



green is the new white

By Fern Glazer

It's all over the news and on the web: The "green" wedding has arrived. You're thinking about getting in on the eco-friendly movement, but is trying to find a way to be kind to the planet without putting a cramp in your style enough to make you elope?

Don't book those tickets to Vegas yet. Americans' renewed concern about the environment has spawned a cottage industry designed to help you plan a wedding that is as much about you as it is about saving the planet. Whether you want to go totally or just a shade of green, you can now easily find everything you need — from sophisticated organic food to elegant sustainable flowers. So forget about getting hitched at the Elvis Chapel and read on to find out how to go green with style.

"I pretend we're not doing a green wedding ... I plan the dream scenario, then

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it's my job to figure out how to make it work," says Danielle Venokur, founder of dvGreen, a new Manhattan-based sustainable events company that specializes in producing stylish events with a reduced ecological and carbon footprint.

Though there are many ways to be green at your wedding, industry experts say the most

popular way by far is via food. For instance, instead of burning up fuel shipping supplies from remote farms, a growing number of caterers and restaurants are now partnering with local farmers and designing menus featuring locally grown organic produce, fish, poultry and meat.

Among those offering such options is Exquisite Food, an East Hampton event planning and catering company. For more than a decade, chef Simon Sheridan has been helping clients plan and execute sustainable weddings and

other events using, among other things, locally grown organic ingredients.

While some couples may worry that "organic" and "local" also mean "bland" and "boring," Sheridan, best known for his gourmet food, says nothing is further from the truth.

"I only use the best possible ingredients," he says.


"There's an enormous difference in taste."

Using native, locally grown or seasonal flowers for table centerpieces and bouquets is another way to significantly reduce the impact of your affair, according to Venokur. The vessel for the flowers can be eco-friendly as well. Venokur suggests asking your planner or florist to use vases made of natural materials or recycled glass, or vintage vases sourced from a thrift shop.

For some smaller choices that can have a considerable impact, industry experts suggest:

- Use recycled or tree-free paper invitations.
- Purchase a gown made of natural material, such as silk or hemp, or perhaps buy a vintage gown.
- Forget novelty guest gifts that only end up in the trash. Instead, choose something functional such as beeswax candles or plant seeds.

• Register for eco-friendly and fair trade gifts. In the end, having a green wedding isn't for everyone. Some may not be comfortable with the limitations on their big day, while others are taken aback by the increased costs, which can be as much as 20 percent more.

But remember, even the smallest of efforts to go green can make for a better planet for all newlyweds. 



Above: Ornamental pepper plants and pure beeswax candles from Bee Man Candle Company, in sustainably harvested acacia wood dishes from 3rliving.com.

Right: A sample of tempting organic dishes from Exquisite Food in East Hampton.

