

Fashion Action

Healthy & Green Fashion

Innovative Design

Special Events

- Eco Wedding
- **Green Birthday**
- Green Father's Day
- Green Graduation & Gifts
- Green Holiday
- Green Mother's Day
- Green Vacation & Travel
- Green Valentines' Day
- Halloween
- Tips to Save Money & Go Green
- Waste-Free Gift Giving

Pretty in Pastels



Shop all pretty in pastels



DIY Party Décor

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Throwing a party is not only expensive; it often generates a large amount of waste. Food, decorations, and favors are all purchased especially for the occasion and are promptly discarded once the party is over. Americans spend billions of dollars each year buying party supplies, which places a strain on your wallet and our planet's natural resources. Most party waste is not recycled; instead it is shipped off to a landfill. If you make your own decorations or purchase reusable décor, you can save both money and resources. Hearts is here to help you get it done with a quick guide to choosing reusable and eco homemade party décor.

Quick Facts: The Nasty Impact of Party Decorating

- **\$100 to \$300 spent on birthday bashes:** Birthday celebrations cost anywhere from \$100 to over \$100,000, with 49% of parents spending between \$100 and \$300.^[i]
- **\$20 billion in party supplies:** One company, Party City, had 2010 revenues of \$1.6 billion.^[ii] with the party supplies as a whole bringing in \$20 billion annually.^[iii] Global spending on special events is estimated to be \$500 billion annually!^[iv]

- **4 pounds of party waste per person:** The average party creates 4 pounds of waste per person.^[v] Imagine if 38 million out of 76 million American children's birthdays had only 8 guests, that would produce 1.2 billion pounds of waste (or 608,000 tons).^[vi]



Take Action! Reduce Decorating Expenses and Waste

1. **Reuse items you already have:** Items you have sitting around your house can often be refashioned into party decorations. The simplest is a vase of backyard flowers, a bowl of fruit, or draped fabrics. Other ideas: upcycle leftover plastic cups and strands of holiday lights to **create your own party lanterns**; create a fun, spill-proof **table cloth out of a Twister mat**; or use **tea cups as snack servers**. Real Simple offers a variety of tips for **New Uses for Old Things** for decorating to inspire you as well.
2. **Buy decorations you can reuse:** If you need to invest in new party decorations, try buying decorations that can be reused each year. For example, **make your own cloth napkins** using various seasonally or occasionally appropriate fabrics, buy high quality metal decorations that can be reused each year like these **decorative pumpkins** for Halloween, or choose living houseplants that can be kept and displayed throughout the year.
3. **Rent decorations:** For larger party decorations like a trellis, gazebo, tent, or tables and chairs, consider renting instead of buying. You will have access to the decorations you're craving to make your party perfect, but you will save money (by not purchasing 25 of your own plastic chairs) and will be participating in a circle of re-use – the ultimate form of recycling. Decoration rental companies, like **GreenSet** can be found online.
4. **Buy compostable party supplies:** If you don't want to keep extra plates, cups, napkins, and silverware on hand for the few parties you throw each year, consider buying tablewares made from compostable materials, like tree-free paper, chlorine-free cardboard, or compostable corn plastic. **SustyParty** offers a variety of green décor and party kits. You can buy the materials you need and put them in your **backyard compost pile** when you're done.



Dig Deeper: More DIY Decoration Sources

- Explore **HGTV's database** of DIY party decorations and favors for ideas.
- Check out **Pinterest**. Millions of users post their favorite craft ideas and link to a set of instructions.
- Read **Sweet Designs: Bake It, Craft It, Style It** for more ideas for your next party.

Images By: [Elin B](#) and [...love Maegan](#)

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