



# Handmade Wedding

Kate Haines wanted her wedding to reflect her love of nature, sustainability and crafting

**W**hen my partner of 10 years proposed on a romantic weekend break in Brussels I was overjoyed about the prospect of finally getting married and also the thought of planning and celebrating such a special occasion with our two children, family and friends. We talked excitedly about the kind of wedding we'd like and luckily both agreed that we wanted one that was as sustainable and low-impact as possible. Being an avid crafter, I wanted to do as much as possible myself in terms of invitations and decorations, and I was also keen to try to grow my own flowers and arrange them for the day.

**The big three**  
 Little did I realise how much planning goes into a wedding, from choosing a venue to organising catering and arranging entertainment, not to mention the all-important dress. Once we had found a local venue and sent out invitations (recycled and handmade, of course), our next job was to look for a caterer. It was important to us to use a local company that specialised in locally sourced, free-range and seasonal food. Finding a second-hand wedding dress on the internet came next, and I must admit that once those three boxes were ticked I breathed a sigh of relief and started to look forward to what I saw as the fun part.

**Lovely lavender**  
 We started looking at what flowers would be in season in July, the month we had chosen for our wedding. Luckily they included my two favourites, lavender and sweet peas, so we decided to go for a lavender-themed wedding with a lavender and sage green colour scheme. We made lavender bags for favours and used lavender for buttonholes, to decorate the wedding cake and of course in the table settings. We also dried petals from flowers in our garden to make confetti. I chanced upon an old school recorder book for 20p in a charity shop and made confetti cones with the pages.

**Reclaimed and recycled goodies**

Planning an eco-friendly and handmade wedding meant I could indulge my passion for discovering and using preloved and reclaimed items. My local charity shop provided me with my wedding shoes and with a variety of containers for displaying the flowers. For the top table I managed to source some ex-display paper pompons in my colour scheme, some second-hand jute bunting and two beautiful rustic urns. I even used vintage stamps from my dad's old stamp collection for the place settings. The guests loved them, and since the event I've spotted them around people's houses on dressers and mirrors and even in downstairs toilets!

**Home-grown flowers and our knitting aunties**

The venue's co-ordinator raised her eyebrows when I told her I was "doing my own flowers". Undeterred, I spent a couple of days before the wedding picking lavender, sweet peas and aquilegia from my garden and my parents' allotment and arranging them in old china teacups, reclaimed vases, milk bottles, beer bottles and jam jars. It was lovely to be able to take my time and just create. I even added green knitting needles to the flowers for the table where our very special aunties who all knit were to be seated. They were delighted by such a personal touch.

Although I did feel slightly stressed working to a deadline, I really enjoyed making everything myself knowing that the majority of the flowers were seasonal and home grown and hadn't been sprayed with chemicals or picked in an unethical manner. We added some gypsophila from our local flower stall, which cost us just £18 – not bad when you consider that a florist may charge anything from £500 upwards for wedding flowers. Our guests were invited to take the flower arrangements home after the wedding.

**Issues to consider**

From my experience I'd say there are a few things to look out for. For example, when booking a venue, check the terms and conditions. Are there charges if you want to use your own caterer? Are you allowed to decorate the venue yourself or bring your >

