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A GREEN WEDDING RECEPTION



■ Vivek Tilwani and Manasvi Joshi opted for a green wedding reception at home, picking June 5 to coincide with World Environment Day. PRASAD GORI/HT

Reetika Subramanian
 ■ reetika.subramanian@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: When Dr Vivek Tilwani, 35, a medico-legal professional, attended a friend's wedding last year, the sight of generator vans, smoke from fire-crackers and heaps of food dumped in the garbage ruined his mood.

"While the guests were having a great time, my friend's neighbours were severely inconvenienced by the noise and pollution," said Dr Tilwani.

So when Tilwani married 30-year-old lawyer Manasvi Joshi last week, the couple decided to have a simple, green wedding reception at home, even picking the date — June 5 — to coincide with World Environment Day.

"Right from the handmade wedding invitations to earthen pots for the sweets and the use of *ahimsak* or non-violent flowers picked up after they fell off the tree or bush, we have stuck to the theme of Environment Day," said Dr Tilwani, who also asked his friends not to buy any bouquets as gifts.

The Tilwanis admit that the wedding cost a pretty packet. "The handmade paper for the invitations was more expensive than regular card paper," said Dr Tilwani. "Also, we decided to have the wedding in a five-star ecotel, Orchid, so we ended up with a big fat bill. But we still preferred to spend that money protecting the environment rather than having a typical

Big Fat Indian Wedding."

Green weddings, a common trend in the west, are now catching on among urban Indians. Wedding planners have even started offering 'Green Wedding' packages tailored to suit the budgets and demands of their clients.

"Couples nowadays come to us demanding an intimate wedding plan, which implies downsizing the pomp and show and sticking to a simple theme," said Candice Pereira, co-founder and creative head of Marry Me wedding planners. "We suggest day weddings, which helps cut electricity costs, and also tell the couples to hand out saplings to their guests as return gifts."

FIVE TIPS TO TURN YOUR WEDDING GREEN

- Send out your invitations on 100% recycled paper, or send out your invites via email.
- Opt for a garden-themed wedding, transforming the venue into a lush paradise using organic materials.
- Give potted plants or packets of seeds to your guests as return gifts.
- Put soya-based food, lots of salads and green vegetables on your menu.
- Have a green honeymoon; travel by train or ship and plan it like an eco-vacation.

(SOURCE: MARRY ME WEDDING PLANNERS)