

# Green Options for Event Giveaways

Giving away promotional items is a popular way for companies to get their brand into the hands of attendees. However, this practice has a significant environmental impact. Our goal for the Earth Day Festival and the other events we partner with through our Recycling On the Go program is to be low-impact. **Don't be the company whose name appears on give-a-way items that fill the trash cans at our event and risk sending a bad message about your business to attendees!**

## Questions to consider when selecting giveaways:

1. Is a giveaway necessary? Is it an effective way to get our brand out? Are there alternatives to the giveaway in this case?
2. What is the item made of? Is it made from post-consumer or pre-consumer recyclable materials? Is the material organic (like cotton) or recycled (like some polyester products) or naturally compostable (like fruit or seeds)?
3. Is this item made in the USA or overseas? Is the item locally made in mid-west?
4. Can this item be easily recycled or composted once it is no longer needed/wanted?
5. How long will the recipient want/use this item? Is the item useful?
6. Are the items individually wrapped? How will you contain the wrapping? Can you request that the manufacturer leave out the wrapping? Perhaps you can unwrap prior to the event and recycle plastic bags at the grocery store to avoid letting them enter the event waste stream.

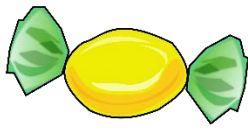
Here are **SUGGESTIONS FOR GIVEAWAYS** that are unique, useful, high-quality, desirable and/or support sustainable living. All of our suggestions can be creatively branded:

- Reusable shopping bags – While very useful, it is a common giveaway. Make sure yours is durable, functional, and made with eco-friendly material. Try bags made from old banners that include your logo.
- Reusable water bottles – Metal water bottles are preferred over plastic. If it's plastic, make sure it is BPA free and made from # 1, #2 plastic, which are both recyclable. Have a water cooler available so people can fill them up and use them instead of buying bottled water. Include information about the benefits of tap water over bottled water.
- Pens & Pencils – Look for options that are good quality and that are made with recycled plastic or a unique material like recycled currency. [Pedro's Planet](#) has "eco" versions that are biodegradable and recycled.
- Reusable travel coffee mug – High quality, vacuum sealed, and metal is preferred over plastic. If it's plastic, make sure it is BPA free.
- Upcycled/Reused bicycle chain key chain (See [Resource Revival](#))
- Attractive, locally printed posters/flyers ([Fire Cracker Press](#))
- Energy efficient light bulbs or night lights (LEDs or CFLs)
- Coupons (printed on recycled paper with low dye and soy ink)
- Yearling trees (natives with instructions for planting)
- T-shirts (organic and/or recycled material only)
- Recycled paper notebook or memo pad
- Seed packets (organic or heirloom)
- Metro passes
- Bird Feeder

### Examples of ITEMS to AVOID

- Mini-frisbees that aren't functional as frisbees (anything less than 175 gram size)
- Energy or granola bars – (wrappers contaminate the waste stream)
- Marti Gras-style beads – (quickly disposable, not eco-friendly)
- Balloons – (quickly become trash or end up in the waterways)
- Coozies/drink insulators – (overdone, quickly disposable)
- Candy – (wrappers contaminate the waste stream)
- T-shirts made from standard cotton or polyester
- Plastic goodie bags

These items commonly become trash:



### Recommended Vendors for Appropriate Promotional Products

**[Resource Revival](#)**: This US-based company makes promotional products and awards from recycled bicycle parts (Oregon USA).

**[Pedro's Planet](#)**: Eco-friendly office supplies, with an extensive catalog of items that would make great giveaways. Locally-owned and St. Louis community leader.

**[Get Green with Geiger](#)**: Green line of promotional products and has a reference guide for "earth friendly products. Local contact: 314.432.4703

**Seed Packets/Garden Supplies:** [Peaceful Valley](#) or [Seed Savers](#)

**[Sew Sack Sew](#)**: This company has been St. Louis Earth Day Festival vendor for several years. They make "upcycled" bags from vinyl banners, supplied by local companies and organizations; having made old banners into bags for Pure Power and the Missouri Botanical Garden).

**[The Firecracker Press](#)**: Local St. Louis graphic design studio and letterpress printshop that uses computer design software to conceive ideas then carves woodblocks and prints by hand to produce event posters, business cards, party invitations, advertising, and more.

Source: St. Louis Earth Day guidelines <<http://www.stlouisearthday.org/2011/03/green-giveaways/>>