

Green Your Halloween

Beyond dressing up as the incredible hulk there are plenty of ways you can green your Halloween. From costumes to treats and not filling car seats, your night can still spook trick-or-treaters without being scary to the environment.

Green Costumes

What will you wear to spook the little goblins, and what will you dress the little goblins up as? It will be difficult to resist the sparkly princess gown and muscle-filled Spider Man costumes shimmering on the racks of store seasonal aisles. When you fight the temptation of store-bought costumes and strive to go green, however, you will reduce pollution, save resources, and may uncover the thoughtful, creative, and constructive minds you and your little devils have.

Think reduce, reuse, recycle! Use materials found in your home. Buy vintage from yard sales or second-hand stores. Reuse items from past costumes, or “borrow” household items to enhance your attire. Make something new from waste materials. Have some fun and think up some clever ideas, or steal some off the internet. The effort to concoct your very own costume adds to the anticipation of this fun holiday, and can rekindle thoughtfulness behind the celebration. An added benefit with greening your costume is keeping some green in your wallet too!

Some green costume ideas for adults (or kids):

- ◆ Instead of buying new costumes, consider renting them, or even borrowing or trading costumes with friends or relatives.
- ◆ Think about your hobbies. Do you scuba dive, garden, work on cars? Wear and carry with you your existing hobby gear and go as a professional in that field.
- ◆ Go as a tourist. Wear bright-colored, wild clothes, wide brimmed hat, and be sure to carry a camera and map. Second hand stores have great loud clothes very cheap. You might have all this in your closet anyway!
- ◆ Dress up as some common phrases like “black-eyed peas,” by darkening around your eye and decorating an old T-shirt with a bunch of the letter “P” printed all over. Or go as static electricity – put on dark clothes and attach socks, handkerchiefs, and underwear with safety pins and use styling gel to make your hair stand up. Be creative!
- ◆ And let us not forget the long standing tradition of using an old sheet for a ghost, or overalls, flannel shirt, and a straw hat for a scarecrow.

Some green costume ideas for kids (or adults):

- ◆ Use any play dress-up costumes that your child already has.
- ◆ If your kid has a body type swim suit, have them go as a surfer. Cut out a cardboard surfboard and have your surfer paint a cool design on it. Wear water shoes, and slick back their hair with gel so it looks wet.
- ◆ If your child is in sports, you've probably got on hand all it takes to be a baseball, soccer, basketball player or karate master.
- ◆ If you have camouflage, khaki, green, or brown shirt and shorts or pants, find accessories to go as a safari guide or hunter. Find a wide brim hat, stuffed animals, and hiking boots. Replace the animals for a rope and you could have Indiana Jones prowling about the neighborhood.
- ◆ Find a flowing dress or top and skirt, add a bandana and some jewelry to go as a gypsy or "flower child."

Check out <http://green.halloween.org>, www.simplecostumes.com, or Google "green Halloween" for other clever, inexpensive, and earth-friendly ideas.

Green Halloween Treats and Treasures

Candy...candy...candy. Yep it's yummy, but too much...well, you know. Think about healthy treats like organic, fair trade fruit snacks, raisins, juice boxes, trial size packs of veggie chips, and snack bars.

Try treasures instead of food treats. Green Halloween, a non-profit grass-roots organization states that "Kids love little trinkets like spinning tops, stickers and collectable cards. Most children especially love gifts from nature like polished rocks, crystals, and seashells. ... Although non-food items are generally healthier than food items, try to avoid non-recycled plastic toys." Some suggestions include:

- ◆ Barrettes
- ◆ Home made bean bags
- ◆ Bells
- ◆ Charms
- ◆ Crayons
- ◆ Pencils
- ◆ Spinning tops
- ◆ Seed packets
- ◆ Trading cards
- ◆ Glass beads

Green Party is More Than a Political Organization

If you're celebrating Halloween with a party, remember, going green is as much about what we don't buy as what we do buy. Reduce excessive buying. Avoid disposables.

Think durable. Serve healthy, pesticide-free, seasonal food. Make sure prizes and gifts are made from recycled or sustainably harvested materials, without unnecessary packaging. Send e-invitations or invitations made from recycled magazines or paper. You'll be celebrating the earth the same time you're celebrating the holiday.

Green Your Jack 'O Lantern

Scary or fun, carving Jack 'O Lanterns is a favorite tradition! And you can treat yourselves and your compost with all the pumpkin parts. When making your Jack-o-Lantern, clean pumpkin seeds and toss with melted butter or olive oil and seasonings like salt, garlic powder, cayenne pepper, or Cajun seasoning for a nutritious snack. Pumpkin seeds are packed with protein, vitamins and minerals. Bake them at about 300°F for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Toss leftover pumpkin guts in the compost pile. And, once Halloween is over, cut up and add the carved pumpkin to the compost bin for a nutritious treat for your plants and trees once decomposed. For more info on composting, check out Tucson Organic Gardeners at <http://iwhome.com/nonprofits/TOG/>.

Let's Talk the Walk

Let's face it, driving is scary, emitting all kinds of pollution into the air and our lungs. Idling gets zero miles per gallon and spews pollution into the air in a concentrated area. Children are especially vulnerable to air pollution, so it's best to leave your vehicle parked and walk with them door to door on their trick-or-treating expedition. Plus, the less vehicles driving neighborhood roads, the safer the little witches and zombies will be.

Go Green

There is a movement at many levels towards going green for a sustainable community, a sustainable earth. And the green hulk in all of us can last well beyond Halloween.