

Making Ripples

Sustainable Spring Dates for Earth Day

by Amanda Bancroft

If you're empathizing with Bambi and his twitter-pated friends, now is the perfect time to try sustainable dating and spread the love to Mother Nature, too.

Most dates are relatively harmless when it comes to our carbon footprint or environmental impact. But consider that candles are sexier than electric lights, and greener, too. And all those miles add up to gallons of gas when you're driving around in a car with your significant other, who can't make googly eyes at you without the risk of an accident. So get out of the car and turn off the lights, and try some local, organic dating techniques.

Be green and save some green on your date! Sustainable dating is often cheaper than paying for gas or an expensive concert. Instead of driving somewhere on a date, try holding hands while walking to a local park for a picnic. Or hop on a bicycle built for two, and have a new experience together! The Fayetteville trails system can usually get you within range of where you need to go, or take you right to the front door – after all, Arsaga's is now on the bike trail and the weather's perfect.

Nightbird Books is rife with romance if you know where to look. It's our favorite destination to go when we want a carbon-neutral date away from people but in the middle of downtown. You can grab some coffee and browse the books inside while watching those crazy cute birdies flutter around and snuggle up in a nest, but the outside contains hidden nooks and plenty of outdoor seating perfect for two. I don't want to reveal all my secrets, so you'll have to walk around the building and discover for yourself how magical it can be.

Supporting restaurants that serve local, organic, healthy food options can leave a great impression on your date. Leaving out the pesticides leaves room for increased health and stamina. But don't forget the green condoms and paraben-free lubricants like Sylk, which is made from kiwi fruit vine extract. Non-natural lubes contain chemicals like parabens that can disrupt hormones. Green condom options include those made of lambskin (biodegradable), or vegan condoms like Sir Richard's (the Tom's of condoms) that contain no milk protein and are made of natural latex. French Letter produces fair trade condoms with Forest Stewardship Council certified rubber. Oil Spill Condoms support Gulf cleanup efforts and come with phrases like "drill without the spill"! Endangered Species Condoms raise awareness about human overpopulation.

Bonus: if you ask that special someone out before the end of this weekend, you'll be just in time for Earth Day. Celebrate your love for each other and the planet on a green date.

Ripples is a blog connecting people to resources on sustainable living while chronicling their off-grid journey and supporting the work of non-profit organizations. Read more on this topic and others at www.RipplesBlog.org