

# Green Gift Ideas

Brought to you by EnAct (Environmental Action Teams) [www.enactwi.org](http://www.enactwi.org)

**Green gifts are creative and affordable presents that celebrate the natural world, conserve energy and water, and encourage environmental awareness.**

Several local stores are mentioned as retailers for specific gifts. However, we encourage the reader to contact local co-ops, hardware stores, and other specialty stores as well.

## Energy-saving gifts keep on giving!

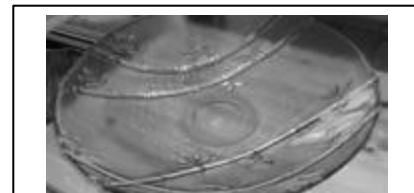
- Solar accent lights for your patio or sidewalk
- Motion or light sensors for outdoor lights
- Kinetically powered flashlight, [www.solargoods.com](http://www.solargoods.com)
- Compact Fluorescent Torchiere Lamps, to replace energy-guzzling halogens
- Compact Fluorescent bulbs – See vendors at [www.mge.com/home/lighting/buy.htm](http://www.mge.com/home/lighting/buy.htm)
- Switch to light emitting diode (LED) Holiday lights. LED's use only 0.04 watts per bulb, compared to the more common miniature bulbs that use ten times as much electricity. The older standard C7 bulbs gobble up more than 100 times as much **per bulb!** Prices range from \$10 to \$16 dollars per set at Bruce Co., 2830 W Beltline Hwy, Middleton.
- Battery charger with rechargeable batteries
- A programmable thermostat keeps your house warm when you're home and saves energy when you're away or asleep.
- A manual push lawnmower as an alternative to a gas-powered mower



Compact fluorescent torchiere floor lamps are safer than halogens and use a fraction of the energy.

## Environmentally Safe Gift Choices

- Recycled glass dishes and décor, from Home Environment, 216 N. Henry St., Madison, WI
- Organic cotton towels, linens, and baby accessories, also from Home Environment
- Compostable pens for garden notes, made of corn plastic, [www.composters.com](http://www.composters.com)
- Beeswax candles emit less indoor air pollution than regular wax candles and are available from local producers
- Petrochemical-free health and body care products and cosmetics are available at Community Pharmacy, 341 State St., Madison WI
- Outdoor furniture such as at [www.eco-furniture.com](http://www.eco-furniture.com)



Recycled glass bowl from Home Environment

### Gifts to Reduce Waste

- Compost crock for the kitchen counter. Some models have a built-in deodorizer.
- Edible birdfeeders leave no waste.
- Gift certificate for reusable building materials from the Habitat Restore, (608) 661-2813
- Cloth napkins reduce waste and add a classy touch to your dining room
- Cloth or other fun shopping bags
- Gift of time: make up coupons for babysitting, painting, or cooking a dinner.



### Gifts for Gardeners

- Organic cotton garden gloves, \$10, 1-800-609-8593 or [www.organicclothes.com](http://www.organicclothes.com)
- Bat house, from the Organization for Bat Conservation, [www.batroost.com](http://www.batroost.com) \$35 - \$90
- Organic fertilizer – consider Vegan Mix Fertilizer or Worm Castings, from [www.abundantearth.com](http://www.abundantearth.com)
- Water – saving irrigation systems
  - Aqua cones turn your plastic bottles into drip irrigation systems, \$12.95 [www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com)
  - Drip irrigation kits with tubing and fittings [www.dripworksusa.com](http://www.dripworksusa.com)
  - Hose or irrigation timer, [www.dripworksusa.com](http://www.dripworksusa.com)
- Self-watering window box to hold water in containers, [www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com)
- Water Ring, a life preserver for trees: [www.watersavers.com](http://www.watersavers.com)
- Black locust planks to make raised beds (Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*, not Honey locust *Gleditsia triacanthos*) is a rot resistant wood that is a safe alternative to treated lumber and can be purchased at your local sawmill
- Certificate for soil and plant fertility testing, or disease diagnosis (UW Extension Office)
- Compost and Worm Bins, from [www.composters.com](http://www.composters.com). Red wiggler worms will eat your compost. Get them at your local bait shop or order them online at [www.wormwoman.com](http://www.wormwoman.com).
- Bird netting to protect your fruit trees or berries
- Floating row covers or a cold frame to extend the garden season (can also be made from old windows)
- Rain barrel to collect rainwater for your garden. If store bought, they cost about \$80. Make your own using instructions at [www.mde.state.md.us/assets/document/water\\_cons/rainbarrel.pdf](http://www.mde.state.md.us/assets/document/water_cons/rainbarrel.pdf)
- Master Gardener or Master Composter Courses (contact the Dane County Extension office at (608) 224-3700)
- Coupon to help with garden work, pruning, landscape design, plant I D, or for delivery of compost
- Offer to take a friend to visit a local arboretum or botanic garden.

### Gifts You Can Make

- Wreaths and ornaments from grapevines, boughs, cones, and seed pods. Visit [www.mountainvalleygrowers.com/wreathmaking.htm](http://www.mountainvalleygrowers.com/wreathmaking.htm) for instructions
- Echinacea tinctures for cold season, or scented lotions and lip balm (for how-to, see *Healing Wise* by Susun Weed, Ash Tree Publishing)
- Oil and vinegar infused with herbs such as rosemary, thyme and sage, and bottled in vintage bottles
- Homemade bath salts with sea salt, dried flowers or herbs, or essential oils
- Draft Stoppers or "Door Snakes" to prevent drafts under doors. These are easy to make from scrap fabric and can be filled with rice or sand.
- Homemade jams or sauces in attractively decorated reused jars
- A homemade cake or cookies
- Install a clothesline for a friend or neighbor
- Start a compost bin for a friend or neighbor. See [www.composters.com/main.shtml](http://www.composters.com/main.shtml) for ideas

### Gifts of Travel

- Bike lights or other bike accessories
- Bicycling maps: Madison Transportation Options map (call Madison Environmental Group, (608) 280-0800), City of Madison Bicycling Map (608) 266-6225 or Dane County Bicycling Map (608) 266-4137. Maps may be available at local bike shops and local libraries.
- Coupon for a bike tune-up at your local bike shop
- A book of bus tickets, or a monthly bus pass. \$9 for 10 tickets. See [www.mymetrobus.com](http://www.mymetrobus.com) or call 266-4466.
- Gift certificate for an eco-friendly hotel or bed & breakfast. Some ideas at [www.betterworldclub.com](http://www.betterworldclub.com)
- Better World Club offers an alternative roadside assistance service comparable to AAA, and they offer the only bicycle roadside assistance program. They donate 1% of annual revenues to

environmental causes. 1-866-304-7540 or

[www.betterworldclub.com](http://www.betterworldclub.com)

- A weekend car rental gift certificate for your car-free friends.

### Gifts of Good Times

- Gift certificate for a favorite restaurant
- Coupon for a UW mini-course at 262-3156 or <https://wiscinfo.doit.wisc.edu/minicourses/default2.asp>
- Tickets to a show or a sporting event
- Gift certificate for a visit to a day spa or a massage
- Coupon for canoe or kayak rental (Carl and John's Paddlin' [www.paddlin.com](http://www.paddlin.com) (608) 384-0300)
- Gift coupon for ice skate or ski rental, wrapped up with a package of organic fair trade hot cocoa. Call Camp Randall (608) 263-6566 or Madison Ice Arena (608) 246-4512 for indoor skating information. Organic fair trade hot cocoa is available at Willy Street Co-op, Mifflin Co-op, area cafés and specialty stores.

#### Organic & Fair Trade Chocolate

When most people bite into a candy bar, they probably don't consider where the chocolate they enjoy comes from. In the Ivory Coast, which grows 43% of the world's cocoa beans, child slavery is prevalent.

Fair Trade products ensure that artisans and farmers receive fair wages and good employment opportunities.

Furthermore, organic chocolate is often shade-grown to preserve endangered rainforest ecosystems.

Fair Trade Chocolate in Madison:

- Coffee Shops (Steep & Brew, Michaelangelo's, etc.)
- Willy Street & Mifflin Coops
- SERRV

### Gifts that Grow

- Indoor flowering bulbs such as amaryllis or paper white narcissus
- Over-the-rail planters for apartments or condos
- Cuttings from your favorite houseplants, transplanted in a colorful decorated flower pot
- Heirloom garden seeds from Seed Savers at [www.seedsavers.com](http://www.seedsavers.com). How about black tomatoes or white cucumbers?

### Gifts to Eat and Drink

- Local or organic wine and cheese. Try [www.wiswine.com](http://www.wiswine.com) and [www.houseofwisconsincheese.com](http://www.houseofwisconsincheese.com)
- A reusable coffee mug for the coffee drinker on the go.
- Homemade jams or sauces in attractively decorated reused jars
- A homemade cake or cookies
- Buy a share in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm. Visit [www.macsac.org](http://www.macsac.org) for a list of local CSA farms or call (608) 226-0300.
- Make a gift basket with organic Fair Trade Coffee or tea and some vintage tea or coffee cups.

### For Kids

- A set of coupons entitling your child to a full day spent with you in a way that he or she chooses (for example, visit the Milwaukee Zoo or Henry Vilas Zoo, or go ice skating).
- A spending allowance for a day of clothes shopping at St. Vincent's de Paul or Wear it Again
- Magnifying glass to identify insects in the yard and garden
- Recycled crayons (Home Environment)
- Organic cotton stuffed animals (Home Environment)
- Organic cotton clothing
- Classes at the Madison Children's Museum. Call (608) 256-6445 or see [www.madisonchildrensmuseum.org](http://www.madisonchildrensmuseum.org)
- Take your curious child to one of the UW Arboretum's kids' programs. Call (608) 263-7888 for details.
- Take your young outdoors enthusiast to one of the Aldo Leopold Nature Center's family programs. Call (608) 221-0404 for more information.
- Help your child befriend an animal from the Henry Vilas Zoo in Madison. [www.vilaszoo.org](http://www.vilaszoo.org), or (608) 258-9490. For more ideas about helping animals with your children, visit [www.justgive.org/html/ways/giftideas.html](http://www.justgive.org/html/ways/giftideas.html)
- Madison School & Community Recreation classes for kids at [www.madison.k12.wi.us/mscr](http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/mscr)



### **Gifts of Giving**

- Heifer International donates livestock to impoverished communities around the world. Choose from cows, rabbits, chickens, bees, and more, at [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org), or call 1-800-698-2511.
- Madison Audubon Society has a donation program to purchase, preserve and restore local wetlands and prairies, 255-BI RD or [www.madisonaudubon.org/audubon](http://www.madisonaudubon.org/audubon)
- Protect an acre of rainforest through the World Land Trust ([www.worldlandtrust.org](http://www.worldlandtrust.org)) or Protect-an-Acre at [www.rainforestweb.org](http://www.rainforestweb.org)
- What is the gift recipient's favorite non-profit organization? Renew their membership or make an additional donation in their name. (e.g. International Crane Foundation, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Wetlands Association)
- The United Way Wish List ([www.uwdc.org](http://www.uwdc.org)) or Isthmus Wish List ([www.thedailypage.com](http://www.thedailypage.com)) provide directories of local non-profit needs.

### **Gifts for a Reader**

- Buy a first edition used book by your friend's favorite author
- Choose from many sustainability themed books and magazines (such as *Better World Handbook*, *Radical Simplicity*, *Yes!*, *Utne*, *E Magazine*, etc) at [www.newsociety.com](http://www.newsociety.com)

### **Other Green Holiday Tips**

- Reuse gift wrap, ribbons, bows, boxes, and bags
- Cut up old greeting cards to make reused gift tags
- Entertain with dishes and glassware rather than paper and plastic. This is cheaper in the long run and more elegant. If you don't have enough for parties, borrow from a neighbor or buy odds and ends at your local second-hand store.

### **Other Green Gift Resources**

Center for a New American Dream [www.newdream.org](http://www.newdream.org)