

# THE SUSTAINABLE WEDDING GUIDE

*Your guide to celebrating your love story with  
our planet and neighbors in mind.*

*by*



GREEN BEE  
Sustainable Weddings

[www.GreenBeeWed.com](http://www.GreenBeeWed.com)

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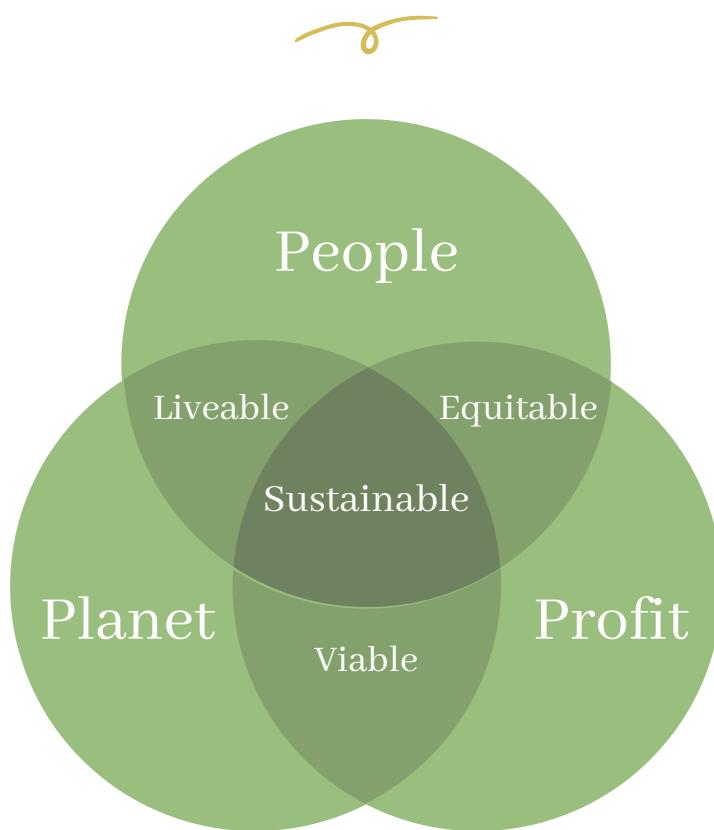
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# WHAT EXACTLY IS SUSTAINABILITY?

The United Nations defines sustainable development as:

*"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*

While the environment is a huge part of sustainability, we can't build a sustainable future together without ensuring it is inclusive, equitable, and financially viable.



## THE THREE P'S

*People:*  
social  
sustainability

*Planet:*  
environmental  
sustainability

*Profit:*  
economic  
sustainability

# HOW WEDDINGS CAN BE SUSTAINABLE

The Green Bride Guide estimates that each wedding produces an average of 400lbs of trash. Multiply that by the estimated 2.3 million weddings in the United States each year, and you've got nearly

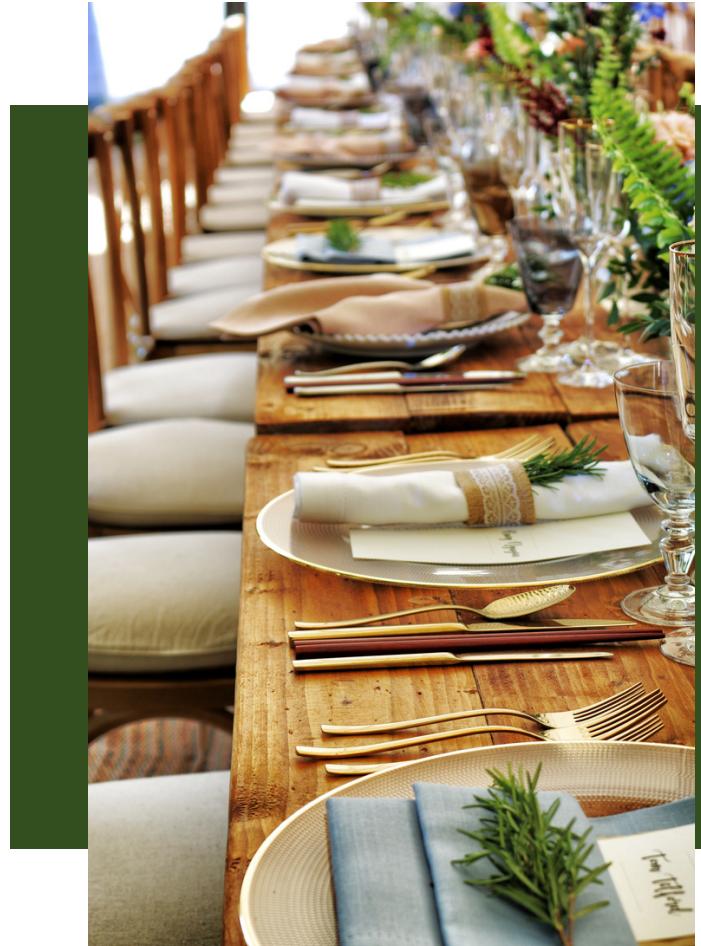
**1,000,000,000**  
*pounds of trash*

generated every year by U.S. weddings alone.

**WE CAN CHANGE THAT.**



Not only do weddings create a lot of waste, they can also be *expensive*. You've probably been saving up for a while now, and might have help from parents who have been saving, too. Whether your budget is \$10,000 or \$100,000, the money you spend to celebrate the love you can also be used to support small businesses, your community, and those in need.



## Businesses you can support to make a difference in your community:

- *Small businesses*
- *Local businesses*
- *Women owned*
- *BIPOC owned*
- *LGBTQ+ owned*
- *Zero- or Low-waste focused*
- *Employs adults with disabilities (and pays them well)*
- *Portion of sales go to a charity or non-profit*
- *Uses renewable energy*
- *Union-made products*

### GREEN BEE TIP

Finding these businesses might take a little more time, but it pays off knowing that your money is doing more than hosting your epic wedding celebration. An eco-focused wedding planner can help with these vendor recommendations.

# CONSCIOUS ALTERNATIVES

By *conscious*, we mean:

- *adj.* having knowledge of something; aware.
- *adj.* (of an action) deliberate and intentional.

Being conscious of the environmental, social, and economic factors that your wedding contributes to is the first step towards planning a sustainable wedding.

We'll be using this key to indicate which area of sustainability these alternatives fall into.



Environmental



Social



Economic

## 1. WEDDING DRESS



If one or both of you are wearing a wedding dress, consider buying one used. Or, if you're lucky, borrow one from a friend or family member. Not only will you save money (I got mine almost 60% off retail price!), you'll also help reduce waste by giving a beautiful dress more than just one use.



BONUS: Pass it on by selling or even donating your dress after your wedding.



## 2. SUITS & TUXES

Whether for yourself or your wedding party, renting suits/tuxes is a great way to reduce costs and waste, especially for something you might only wear once.

However, purchasing these tailored suits for your wedding party is a great, practical gift--IF you think your wedding party will get more wears out of them.



# CONSCIOUS ALTERNATIVES (CTND.)

## 3. FAVORS



Honestly, I think you can skip wedding favors entirely. Most people won't hold onto them, plus you're already giving guests a delicious meal and dessert, drinks, and a party! If you're set on favors though, opt for something practical--my favorites are potted plants, tree saplings, or locally made treats.



For a super impactful, zero-waste favor, make a donation to your favorite non-profit in your guests' honor.



## INVITATIONS

Having a more casual wedding? Send out e-invites and save the dates. For paper invites, opt for 100% post consumer recycled paper and water-based inks. You can also repurpose your invitations by putting a full picture of you two on the back--an easy way to send out engagement photos to family and friends!



TIP: Be careful with seed paper--some wildflowers may be invasive to your area.

## 5. THE RINGS



If one or both of you are wearing a wedding dress, consider buying one used. Or, if you're lucky, borrow one from a friend or family member. Not only will you save money (I got mine almost 60% off retail price!), you'll also help reduce waste by giving a beautiful dress more than just one use.



## 4



# CONSCIOUS ALTERNATIVES (CTND.)

## 6. DECORATIONS



This is where most wedding waste comes from and there are many things you can do. Here are some of my favorite ideas:

- Keep it minimal but meaningful.
- Use nature as your decoration by having your ceremony and/or reception outdoors.\*
- Purchase in-season flowers from a local florist
- Rent your decorations.
- Join a local wedding buy/sell group.

\*Always have a contingency plan in case of bad weather!



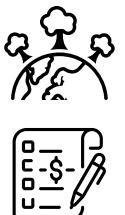
## THE VENUE

Save money, gas, and time by having your ceremony and reception at the same location. If that isn't possible, encourage your guests to carpool or even consider hiring a transportation service.



TIP: Make sure there are hotels or other accommodations close to your venue for easy travel for your guests.

## 8. THE BAR



Keep it simple. You really don't need a full bar for your guests, just a few selections of wine and beer, plus champagne and maybe one signature cocktail. If you're having a lot of beer-drinking guests, buy a keg and rent glasses from your caterer. Otherwise, aluminum cans are the way to go. Be sure to have a box behind the bar for the bartenders to put empty wine bottles and beer cans in!



# THANK YOU



Don't feel like you have to do everything in this guide--it isn't meant to be daunting! The best thing about sustainability is that every small action adds up when more and more people do it. Budget constraints can definitely make implementing some of these sustainable alternatives difficult, and that's okay. By doing what you can in your unique situation, know that you are making a difference in the world and your community.

Congratulations again on your engagement! I wish you all the best.

*Kristen Hood*

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For a Look into Our Day-to-Day  
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