



## Eco-Friendly Weddings

Eco-friendly weddings are eco-chic! Greener weddings can be every bit as gorgeous with less waste. Every aspect of a wedding has eco-friendly options worth considering. Whether you use just one or two earth-friendly elements, or go completely organic from the silk of your dress to the food you serve, remember that every green choice makes a difference.

The average US wedding produces an average of 62 tons of carbon dioxide and 400-600 pounds of trash. Simple substitutions and eco-conscious decisions can meaningfully decrease your wedding's impact on the planet.

All weddings at Stoneleigh are a lot greener since the Club became the first in wedding venue in Virginia to implement an innovative zero food waste program. Launched May 23, 2012, the use of a Bokashi fermentation composting system diverts 1.6 tons of food waste from landfills annually into the Club's garden to produce fresh and ultra-local herbs and vegetables.

There are many ways make additional green decisions without sacrificing style or elegance!

- **Invitations:** Recycled and post-consumer waste paper, tree-free paper, soy inks and digital correspondence options all offer beautiful and elegant ways to reduce resource consumption. If you opt for paper with seeds for planting some reception venues (including Stoneleigh) will plant them onsite. Put all pertinent information on a wedding website. A number of elegant invitation companies are now creating one-page invitations with a detachable response card. The ultimate waste reducer? Email invitations and online RSVP.
- **Attire:** Reuse by going vintage, updating and altering a family gown, or simply donate your gown after the big day. One great organization that accepts wedding dress donations is Brides Against Breast Cancer. Your dress will be sold and the money earned from it will help women with breast cancer and their families. The proceeds will go towards granting a wish to a woman with breast cancer. To read more about this agency and how to donate your dress, visit their website by [clicking here](#).
- **Flowers:** Over half of the florists in the U.S. use imported flowers that are sprayed with pesticides and fungicides. Using local, seasonal and organic flowers, which are never sprayed with toxic chemicals, lowers fuel consumption and is often less costly than ordering exotic species, which must be shipped. Making use of plants such as hydrangeas that can be replanted at your home or at your reception venue reduces

waste and creates memories.

- **Photography:** Digital photography offers a paperless and chemical-free way to capture your event, including being able to view online proofs before deciding which ones to print.
- **Jewelry:** Eco-conscious jewelers use recycled stones and metals, as well as ethically sourced diamonds, gems and metals to create breathtaking and unique items. Family heirlooms, vintage or antique pieces, or handmade items are also sustainable, and often less expensive options to consider.
- **Décor:** Reduce one-time-use items. Use your location and the season for inspiration to provide natural decor. Centerpieces made from vintage items or pieces collected from friends and family will add unique personality to tables.
- **Favors:** Favors for all your guests can cost you hundreds of dollars, and often wedding favors are small trinkets destined for the trash can. Making a small donation for each guest to a cause that is important to you is a thoughtful alternative to a tangible, potentially wasteful favor. If you would like to give a small gift, some non-wasteful favor ideas include edibles, small potted plants, seedlings or soy candles that will echo the values behind your wedding.

There was a time when going green meant less fun, quality sacrifices and additional expense but those days are in the past. Have fun, do good and feel great while celebrating your big day!

*Aisle Dish is written by Meredith Thomas, Stoneleigh's in-house Event Consultant. If you would like assistance planning your special day, Meredith offers a complimentary one-hour consultation to all brides hosting their wedding at the Club and is available for further planning services at an additional fee. Contact Meredith at [mthomas@stoneleighgolf.com](mailto:mthomas@stoneleighgolf.com) or 540.338.4653 ext. 303.*