



THE OAK GROVE
DOUBLE TREE
IS ONE OF FOUR
CEREMONY SITES
AT MOUNT PISGAH

Waste-Free Weddings

MOUNT PISGAH IS A LOCAL LEADER IN
SUSTAINABLE WEDDING PRACTICES *By Vanessa Salvia*

Despite the cold and rain that enrobes Eugene for many months of the year, outdoor weddings are growing in popularity here. And there's one venue that is more popular than nearly all others — Mount Pisgah Arboretum.

Peg Douthit-Jackson, the arboretum's education and special events coordinator, says they have been "swamped" with interest in recent years and that it consistently fills its wedding schedule. Part of that growing interest is the arboretum's response to the desire for more sustainable weddings.

"I've been here six years and what we see is a lot of couples doing the same kinds of things," she says. "The same kinds of lighting, the same decorations. I said, 'Wow, they're all bringing in the same things. How can I facilitate more sharing?'" Her response was to encourage couples that are getting married on the same weekend to share what they can. If one person is using white lights and paper lanterns, then they can remain in place for the next couple, and each couple doesn't have to buy full sets of each item. She also noticed couples putting out their own signage directing guests to the site. Now, the venue provides these signs.

"The feedback to these changes has been tremendous," Douthit-Jackson says. "The brides have been really grateful and thankful that they're not all going to have to go out and buy the same things."

In late January, Douthit-Jackson is planning on hosting a get-together for all couples who are scheduled to be married in 2014. "They can get together and talk about their weddings; they can share ideas and ways to reduce buying lots of things," she notes.

Last year 65 couples tied the knot at the outdoor venue. One of those couples was Debra Grosella and Adam Jacques, who got married in the garden terrace right outside the 3,000-square-foot White Oak Pavilion. Grosella had worked in the dessert catering business and had helped set up numerous weddings at

the venue, so her decision was easy. "I just knew that Mount Pisgah was the place. Mount Pisgah chose me," Grosella says. "I wanted to get married outside and it was the perfect place."

Grosella and Jacques wanted to be as creative and resourceful as possible. They used natural decorative items such as moss-covered branches and hand-made tissue paper flowers, made by friends at the bridal shower. They purchased their black tablecloths because buying the fabric was cheaper than renting, and now they plan to donate the tablecloths to Mount Pisgah's sustainability program so that other couples can use them in the future.

Each festival and event that is held at Mount Pisgah uses 100 percent compostable supplies. "We recycle every single thing," Douthit-Jackson says. "We reclaim it, we put it in piles and the compost we put in the native plant beds," she says. "It goes back into the ground. It's a nice circle." There is also a sense of sustainability for the community: Because Mount Pisgah is a nonprofit, it donates 100 percent of the wedding rental fee (\$2,500) to the onsite children's education program.

"We were able to have a waste-free wedding and they made that easy for us," Grosella says. "Everything was composted and recycled and they took care of all that."

Being married outside had other perks for the couple. One of Grosella's guests told her that as the wedding party was taking their places, birds flew in and perched on the branches of the trees surrounding the terrace. "I didn't notice it because I was too nervous about getting married, but it gave me chills when my friend told me that it was almost Cinderella-like," she recalls. "So I tell people about getting married at Mount Pisgah that you don't get just your people guests, but all the wildlife will bless their ceremony in all of their special ways too."

For more info, visit mountpisgaharboretum.com/weddings-and-rentals.

THE WEDDING (RE)CYCLE

Want to try and recoup some cash by selling your wedding supplies (or nab some cheap supplies, and even a tux, for your own wedding)? Craigslist works, but now there's a more targeted approach.

Sites such as Ruffled Blog (ruffledblog.com), which has a section called "Recycle Your Wedding," allows users to sign up to buy and sell gently used wedding items. They charge no commission or listing fees.

Recently, items such as candleholders, a birdcage and a "large assortment of cloth doilies" for \$50 were listed as available. Listings span the United States as well as the world.

Most sites, such as Bravo Bride (bravo-bride.com), list dresses and gowns along with accessories. Tradesy allows users to swap clothing, shoes and handbags of the non-wedding sort, but also has a section specific for wedding gowns, groomsware and decor (tradesy.com/weddings).

It may be hard to find a buyer for your unused cocktail napkins if they are embossed with "Bruce and Bob Forever," but your clean, white tablecloths, linen napkins and unlit candles will be much sought after by other frugal couples. Choosing wedding items that hold their resale value could help you fund that romantic honeymoon you've always wanted. — *Vanessa Salvia*