

Ecomart

Good Christmas gifts for our environment

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By LINDA O'CONNOR
Lifestyles Editor

Giving a gift that's good for the environment is a great choice this holiday season.

With so much emphasis today on environmental issues, many companies are jumping on the bandwagon to offer gifts that are healthy alternatives.

Local entrepreneurs Joanne French and Liz Mayer, who opened an environmentally friendly shop in the spring, Ecomart, share some terrific gift ideas.

One of the most popular is the Vermi composter, a worm composting kit. Designed for indoor composting or for people in apartments, the bright, colorful composters is filled with Red Wigglers ready to compost your kitchen waste. Purchased in three sizes, they range from \$70 to \$100.

"Worm castings are terrific for spring plantings or houseplants," says French.

For the shopper in the family, a cloth shopping bag kit comes complete with grocery-sized cloth bags and smaller cloth bulk food and produce bags, costing \$40.

The commuter in the family will be pleased with a commuter coffee mug kit. The recycled plastic mug with a non-spill lid comes in a cloth carry bag with cotton napkin.

A wooden newspaper binder, costing \$40, will encourage people to put their newspapers in the blue box. It comes complete with twine to have them ready for recycling.

Many stores have environmentally friendly detergents, cleaners and body products available. Why not make up a basket for the person who has everything?

If you have difficulty filling a stocking this Christmas, an array of moderately priced products are also available. Here's just a few:

Cloth coffee filters — can be reused hundreds of times and come in unbleached cotton;

Pure beeswax candles;

A mini-earth flag which features the earth as seen from space;

Recycled stationery;

Solitudes — nature tapes on compact discs and tapes;

A mini blue box — a desk-top version of the curbside box.

And how about a gift that keeps on giving?

A portion of the proceeds from Under the Tree Handbook goes to the Pueblito Third World Children fund. The book is full of non-toxic cleaning recipes and housekeeping advice.

Bridgehead teas and coffees are part of the Oxfam organization. The profits go directly to the workers.

Handsome sweatshirts, decorated with wildlife and other scenes, are part of World Wildlife fund-raising. A portion of the profits are used to preserve the Amazon rainforest.

You can also protect the rainforest by buying protection for an acre from clear-cutting in someone's name.

For the children in your family, there's also a good selection of books and games. Some of the better choices are the Junior Green Guide, the children's version of the Green Consumer Guide; 50 Simple Things Can Do to Save the Earth and the Earth Book for Kids.

Whatever you choose this Christmas season, it's important to look at its impact on the environment. Earth will thank-you for it.