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Go Green for Your Big Day



A new wave of brides and grooms are redefining the way weddings are planned and executed — and the environment is at the forefront of their efforts.

According to a poll by the Clinton Global Initiative and Microsoft, 66 percent of millennials believe there is solid evidence of global warming, and about 75 percent say it is because of human activity.

In turn, these environmental advocates are taking action by planning weddings that relay less on disposable products and fossil fuels and more on sustainable practices that can lead to a healthier environment.

Follow our suggestions below to integrate a little of this approach into your spring wedding.

Choose Earth-Friendly Vendors

One of the most meaningful steps you can take is to enlist the services of Earth-friendly vendors. These businesses are committed to following environmentally sound processes when producing and deliv-

ering their products, which can range from paper flower bouquets to sustainable invitations.

There are card companies that print their materials on 100 percent post-consumer recycled paper or alternative non-tree fibers. Some businesses pledge to plant a tree for every order you make with them. Knowing you had a positive impact on the environment in your wedding planning will give you that extra feeling of satisfaction.

Choose Local Venues

The less distance you put between your church and reception hall, the less pollution you are inviting into the atmosphere through the burning of gasoline in the vehicles of your wedding party.

This seems like a small step, but consider how many cars will be traveling around town on the day of your wedding. Inviting 200 guests means you're probably also invit-

ing 50 to 100 vehicles onto your community's roadways. That's a large carbon footprint you could lessen by keeping things confined to the same building or ones that are close in proximity.

Recycle Your Flowers

Many companies across the country collect flowers after weddings and re-purpose them for delivery to nursing homes and shelter facilities. By choosing to participate in such an arrangement, you are passing along some of the beauty of your wedding to even more people around you.

These companies also keep your flowers out of landfills by composting them into usable materials for gardens and other uses.

Look around in your area for these types of services or offer to do it yourself in collaboration with your local nursing homes or shelters.

Help Your Wedding Party Bond



Coming up with the final roster of wedding party participants can seem like one of the biggest chores of planning your wedding.

You don't want to leave out anyone, and you also want to pair the right groomsman with the right bridesmaid to match your vision for photos.

Once you select your party, it's up to you to help them form a bond ahead of your wedding. That way everything from the rehearsal to the reception can go that

much smoother. You want your wedding party feeling relaxed and able to have a good time, so do your best to bring them together.

Ways to do so can range from throwing a party at your home or inviting everyone out for a fun evening on the town. Whatever you decide, be sure to include everyone to make sure you create the strongest bond possible.

Hit the Water

The springtime provides beautiful weather for outdoor activities. Take advantage by inviting your wedding party out for a day of fishing, boating, swimming or lounging. If you have a local marina, consider renting jet skis or large rafts for the afternoon and spend the day getting to know each other in the water.

You also could choose to simply spend the day at the pool. What's more relaxing than laying poolside with a cool drink in your hand? The laid-back atmosphere is perfect for fostering communication between those in your wedding party.

Play Sports

One of the best ways to build a bond is through a little friendly competition. Set up a half-day of fun on your local golf course, your local bowling alley or even your local paint gun range.

Make sure everyone can attend well ahead of time and consider splitting teams strategically, so people outside of your normal social circle can easily get to know those who aren't. Your wedding party will appreciate your efforts in trying to bring everyone together before the big day.

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Mary Claire Crook



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