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# February Action of the Month: Share Resources

By Abigail Stofer Art/Photo: Hannah Lee



Everyone has some sort of community that they rely on. Humans are naturally social beings and look for connections with the people around us, whether that is with our friends, family, teammates, or classmates. However, we often overlook a potential connection that is right next door to us—our neighbors! SLIA's February Action of the Month: Share Resources challenges all of us to build this community with our neighbors in order to become more sustainable and connected.

This action involves sharing household objects that we might only use once in a while, such as a socket wrench or a ladder, with our neighbors. These items are ones that take up a lot of space, cost a lot of money, and sit unused in our garages for the majority of the year. By sharing these resources, you can benefit the environment because you will be cutting down on the resources and energy it takes to build and transport items. The best way to organize the diverse set of skills, knowledge, and resources your neighbors have is to make a list!

In order to create this shared resource list, your first step will be to talk to your neighbors to see if they would be willing to participate in the plan. If you want to start small, you can begin by just asking the neighbors you are close to and have already established a baseline of trust with. Once you have a few neighbors who are willing to contribute to the list, it is time to decide the format of the list.



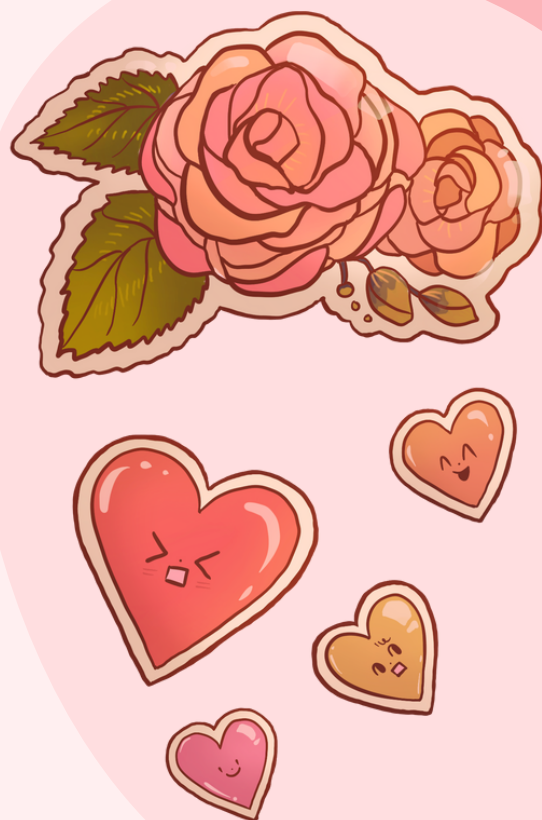
A Google or Excel spreadsheet may be a good format to start out with so you can organize the resources. A few important categories to consider adding onto the list include: who is offering it, how to contact that person, and whether there are any special instructions.

It is also a good idea to set some baseline rules and expectations for everyone. How long will each resource be loaned for? Will there be any rules on asking for an item, inspecting one, or returning it?

After you've created the foundation for the list, it is time to create and share it! You can start expanding the amount of people who have access to the list. Make sure everyone has access to the list through shared communication such as a Google group or a group chat, and make sure everyone knows how to use the list. You can also send out reminders once or twice a year to ask people to update their information in the spreadsheet if needed. Additionally, keep in mind that the list does not need to be limited to physical items. Skills and services such as sewing or babysitting are also useful tools that can be shared.

Another idea is to host a swap or freecycle event with your neighbors. At these events, neighbors can bring items they are no longer using, such as clothing or household items, and swap them for other things that might be more useful to them. You could even incorporate fun activities such as potlucks into these events!

Creating a shared resources list with your neighbors is a great way to be sustainable while also forming deeper connections with the people around you. If you want to join us in taking on this action, you can find out more information on the [Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge website](#). Join us in making a difference, one action at a time!



# Cards: A Shocking Waste!

By: Alison Chiu

Traditionally, the gift of a stuffed animal, some chocolates, and a well-written card are the staples of Valentine's Day. In fact, a whopping 65% of gifts on Valentine's Day each year are cards! However, due to their mass production, cards can become wasteful and unnecessary.

For example, of the 145 million cards exchanged on Valentine's Day, numerous different types exist, ranging from glittery ones to those that can sing and talk. A good rule of thumb to keep in mind is the fancier the card, the less recyclable it becomes. While cards with little metallic details are perfectly recyclable, cards with more elaborate designs with batteries and other electronics are not. Make sure you look into what materials can be recycled and what cannot! (Check out a helpful guide here.) Details like glitter, glue, plastic, and foil may make the card off-limits for recycling!

If you do choose to gift a card, make sure it is meaningful to the receiver. A meaningless card is merely wasted, so make sure the receiver will cherish the card so it doesn't end up in the trash. Putting both time and effort into a card may help you jazz up a more "plain" card as well.



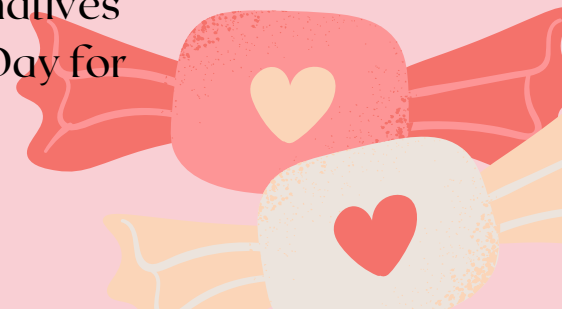
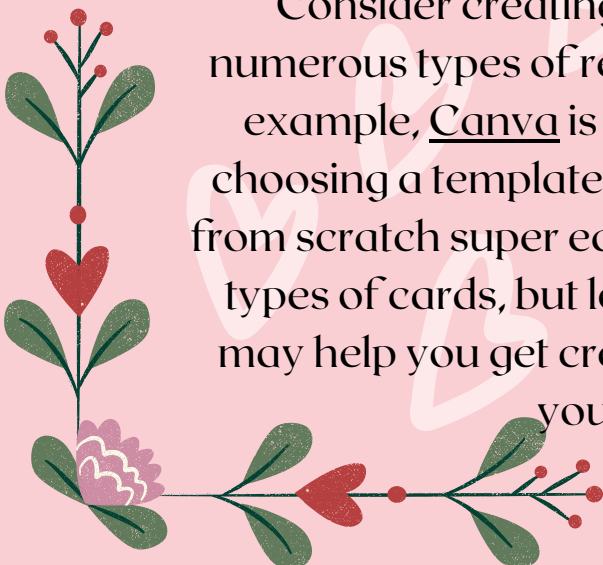


Often, Valentine's Day doesn't require a card to be meaningful, so you might even want to think about ditching the card in the first place.



Furthermore, look into different types and materials of cards. Many types of cards are recyclable, so when choosing one, avoid materials (referenced above) that may make it unable to be recycled later. You may also want to look into biodegradable, plantable paper (such as some found here) with seeds that can germinate when planted in soil. You can even buy edible cards! Feel free to get creative with your card-giving this Valentine's Day and help reduce some of the waste emitted each year!

Consider creating an online card! There are numerous types of resources in a click's reach. For example, [Canva](https://www.canva.com) is a great resource that makes choosing a template for a card or designing a card from scratch super easy. Not only are there different types of cards, but looking into some alternatives may help you get creative this Valentine's Day for your loved ones!



# CUPID'S GIFT

BY: JOSHUA ODIASE

ART/PHOTO: KARLINA MEYER



It's February - the birds are chirping, romance is in the air, and it's that time when roses cost a substantial sum of money. Though the urge to get a gift for your significant other this Valentine's Day is compelling, finding gifts that are sustainable and affordable while still conveying the same amount of importance and appreciation can be difficult.

Gifts don't necessarily have to be expensive or grand at the expense of precious wildlife and biodiversity. Instead of purchasing chocolates that lead to massive deforestation in West Africa, a better option is investing in candies that bring the same quality of flavor without deleterious effects on the environment. Vegan candies, for example, save the environment and your health at the same time.

Great alternative gifts are plants (cheaper than roses), fruit baskets, scented candles, solar-powered technology, or even an eco-friendly coffee maker. There are countless sustainable alternatives for gifts on the internet. In most cases, they aren't advertised commercially and may require imagination, but should be embraced. The recipient's appreciation of your creativity will be priceless.

Gifts are a customary pastime for Valentine's Day, but with the changing climate, the damage these gifts could inflict on the environment can't continue. Breaking the often-harmful habit of buying traditional Valentine's Day presents and getting your significant other a more eco-friendly gift will be a win-win situation for you and the planet.



# Word Search & Crossword Puzzle



By: Stacey Ndeke

Art/Photo: Hritika Trivedi and Karlina Meyer

Print out or digitally complete!

Answer Key on Pg. 11





# VALENTINES DAY WORD SEARCH

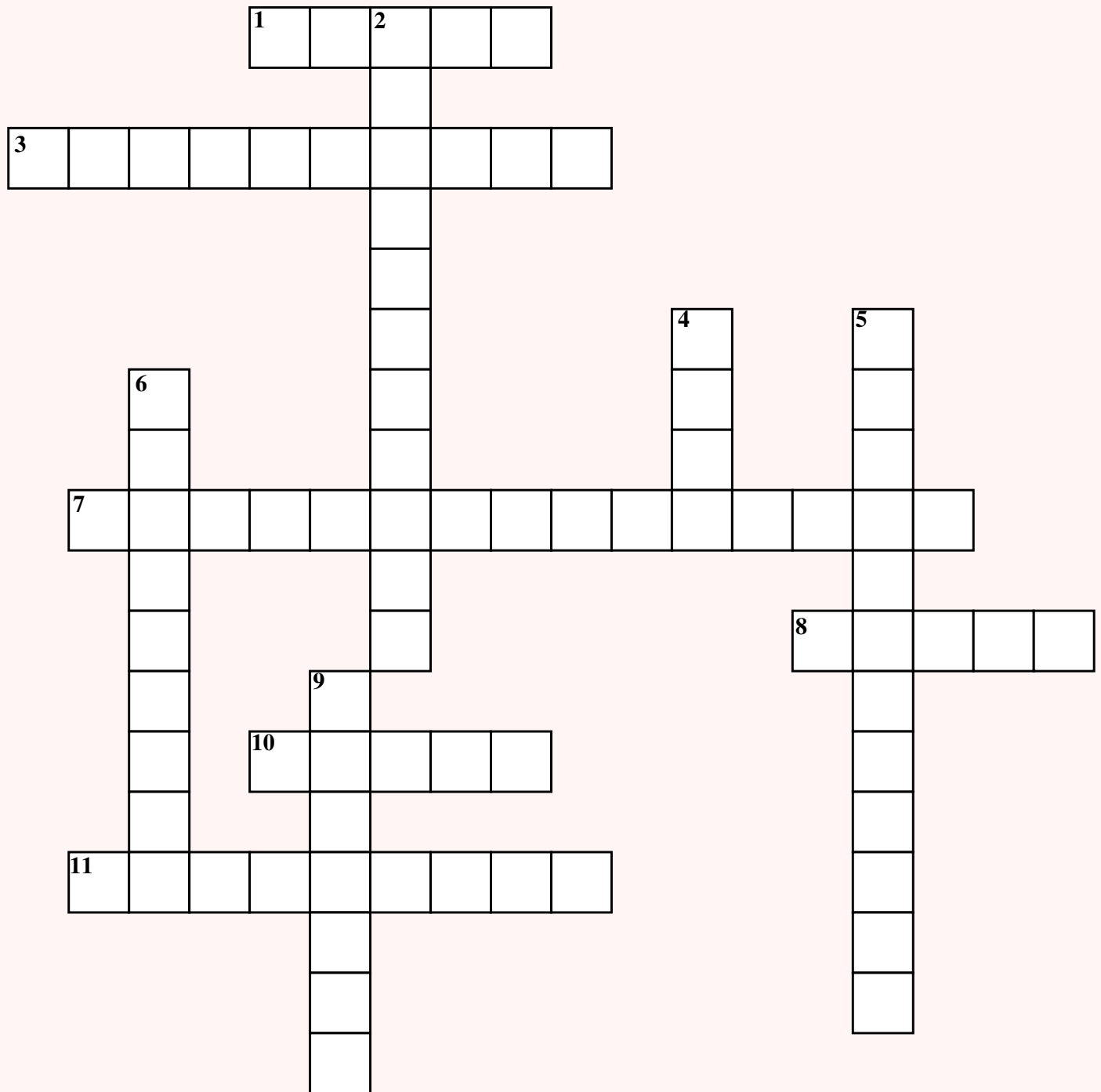
Y E L B A N I A T S U S G I U  
R O M A N T I C D M T N M P R  
B U P C Y C L E W A S T E I E  
F S I N V A L E N T I N E S E  
R T O O G P L L U D O S M T A  
L F C S I C Y C R A J R C W R  
I I O T F U E E A N L F E I T  
P G C F T W T L H D W H L V H  
K Y S O C I A C O I K H A H B  
N T T K A S L Y O P E P Y D P  
L F V O R T O C I U F G F D K  
O S B O D B C E U C K Y W D S  
V D L M S Y O R S R E W O L F  
E P U I W C H C T D W C O O A  
C O J A A O C F R F L L E F F

1. CHOCOLATE
2. CUPID
3. EARTH
4. FLOWERS
5. GIFTCARDS

6. GIFTS
7. LOVE
8. RECYCLE
9. ROMANTIC
10. SCOCO

11. SLIA
12. SUSTAINABLE
13. UPCYCLE
14. VALENTINES
15. WASTE

# VALENTINES DAY CROSSWORD



## Across

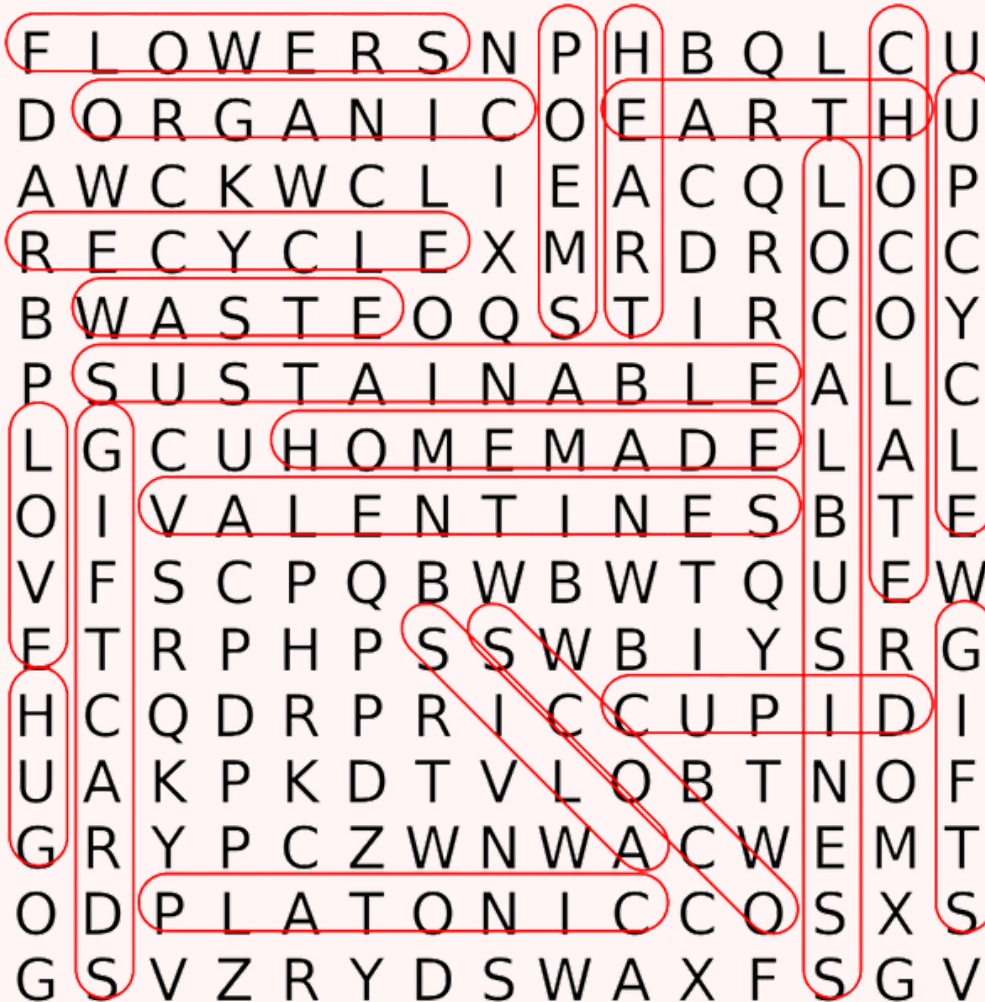
- [1] Unwanted, Excess, Leftover, ...
- [3] Platonic Connection
- [7] Support... !
- [8] Our Home
- [10] Second Planet from the Sun
- [11] Fuzzy Friend

## Down

- [2] We Strive to be... !
- [4] A Powerful Emotion
- [5] Can be more sentimental
- [6] Made from Cocoa Beans
- [9] Reduce, Reuse, & ...

# ANSWER KEY

## WORD SEARCH



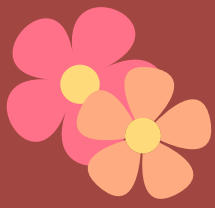
## CROSSWORD

### Across

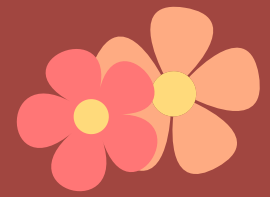
- [1] Waste
- [3] Friendship
- [7] Local Businesses
- [8] Earth
- [10] Venus
- [11] Teddy Bear

### Down

- [2] Sustainable
- [4] Love
- [5] Homemade Gift
- [6] Chocolate
- [9] Recycle



# Tips on Buying Local and Organic Flowers



By Samriddhi P.

Art/Photo: Karlina Meyer



Did you know that more than 80% of flowers sold in America are grown overseas? Each year on Valentine's Day, over 500 million tons of flowers are imported from other countries to the United States. According to Heirloomsoul.com, "Flowers are flown in planes overseas and then driven across the country using massive amounts of petroleum just to be delivered to grocery stores and flower shops." Not only does this trip emit large amounts of greenhouse gasses, but these internationally-grown flowers are grown using heavy chemicals and pesticides that are not sustainable. Flowers that come from outside countries are covered in chemicals to avoid the transmission of diseases, to prevent rotting during transit time, and to ensure that the flowers look "good." Unfortunately, this affects our health, our planet, and our environment.

Most of the United States' flowers are imported primarily from countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, and the Netherlands. Many of these flowers aren't grown in sufficient environments for workers and don't follow labor regulations, and the majority of the farmers who plant these flowers are underpaid. According to Blue Heron Farm, "How your flowers were grown impacts not only the health of the farm where they're grown, but also the health and safety of the workers handling them, and you, the consumer, enjoying them."



When you purchase local flowers, you are not only supporting local businesses but also helping to diminish the carbon emissions caused by the transport of flowers across the world. It is important that we make sustainable choices when it comes to gifting our loved ones flowers, whether that is for Valentine's Day or any other holiday!

These are just a few of the advantages of purchasing locally-grown flowers. Remember to consider these tips and benefits when buying local flowers this Valentine's Day! You can search and support your local flower farmers through [Floret Flower Farmer Collective](#), a website where you can find a local farmer or even other farmers from around the world. You can learn more about their flowers, where they come from, and do your own research to make sure they meet your needs before purchasing!





CLIMATE CAREERS CHAT

# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Thursday, March 2nd from 6:30-8PM

Join us to learn about wildlife conservation from two experts at this free, interactive youth-produced virtual panel!

register here:



[tinyurl.com/CCCMarch23](https://tinyurl.com/CCCMarch23)



Christina Schwandt

Lindsay Wildlife Experience



Soumya Suresh

Sequoia Ecological Consulting



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COLLABORATE

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**SUSTAINABLE**



**LEADERS IN ACTION**