

IN THE LOOP!

Free newsletter of MassRecycle, the Massachusetts Recycling Coalition

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My Green Valentine Ideas for a Romantic and Green Valentine's Day

By Shilpa Jacobie



Image: www.tshirtdujour.com

Valentine's Day is the second biggest holiday of the year, after Christmas. Stores begin stocking up for it in early January. We go from one holiday to the next, piling up, throwing out, and filling landfills. So while red has always been the reigning color of Valentine's Day, it's a good idea to green it up this year.

I'm a hopeless romantic just as much as the next person and I think love should be celebrated all year round not

just once a year. But, here are a few things to think about:

- Hallmark estimates that here in the United States 152 million greeting cards are exchanged for Valentine's Day.
- For florists, Valentine's is the top holiday with roses being the best seller. According to the Society of American Florists, 187 million roses were produced in 2009 just for this day.
- Last year, the Nielsen Company estimated that people would purchase more than 58 million pounds of chocolate during Valentine's week.

What are the greener alternatives to the usual "stuff?"

There's no reason you have to give up the love notes, the candy, the perfume or even the flowers. But try these greener solutions instead:

- Pick up a pair of scissors, let your inner child out, and [craft your own hallmark masterpiece](#).
- To sweeten your loved one's palate, try these favorite fair trade and organic chocolates: [Green & Black's](#), [Divine Milk Chocolate](#) or Massachusetts' own [Equal Exchange](#).
- If it's flowers you fancy, look for locally-grown varieties or organic flowers from [Organic Bouquet](#) or [Diamond Organics](#). Most of the flowers in the US are imported, and that means lots of greenhouse gas emissions.
- See our "Top 5" box for ideas for your romantic dinner and drinks. Light up some candles to set the mood – and to save energy.

Showing someone you care takes some amount of effort, but thoughtful gifts are always appreciated more. If chocolate truffles, flowers, teddy bears, and all things heart-shaped are not your thing, there are still simple, green gifts to give.

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About MassRecycle

MassRecycle is a non-profit statewide coalition that works to:

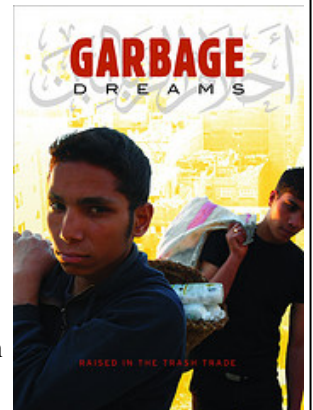
- **Strengthen local recycling programs,**
- **Educate businesses and the public** about sustainable practices,
- **Advocate for recycling** in the Legislature,
- **Reward recycling champions** by presenting annual awards.



Join us at www.massrecycle.org!

Free Recycling Movie Screenings across the State

In the winter and spring of 2010, MassRecycle will partner with a wide range of environmental organizations to show the critically-acclaimed documentary *Garbage Dreams* across the state.



Each event will also include a panel discussion about ways to increase recycling locally and in the state. These events are **free and open to the public** but an [RSVP](#) is requested.

Garbage Dreams follows three teenage boys born into the trash trade and growing up in the world's largest garbage village, on the outskirts of Cairo, Egypt. It is home to 60,000 Zaballeen, Arabic for "garbage people." Far ahead of any modern "green" initiatives, the Zaballeen survive by recycling 80 percent of the trash they collect. When their community is suddenly faced with the globalization of its trade, each of the boys is forced to make a choice that will impact his future and the survival of his community.

See Page 2 for Dates & Locations

My Green Valentine (Continued)

Recycle, reuse and find something unique (a vintage book or classic old movie perhaps) at Half.com, or eBay. If things are getting serious, consider pre-owned jewelry or (if you want to splurge a little) go to a jeweler that uses recycled gold or conflict-free diamonds.

However the most important thing about Valentine's Day is not what you give someone, but the time, effort and the actions that show you care. There's also no reason why you needn't show some love for the environment too, and it's great knowing that you can go green and still not have to give up chocolate.

Top 5 Green Valentine Ideas

- 1. Give a "gift of experience."** Instead of giving your loved one things consider sending him or her on an adventure. How about a massage, a local tour or a live music event? For events in your community visit WhoFish, or sign up for Goldstar and get half-price tickets to Boston's shows and concerts. Avoid gift certificates for cooking classes and gyms unless you are coming along.
- 2. Support an Important Cause.** A gift membership or a donation to an organization supporting your loved one's favorite cause may be good way to show just how thoughtful you are. We would be remiss if we didn't mention MassRecycle, but there is a wide range of deserving causes – from [the relief efforts in Haiti](#) to [local non-profits that need your support](#).
- 3. Share a vegetarian or vegan meal.** Avoid animal cruelty and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by having an organic, [vegetarian or vegan meal at a restaurant](#) or and cook your own meal with produce from your [local farmers' market](#). If you feel like taking this a step further, consider buying a [Community Supported Agriculture \(CSA\)](#) membership or signing up for [Boston Organics](#) – and you will be able to pick up or get regular deliveries of organic produce.
- 4. Try some organic bubbly and biodynamic wines.** Visit [Diamond Organics](#) for a great selection of organic wine, beer, and even Sake or [Appellation NYC](#) and their biodynamic wines for something different.
- 5. Choose recycled, reusable and less toxic products.** A wide range of online retailers offer "greener" options for skin care, massage oils, house wares and other items, but check your local store first for the personal touch you won't get online.

For unexpected and funny Valentine's Day advice, check out [Grist's "Ask Umbra" Column](#).

MassRecycle Member Testimonial:

"I just joined MassRecycle and I think its really cool. The go-to web-based location for all my recycling and waste reduction problems. For instance, I have been wondering for a long time what the percentage of food waste is to total amount of municipal solid waste. I just found out that it is 10% of all solid waste and only 5% of food waste is actually composted now. If we increased the amount of composting we could reduce solid waste by 10%!"

Elizabeth, Georgetown, MA

Join MassRecycle at www.massrecycle.org!

Come to a Free Movie Screening and Discussion!

We invite you to a free showing of *Garbage Dreams* in the following communities. Please don't forget to [RSVP](#)!

Lowell • Tuesday, February 23, 6 PM
Boott Cotton Mills Events Center at the Lowell National Historical Park

Salem • Thursday, February 25, 7 PM
Phillips Library Auditorium / Peabody Essex Museum

Burlington • Sunday, February 28, 2 PM
Burlington Public Library

Quincy • Wednesday, March 3, 7 PM
Atlantic Middle School

Groton • Thursday, March 4, 7 PM
Nashua River Watershed Association River Resource Center

Holyoke • Wednesday, March 10, 6:30 PM
Holyoke Public Library

New locations will be added soon – please check our website. Get full details, watch the trailer and RSVP at

www.massrecycle.org/dreams!

Stay in the Loop! Make sure we email you the next issue!

- Sign up online at www.MassRecycle.org using the "Request in the Loop" button or,
- Send a blank email to info@massrecycle.org with *In the Loop* as the subject line.