

## A Green Halloween

For many people, the Halloween season is an exciting time filled with festive decorations, fun costumes, and, of course, lots and lots of treats. Unfortunately, however, Halloween also often comes with just as much waste. On average, a single trick-or-treater generates one pound of trash all by themselves. Costumes alone count for 12,500 tons of garbage sent to landfills every year (“Give Old”). But celebrating Halloween doesn’t have to mean harming the planet. That’s why we’ve brought together some tips from around the internet helping you to enjoy the holiday season sustainably. We wish everyone a spooky--and green--Halloween!

### Sustainable Costumes

- “*Vintage, reused, DIY—oh my!* Instead of buying a pre-made costume, consider reusing or recycling costumes from previous years or even make your own from things you already have in the house. Mandy Farhoodi of FSS is keeping it classic and using an old bedsheet to dress up as a ghost. Browse thrift shops, flea markets or gather some inspiration from your own closet: an old prom dress, bowling shirt, or cowboy boots are all the beginnings of great costumes. There are many websites full of DIY ideas for you, children, and even pets. You can get started here. Bonus tip: Masks and Facepaint—instead of a wasteful plastic or rubber face mask, try to choose face paint or make up without lead, that is cruelty free, and contains no harmful toxins. You can even make your own fake blood; there are various recipes on blogs and pinterest” (Harvard).
- “*Costume Swap.* Host a Halloween costume swap with a group of friends to put your previously-worn costumes to use. We have all the instructions you need right here, from how to set a date and secure a location to swapping rules and how to organize the racks. It’s fun, easy, and keeps old costumes out of landfills” (Loanzon).
- “Go all out, albeit temporarily, by renting a costume” (“29 Fun”).
- “Donate your used costumes to thrift stores” (“29 Fun”).
- “Don’t just save money: Make money by *selling* your costumes” (“29 Fun”).

### Green Trick-or-Treating

- “*Trick-or-Treat Bags.* Use (and decorate). household items to collect candy in. A bucket, pillowcase, or old even an old bag can be decorated inexpensively at home - and reused year after year” (World Wildlife Fund).
- “*Transportation.* Trick or Treat by walking around your neighborhood instead of driving to another destination. Get to know your neighbors, reduce your carbon emissions and help keep the streets safe for other walkers” (World Wildlife Fund).

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- “If you’re approaching candy overload and need to get a bulk of it out of the house, donate it ([Operation Gratitude](#)). is a great option, as are local shelters). or try the Switch Witch” (“29 Fun”).
- Make your own treats to cut down on wasteful plastic wrappers! Find recipes for Halloween cake pops, chocolate truffle eyeballs, ghost biscuits, and more at [GoodtoKnow](#).

### Climate-Friendly Pumpkins and Other Decorations

- “*Get crafty*. Decorating is one of the best parts of Halloween but also the most wasteful. As the second biggest decorating holiday of the year, many of the decorations are made from non-recyclable plastics. Use natural products like pumpkins and gourds to create an autumnal look. Old stockings can become spider webs, cardboard boxes become tombs. There are so many things you already have in your home that can be turned into ghoulish decorations” (Harvard).
- “*Purchase locally grown pumpkins*. When you think of Halloween, you surely think of pumpkins. Lower your emissions by purchasing locally grown organic pumpkins. Remember to compost your pumpkins, save the seeds from carving for roasting them with a little oil and salt, or use the insides for delicious breads, pies, muffins, soups, and other recipes” (Harvard).
- “*Jack-o-lanterns*. Don't throw away all the goodies from inside your pumpkin. Toast the seeds for tasty treats. Make pumpkin pie or muffins with the fruit - or compost it” (World Wildlife Fund).
- “Decorate with things that can be composted, such as pumpkins, gourds, corn stalks, hay, leaves, and sticks. (If your backyard isn’t ripe with fall decor, support a local farmer by going to a nearby Pick-Your-Own farm (PYO). Check out Local Harvest to find one.)” (“29 Fun”).
- “If you’re choosing between carving and painting, then carve: A painted pumpkin has to go in the trash afterwards, while a carved pumpkin can be returned to the earth in a variety of ways (more on that coming up!).” (“29 Fun”).
- “If you’re not going to carve the pumpkin, but still want to decorate it, dress it up with a fall motif instead of a spooky one — that way, it has the potential to last beyond Halloween and into Thanksgiving, pulling double-holiday-duty” (“29 Fun”).

- “If at all possible, compost your pumpkin — even if that means just smashing it and burying it in your garden to supplement the soil. Just be sure it’s not painted” (“29 Fun”).
- “If you’re lucky enough to have a neighbor with chickens, see if they’d like to take your pumpkin to use as chicken feed” (“29 Fun”).
- Craft your own decorations! Find cheesecloth ghosts, old jug spirits, garbage bag spiders, and other fun ideas at [Brightly](#).

### Sources

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