

A Green Halloween

Awaited impatiently by little kids, and dreaded by dentists everywhere, Halloween is a notoriously unhealthy holiday. However, this year while planning ghoulish (and safe!) night, you can go green. You may find yourself asking, "Hallow-green? How is that possible?" Using Halloween as an example, by analyzing the various aspects of the event, one can see how any event can be green without losing its integrity or purpose. The first thing that comes to mind about Halloween is Trick-or-Treating. Plastic-wrapped, high fructose corn syrup-packed candies have become the staple for this holiday: this could be changed. While fruit does not make a satisfying addition to a bag full of candy, there are other ways the goodies that you hand out can be healthier. For example, when you purchase candy, look for brands with little packaging to reduce waste. Also, there are organic candies, which taste just as good as normal treats. If you don't believe me, try one. Although sugar is not ideal, in moderation, there is anecdotal evidence that suggests that high fructose corn syrup is more addictive than sugar and therefore contributes greatly to obesity. In fact, many environments argue that our reliance on corn is dangerous, and since high fructose corn syrup is a corn product, it is best to switch to sugar. If you are throwing a party, you can dip fruit in (organic) chocolate instead of putting out a bowl of candy. Chocolate-covered fruit is fun to make, and it gives a healthy alternative that is out of the ordinary.

To save money this year, skip the new costume. You can swap costumes from last year with friends or even make your own. This could mean a typical sheet-ghost costume, or a one-of-a-kind cowboy getup (You only need some boots, a handkerchief, button-up shirt, hat, and a rope. Most likely, you can find all these ingredients at your house already!) All it takes is a bit of creativity. Vintage stores will also have great clothing and props that could create a unique, re-used costume. Vintage stores (such as Goodwill, Buffalo Exchange, Salvation Army) are not very expensive, and will save the production consequences of a costume. Cotton, for example, is the most heavily pesticide-sprayed industry in the world. In fact, it takes a third of a pound of toxic chemicals to produce one conventional cotton T-shirt. Just imagine how many pounds of chemicals are used to produce all of the Halloween costumes in the country, if one mere T-shirt requires so much! If you choose to decorate your home to partake in the festivities, use a small amount of lights that you use to conserve energy. For the artistically-inclined, you can make your own decorations out of old papers, fabrics, etc. Make sure you save your decorations so that you can use them again next year instead of buying or producing more. Pumpkin-carving is a very traditional Halloween activity; buy your pumpkins from a local farmer or pumpkin patch owner so that your pumpkin does not travel too far and create unnecessary carbon emissions. Remember, the pumpkin has to be shipped from where it is grown! When you are carving, save your pumpkin seeds, and you can roast them to create tasty Halloween treats instead of throwing them out. With candy, a recycled costume, and sustainable decorations, you will be all set for a fantastic Hallogreen!

Sustainable Site of the Week: Check out the eco-costumes on <http://ow.ly/vMUw> and post your own to win \$100 credit at inhabitat.com. By Emily Packer