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Both flowers and stuffed animals always make nice Valentine's Day gifts.

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Can't Buy Love?

Maybe love can't be bought, but Valentine's gifts never hurt anyone

Valentine's Day is the perfect time for exchanging gifts. Whether you wish to bestow a traditional bouquet of red roses and chocolates upon your beloved or celebrate in a unique way, remember, it's the thought that matters most.

"The greatest Valentine gift I ever got was a homemade card and a daffodil that he picked outside my dorm on the way up," said University student Joanna Levine.

In fact, the very first Valentine card was homemade. In 1415, while the Duke of Orleans was imprisoned, he sent loving greetings to his wife in card form.

This practice continued in the 18th century. Kings and other members of the aristocracy often employed poets to write verses for their paramours. Once the printing press arrived, however, cards became available to the working class as well.

At Jabberwocky Cards and Gifts, 1308 Hilyard St., you can find some of the loveliest cards in town. They also sell confetti in the shapes of cupids, hearts, xs and os for 75 cents a scoop.

"People like to put some inside the cards," said owner Vicky Leppmann. "When the card is opened, the confetti falls out."

If you want to be more original, you can create your own gift by filling up tins with small toys and chocolate hearts or truffles. Tins start at about \$2.75, and mugs filled with Euphoria chocolate hearts with a balloon bouquet sell for \$11.95.

If you're looking for exotic flowers, Bloom's, 1167 Willamette St., offers many varieties. For \$19.95 you can purchase "The Romantic Duo," which includes two cymbidium orchids arranged in a basket with heather.

Other flowers include demrobium orchids, birds-of-paradise, lilacs, daffodils and star-gazer lilies. Running at about \$4.50 per stem, the birds-of-paradise and lilies are less expensive than roses and more colorful and striking.

"The star-gazer lily is gorgeous and appropriate too," said owner Ben Raogh. "It's a white lily with a red center."

Eugene's Flower Home, 610 E. 13th Ave., will sell roses and theme bouquets. "Buttons and Bows" is a bouquet of carnations with bows on the stems. "Love Nest" is a more natural looking arrangement with miniature carnations and a bird in a nest made with grayish moss," explained manager Laurie Brooks Headley.

At Eddie's Flowers, 1400 Willamette St., you can arrange for a balloon basket to be delivered for \$15. And if you can't afford a dozen roses for \$50, you can always pick up a few stems.

Books make great gifts, too. Both the University Bookstore and Smith Family Bookstore, 768 E. 13th Ave., are featuring books of love poems, love songs and fiction.

Most people also like to give chocolate or pastries. The Fall Creek Bakery, 881 E. 13th Ave., will sell heart-shaped cookies for \$1.50. They will also feature six-inch heart-shaped cakes for \$10.95 each — perfect for two to share.

At Prince Puckler's, 861 Willamette St., you can get a double scoop sundae for \$2.50 throughout the whole Valentine weekend.

Other interesting gifts include fairy chimas from Cobblestones, 175 E. Broadway, or relaxing nature tapes for \$10.95.

One suggestion I have is to make your own cards with homemade paper. To make your own paper, shred some paper (preferably used paper) and then put in a blender with some water until it looks like a pulp. Spread this mixture on a screen. The water will drip down and you'll soon be left with natural-looking paper. Cut in heart shapes if you desire.

Dried flowers or homemade potpourri are more natural alternatives.

Cooking a romantic dinner for two can be more fun than going out. Or bake some chocolate chip cookies substituting chunks of candy bars and truffles for chips. The possibilities are endless.

—Christina Komeshtian

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