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to share their ideas,  
experiences and resources  
while inspiring each other in  
their life's journey.

## **Eco-friendly Gift Ideas: Think Globally, Act Locally**

by Katie O'Sullivan

Holidays and gifts go hand-in-hand. But before rushing off to the mall in a panicked frenzy, take a moment to consider the environmental impact of your gift giving. Does every gift need to be imported from China, made of non-biodegradable plastics, powered by a jillion non-rechargeable batteries, and swathed in yards of needless wrappings?

Looking for "environmentally friendly" gift ideas, though, can be a tricky task. The best eco-ideas are to give the gift of time, service or expertise, or make donations to a charity in the recipient's name. Handmade coupons included with a card can mean a lot to the right recipient, as can a handwritten letter or old photographs and mementos. But handmade isn't always the answer. Which leads us back to the shopping frenzy...

In our global economy, it's difficult to find gifts that have "zero-impact." The reality is that most goods are manufactured overseas. But as one shopkeeper told me, even though something is not made in the U.S., it is still made by a person. This person, wherever they may live, still needs to eat and put a roof over their head.

Most U.S. companies have some or all of their manufacturing done in other countries. Even those companies that make their products here in the U.S. and use recycled materials still need to package their goods, put them on gasoline-powered trucks, and ship them to stores. Everything has a carbon footprint, some larger, some smaller.

So what can a holiday shopper do to help reduce their carbon footprint and still have a unique gift to tie a ribbon around?

As conscious consumers, there are two things we need to consider: where to spend our money and what companies we want to support. We can choose to patronize local shops instead of heading to the big box stores. We can also choose to buy goods from companies that are environmentally and socially responsible. The mantra "Think Globally, Act Locally" totally applies.

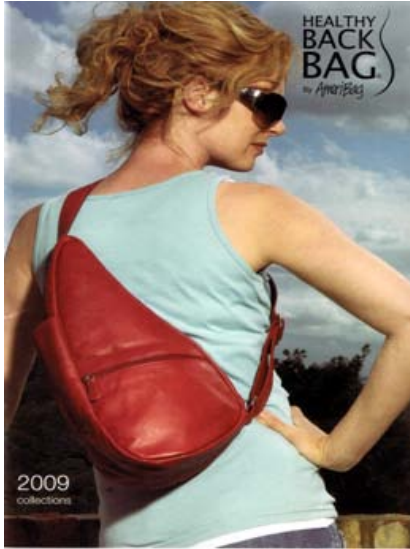
There are several gift shops across Cape Cod that cater to the eco-conscious buyer. I like to buy some of my gifts from Sativa, on Route 28 in Harwichport, and Deborah Ann's Rainbow, [www.deborahannsrainbow.com](http://www.deborahannsrainbow.com) on Telegraph Road in Dennisport.

Adlumia, [www.adlumia.com](http://www.adlumia.com) on Main Street in Orleans, offers many products for the home, garden and body that were made from recycled, organic and sustainable resources. The Recycled Retriever, on Commercial Street in Provincetown, caters to the eco-conscious dog owner. Their pledge is to "always provide a place to find eco-friendliness for pet lovers." While the shop is closed for the season, you can still order eco-gifts for your pets online at their website: [www.therecycledretriever.com](http://www.therecycledretriever.com)

Sativa [www.sativastuff.com](http://www.sativastuff.com) carries many items that fit the bill of being environmentally and socially responsible. Their Fair Trade items include Zulu-grass bead necklaces and beautiful Haitian art created from discarded metal oil drums. Buying these items helps to support people who are trying to make a better life for their families in rough parts of the world.

Sativa also supports companies with environmental missions, like PositivelyGreen, which makes cards, notebooks and stationary from recycled paper and use soy ink for printing. They also donate ten percent of their profits to fight global warming.

For the fashion-forward environmentalist on your list, look for gifts made from recycled materials, like the baabaazuzu mittens, sewn from repurposed sweaters, with a tag reading "100% Vintage Wool."



AmeriBag “healthy back” handbags, a company based in Kingston, NY, has an eco-friendly Earth Collection made from recycled PET (think plastic water bottles, chopped up and melted down for a second life), and another Pink Ribbon line of bags which donates its profits to fund breast cancer research.

Some “regular” gift shops also carry items that make unique gift ideas while also being eco-friendly. “Eco-friendly” can mean both how an item is made, or what it is made from. At the Dennisport General Store, on Route 28 in Dennisport, you can find eco-friendly items for the kitchen gadget guru on your list.

Owner Joe LaBelle can point out kitchen towels, cutting boards and wooden utensils all made from environmentally friendly bamboo. Grown without using pesticides, bamboo is a great sustainable product because it can self-regenerate and grow to maturity in 3-5 years. He also carries a line of trays and serving plates from a company called Cypress, made from “Eco-Bamboo,” a new alternative to melamine.

The Dennisport General Store also carries Nicholas Mosse Pottery, handmade in Kilkenny, Ireland. The china is mixed, molded and sponge-painted by hand in a repurposed flour mill using eco-friendly hydropower from waterfalls on the nearby Nore River.



Nicholas Mosse Pottery

Both Yankee Ingenuity, [www.yankee-ingenuity.com](http://www.yankee-ingenuity.com) on Main Street in Chatham, and Red Fish, Blue Fish, [www.redfishbluefish.com](http://www.redfishbluefish.com) on Main Street in Hyannis carry a line of bowls, clocks and coasters made from vintage 33 rpm vinyl records, given a new life and purpose by New York artist Jeff Davis.

A Mylar seal protects the labels and seals the spindle hole. Bowls come in both stepped and smooth styles, and the labels feature everything from folk singers to Broadway musicals to symphonic works (I even found a Monkees album at one store, turned into a chip bowl – the perfect gift for my sister!)

As you make your Holiday gift list this year, think about supporting your local stores. These stores are trying to bring unique and earth-friendly options to Cape Cod shoppers, like you, as well as supporting those companies who positively impact their communities and environment. Your consumer dollars will work harder to make the earth a better place when you think globally and act locally.

Happy Shopping!

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#### WHAT IS RECYCLED PET?

PET (PolyEthylene Therephthalate) is a polyester material used for packaging materials, mainly plastic bottles. You know, those millions of water bottles people use once and then discard, each and every day.

The bottles are collected, sorted and chopped into tiny pieces, then heated to manufacture new PET. The recycled PET can be made into fiber and eventually be used for making clothing, upholstery and even new bottles - or in the case of Ameribag, handbags and totes! Look for items that say they use Recycled PET when you shop.

#### CLOSING THE LOOP ON RECYCLING--4EM

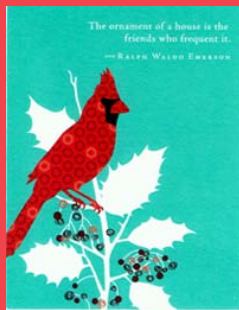
Recycling is great but it only works if we "close the loop." What does that mean? As we throw our used paper or plastic bottles into the recycling bin, we need to realize it's going to be turned into a new product which must be purchased by someone in order to really close the recycling loop.

An estimated 100 million trees are cut down each year just to make new copy paper for the U.S. alone. Oil supplies around the world are being depleted partly so we can continue to produce all the plastic products we use every day. It's estimated to take up to 3 liters of oil to produce a single toner cartridge alone. Purchasing and using recycled products lessens the pressure on natural resources and helps to keep functioning ecosystems intact. Recycling and remanufacturing processes produce substantially more jobs than land filling or incinerating, and usually at a lower cost to local governments and residential and business ratepayers.

Buying recycled-material products saves energy and water, helps to preserve landfill space, supports recycling markets, and bolsters the economy. So not only do you need to recycle your items when you are done with them, but you need to buy the newly made recycled content products to truly support the process. For more information Visit [www.recycledproducts.org](http://www.recycledproducts.org).



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made from 100%  
recycled wool  
[www.baabaazuzu.com](http://www.baabaazuzu.com)



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