a positive contribution to sustainable business simply by hosting your wedding at a venue that has been recycled, such as a mansion that is now operating as a family restaurant. You can also support designers who use their ingenuity to recycle non-virgin resources, such as one-of-a-kind journals as wedding favors, which have been made from recycled books, or even your great-aunt's wedding dress that a talented seamstress has recreated to be your own unique design.

Very helpful book. Read it in a day and then passed it on to the bride. This book was filled with great ideas for the bride who wants to make a low impact on the environment. Lots of things that I had not

thought of. Great questions to ask vendors.

some good ideas to save money.

Emily Anderson is a true pioneer. This was the first green wedding book to show that you can go green without sacrificing style. She changed the way people think about eco-friendly weddings and I am extremely grateful to her for that. Every choice makes a difference. Go green!

The book is interesting in its approach. I was looking for something that would provide the groundwork for my daughter's upcoming 'green' wedding which is to be eco-friendly, green and carbon neutral. However, there is much repetition and redundancy in the book, focusing on many small things rather than the bigger picture of environmental sustainability and how to incorporate it into the wedding plans. Some of the discussions seemed half finished. The book is definitely for someone who is a novice at doing things environmentally sound rather than one who has had experience in environmental sustainability projects and issues. The chapter about honeymoons is the best part of the book - excellent recommendations and descriptions with phone numbers, web sites, etc. Author provided numerous Web sites which can be helpful during the planning stages. Many of the ideas focused on having the bride and friends make things for the wedding. While that can be a nice touch, not everyone is capable of or wants to do that at such a stressful time. They would much rather work with a wedding planner to achieve the eco-chic wedding. Working with a wedding planner was not addressed well in the book. It would be advantageous for the author to attempt to find wedding planners who may specialize in 'green' weddings or provide information on how the planner can educate herself/himself in the ins and outs of sustainability.

Yoga instructor Emily Elizabeth Anderson presents *Eco-Chic Weddings: Simple Tips to Plan an Environmentally Friendly, Socially Responsible, Affordable, and Stylish Celebration*, a guide to saving money as well as being environmentally friendly when celebrating that special day. Tips include supporting a non-profit organization through one's choice of wedding venue, such as museums, landmark buildings, or other cultural centers; using materials that can be recycled or composted such as organic flowers that won't introduce toxic elements into the environment; avoiding the purchase of wedding-only items and instead investing in dresses, shoes, and glassware that can be altered and reused; and much more. Additional chapters are filled with advice for ecology-friendly married life, from using compact fluorescent lightbulbs to conserve energy to

buying green furniture (not stuff made from pressure-treated wood) to putting air conditioning and heater on timers. Enthusiastically recommended for wedding planners as well as prospective brides and grooms.

My fiancé and I both work in a green field and try to live relatively low impact. We were very excited to see a book that addressed many of our concerns about having a wedding and a honeymoon. This book is an excellent resource and has inspired us not only to have a green wedding but to live more responsibly!

Would have been much better in a hardcover with photos. Lots of tips, but no visual interest, samples, or excitement.

This is a great book for anyone who cares about the impact of our actions on the environment. Another way to feel good about one of the most special events of your life. The info is up-to-date and comprehensive. This is going to be a big help!

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