

Green Tip of the Week...

Green Tip-12-1

For those of you that don't want to give more "stuff" to people on you list who already have lots of stuff, and who want to make a difference with your gift giving, here's a list of very green gifts that make a true difference!

1. **Charity of Choice Gift Certificate:** Tis Best partners with more than 200 certified nonprofits so you can give a "charity of choice" gift certificate, allowing recipients to donate anywhere from \$10 to \$200 to a favorite charity. The colorful gift cards make great last-minute gifts and stocking stuffers. Learn more at tisbest.org, 1-206-501-3005.
2. **Adopt a Cheetah:** The Hoedspruit Endangered Species Center's Adopt-a-Cheetah Program is designed specifically to engage children in the conservation, rescue and rearing of an endangered cheetah. In addition to updates from the "Cheetah Chat" newsletter, your child will receive an adoption certificate, mug, stuffed cheetah and a plaque at the entrance to the adopted cheetah's enclosure. \$170 at hesc.co.za.
3. **Save Bees and some people, too!** Give struggling farmers in Honduras the sweet rewards of a marketable skill -- the Mercy Corps' Bee Hive Kit. It keeps families and the planet sustainable by providing the beekeeping know-how to provide themselves a marketable resource while helping to preserve the disappearing honey bee. Learn more at mercycorps.org, 1-888-256-1900.
4. **Plant a billion trees:** The Nature Conservancy is responsible for preserving scenic and ecologically important land around the world. The non-profit land trust has three gift options this year that allow you to help plant a billion trees in Brazil's Atlantic Forest, adopt an acre in Las Californias, U.S. or coral reefs in Palau, or a number of other unique gift options. \$10 and up at nature.org.
5. **Adopt a Polar Bear:** Who can resist the adorable polar bear? As global warming causes the polar bear's delicate ice habitat to shrink, you can help with the World Wildlife Fund's, "Adopt a Polar Bear Gift," a cuddly plush polar bear. Your adoption kit includes a stuffed polar bear and adoption certificate. Proceeds go to support polar bear conservation efforts. \$50-\$250 at worldwildlife.org, 1-800-225-5993.
6. **Preserve an Acre of Rainforest:** Make a donation in your loved one's name. For \$100, you can protect one acre of rain forest with the Rainforest Alliance, one of 88 environmental charities that is rated with four stars by Charity Navigator. Consult the independent watchdog's list of most financially responsible environmental organizations before making a donation to the cause of your choice.

In keeping with the charitable posting last week, I have discovered the perfect place for your old raggedy towels and blankets when they aren't good enough for Good Will or a homeless shelter. Rather than tossing them in the garbage, give them to a local animal shelter. Shelters use them as beds for their animals. I called the local Oak Park Shelter and they were thrilled to take my old blankets and towels.