

# Keep on giving

Preparing a beautifully wrapped gift can show how much you care, for both the recipient and the environment



Above and main picture: Using colourful, recycled paper and decorations that nature can replenish, is a simple way to protect the environment.  
上及大圖：使用富色彩的、循環再造的紙張及裝飾物來包裝禮品，是一種簡單的環保方法。

With every passing year, people in Hong Kong are becoming more environmentally aware and conscious of the fact that, through their actions, each individual has the power to make a positive difference to the world. Yet despite all the great initiatives from tree-planting and beach-cleaning to “lights out” campaigns and education in schools, we still sometimes overlook other possibilities to help the environment, even though they can be easily done and are capable of having a significant cumulative impact.

Consider the practice of wrapping gifts for birthdays, special occasions and the festive celebrations that come around every year.

In most cultures, giving presents at such times is an integral part of the fun, and the care taken over the wrapping, with the use of beautiful paper or fabrics, glitter, ribbons and bows, is seen as adding something extra to the gift, expressing esteem and the personal touch.

No one would dispute that, but there is another side to the story. It is that most of the wrapping materials are used only once. And in these times when families have the good fortune to celebrate so many festivals in both the Lunar and Gregorian calendars, it makes sense to apply some “green” thinking to reduce our use of wrapping materials without in any way lessening the enjoyment of each occasion.



Imaginative wrapping can make stunning creations.  
具想像力和創意的包裝，正是藝術創作的一種。

At the Mid-Autumn festival, for example, the custom is to present mooncakes to friends, relatives and colleagues. The mooncakes usually come in tin boxes, which are then wrapped in colourful paper and ribbons. And at Lunar New Year, when counters are set up near the door of leading stores and supermarkets, you will see staff helping to gift-wrap hundreds of items, many of which already come in special seasonal packaging.

One need only pause for a second or two to contemplate what must be happening around the world at Christmas time, when millions of gifts are wrapped up and left under the tree. In most cases, they are ripped open in an instant and the wrapping paper is discarded with hardly a thought.

But of course, there are consequences, that can be put into perspective when you consider that if no one in Hong Kong used wrapping paper this year, it would save more than 1,200 trees.

This does not mean we should stop wrapping gifts; just that we should find sensible alternatives. There are many creative, fun and interesting ideas for wrapping gifts in ways that will benefit the environment and be great projects in which the whole family can take part. Adopting this approach is an essential element in “the art of green giving”, which groups like Friends of the Earth recommend and which they promote under the acronym “CARE”. This reminds people to

cut the use of wrapping paper, abstain from excessive wrapping, reuse packaging and endorse waste recycling.

Cutting back or changing our habits shouldn’t be a problem since there are dozens of environmentally friendly ways to wrap gifts that will help to save the planet. They also show the receiver that you care enough to have taken the time to create something special.

On top of this, it is possible to add a distinctive touch of class and glamour to the process.

The first step for all of us should be to reuse wrapping paper whenever possible. There is no reason not to, especially if you make a practice of opening gifts with care, storing the paper neatly and, if you think it is necessary, mentioning to friends that you reuse wrapping paper and why.

When it comes to gifts for children, you can always use colourful pages taken from newspaper comics. They have interesting and entertaining designs and serve the purpose. Don’t forget that there is almost endless scope to make further use of empty shoeboxes, tissue boxes, cartons, tins and plastic containers. All of them can be done up or disguised and kept in useful employment from one celebration to the next.

Wrapping gifts using the remains of cardboard boxes or any leftover cardboard you may have around the house is

also a practical and eco-friendly way to wrap up birthday or festive gifts. Over 90 per cent of products shipped around the globe are sent in corrugated cardboard, and reusing the material ensures that it all isn’t simply flung into the nearest bin.

For something equally practical but perhaps with a bit more “glamour”, you can always use one of those recyclable fabric bags that are so easy to find around town. The chances are you may already have a few in various drawers at home, and if you don’t have any readily to hand, you can make them yourself quite easily.

You’ll need to begin by finding some suitable fabric. This can be anything from silk to organza. To remain true to the theme, try to make sure the fabric has been recycled or can be in future. Often the brightest or most garish combinations of colours will make the best festive-looking bags, and the process of designing and making can be a thrill for kids of any age.

The bags can be used again and again as gifts or to store valuable possessions.

Whatever season or event you will next celebrate, or even if you just plan to give someone a “thank you” gift, keep in mind the importance of the environment and spend a little time ensuring that at least part of your gift can be given again.



### 環保包裝始於創意

近年香港人的環保意識不斷提高，透過植樹、清潔海灘、學校的環保教育，以至「香港熄燈」等大型運動，我們俱越來越相信，每一個人都可以盡一分力減低能源消耗，為環保出一分力。不過，我們很多時仍會忽略一些簡單直接而又有助環保的生活小節。

就以包裝禮物為例，一年總有親友生日、節日或喜慶的日子，我們會隆而重之，花心思用漂亮的花紙，綁上絲帶及蝴蝶結，為禮物添加個人色彩。可是即使我們何等細心，包裝禮物的用料通常只會使用一次，而傳統中國節慶及加上各式西方慶祝節日，試想像我們每年耗費多少包裝禮物的材料。如果能從環保著眼，我們不難為節日加添一點「綠色」的歡欣。

每逢中秋，家家戶戶都愛向親朋戚友或同事送贈月餅以表心意。月餅禮盒通常以錫物料來製造，每個月餅則獨立包裝。農曆新年時，隨處可見超級市場的職員忙於為顧客將原已包裝精美的禮品，再包上各式各樣的包裝紙。聖誕時分，大家又會將包好的禮物放在聖誕樹下，那些禮品的包裝，以致我們再加添的花紙及配飾，在禮物打開之後便會棄掉。倘若香港人從此不再為禮品包上花紙，每年就有一千二百棵樹免遭砍伐了！

話雖如此，只要動動腦筋，加上點點創意，包裝禮物也可以環保與歡樂兼備，一家大小可以齊心參與。一直致力推動綠色生活的環保組織地球之友，以「CARE」為口號，提醒市民減用包裝紙、管制「過度包裝」、提倡包裝再用及推展廢物循環回收。



Above: Reusing fabric bags or making them yourself is a great way to save on wrapping paper. Using recycled paper and boxes (left) is also a simple way to help.

上：為節省花紙，可藉循環再用布料或自製布袋來包裝禮品。  
左：循環再用紙張及紙盒亦是提倡環保的簡單方法。

要改變包裝過度的陋習其實不難，使用環保的方法來包裝禮物，長遠而言能大幅減少製造廢物，收禮物的人亦能體會你為環保而付出的心意，心思用得其所禮物亦不失高貴，何樂而不為？

最簡單的第一步是循環再用花紙，只需拆禮物時小心一點，再將花紙妥為收好便可循環再用，又或送給朋友再用並解釋原因也可。送給小朋友的禮物則可以用印有漫畫的報紙來包裝，漫畫的繽紛色彩及歡樂的主題最受小朋友歡迎。此外，鞋盒、面紙盒、硬紙盒、錫罐及塑膠容器等都能循環再用，只要保存得好及使用得宜，無論甚麼節慶都有機會大派用場。

另一個更為「高貴」的方法，乃送禮時將禮物放入循環再用的布袋內。這些布袋隨處可以找到，你的家中可能亦收起一些以備不時之需，即使沒有也可以考考手藝來自製一個（見圖）。

首先準備一些布料，基本上由絲到透明硬紗等任何布料均可，不過要貼合環保主題，請用循環再用或可循環再用的布料，而用來送禮，色彩豐富華麗的就最合用。家中的小孩也可以參與設計及製作，共享親子樂。此外，與孩子自製的布袋亦可當作禮物送給別人，亦可自用兼作儲存珍貴財物。

利用紙皮箱或任何厚紙板作包裝禮品的材料亦是一種既經濟又環保的方法。超過九成藉船運運送的用品都是使用紙皮箱來裝載的，故應善用這些材料，而並非讓其當作廢物丟棄。

下一次當你準備節慶禮物，又或只是送一份謝禮時，請緊記環保的重要，並保證你所送的禮物，至少有部份可回收再用。