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Upcycled and Eco Halloween Costumes

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Maintaining your planet-friendly approach to life during the fun and spooky Halloween season starts with upcycled and eco-friendly Halloween costumes. Instead of choosing store bought plastic or synthetic costumes and accessories that are destined to take up space in landfills, why not upcycle – or repurpose existing clothing, textiles, and accessories to create truly original costumes that are one hundred percent kind to Mother Earth? All it takes is a little forethought and planning!

From scary to wacky to sexy Halloween costume styles, there are Eco homemade, upcycled Halloween costumes ideas galore – it's all about the materials that you select for your designs. Hearts loves the creative process involved in upcycling.

We hope by showing you the best ways to get the upcycling job done in time for your October 31st celebration, you'll never buy another Halloween costume again.



Quick Facts: Halloween's Environmental Footprint

- **41 million pounds of waste:** 41 million trick-or-treaters prowl the streets in America each October 31st, and the vast majority of these ghosts, goblins, princesses and superheroes wear store-bought costumes adding up to 41 million pounds of new waste every single Halloween.^[i]
- **\$70+ spent per person for Halloween:** On average, Americans spend \$72.32 on Halloween costumes, accessories, and decorations for a staggering \$6.8 billion to celebrate the season.^[ii] \$2.21 billion goes to Halloween outfits (2011 figure).^[iii]
- **Unrecyclable costume waste:** Halloween costumes and accessories are typically crafted from synthetic fabric and/or plastics that can't be recycled effectively, including plastic trick-or-treat pumpkins and masks.^[iv]
- **PVC costume health hazard:** Unrecyclable PVC (polyvinyl chloride), that flexible, multipurpose material otherwise known as vinyl, is a frequent component in modern, store-bought Halloween costumes, containing a cocktail of toxins, including **phthalates**.^[v] Plus, PVC releases carcinogens known as **dioxins** both during the manufacturing phase and the disposal phase.^[vi]



Take Action! Create Planet-Friendly Halloween Costumes

1. **Upcycle secondhand textiles:** Create memorable designs and props from secondhand clothes, pillow cases, and kitchen items, such as this upcycled [Twilight-inspired vampire costume](#) or a [rodeo clown getup](#). Or dress up as a scary bat or an iPhone (!) with this [eco-friendly Halloween costumes video](#). Upcycle basic hoodies to create wild Halloween costumes by watching this [Guilty Crafter Episode 2: DIY Halloween Costumes From Recycled Hoodies](#) tutorial.
2. **Hold an annual costume swap:** Plan your own Eco-friendly Halloween using this [How to Host a Costume Swap for Halloween guide](#) to swap costumes reduce waste this October.
3. **Buy costumes that are upcyclable:** If you must buy a costume rather than upcycling one yourself, look for designs that don't feature polyester, PVC, or plastic – materials that are difficult or impossible to recycle. The best costume options for a healthier planet should be crafted from natural fibers, such as organic cotton, cruelty-free wool, or cruelty-free silk. Try to envision ways to upcycle your new costume after the big event, in order to get more use out of what you purchase.
4. **Give away or recycle your costumes:** Gifting needy families with used Halloween costumes is caring, compassionate, and so planet-friendly. In fact, it's a great way to share what you already have, while also sharing your green principles within your own community.

Dig Deeper: Learn More About Eco Halloween

- Learn more about the toxicity of dioxins found in everyday products via [HealthyChild.org's dioxins](#) Chemical Encyclopedia.
- Take the [Green Quiz Answer – Halloween Edition](#) via EarthShare to test your knowledge on the eco damage done by this spooky tradition.
- Learn how California's Department of Toxic Substances Control (and the EPA) are trying to banish toxic chemicals from the marketplace by watching this Federal and State partnership to push [Safer Consumer Products video](#).

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