ECOlunchboxes urges Earth lovers to go green for Valentine's Day this year by choosing eco-gifts that will please their sweethearts and Mother Earth.

The gift of reusable, no-plastic lunch ware eliminates trash and reduces carbon footprint

LAFAYETTE, Calif. - ECOlunchboxes urges Earth lovers to go green for Valentine's Day this year by choosing eco-gifts that will please their sweethearts and Mother Earth.

"Try something new and show your Valentine some eco-love with a green gift that will keep on giving all year long," says Sandra Ann Harris, founder of ECOlunchboxes that offers handmade lunch bags with cloth napkins and stainless steel food containers.

"Green may not be the typical color for Valentine's Day but I predict we'll be seeing a lot of interest in sustainable gifts," says Harris whose eco-mom company is based in Lafayette, Calif. "Reusable lunchware is a classic green gift. It's shocking how quickly plastic baggies, disposable utensils and pre-packaged snacks add up to a lot of extra expense and waste."

An average U.S. family spends about $400 extra on disposable lunchware and creates more than 4,000 pieces of trash unnecessarily, according to the results of the recently released ECOlunchboxes Lunchbox Waste Study.

An ECOlunchbox Kit, which includes a lunch bag, a stainless food container and bamboo spork, "is a great way to encourage friends and family to make the shift to more sustainable habits," says Harris, a mother of two elementary school age children.

Harris designed the handmade "ECOlunchbag + 3 Matching Napkins" for children and adults. The colorful and gifty lunch bags are shaped like the kraft paper bags used for generations, but they're machine washable, sewn from artisan block-printed cotton and can be carried as a backpack or hip bag.

"I was tired of using so much plastic and concerned about its potential health effects on my family," explains Harris. "I decided to develop a lunch kit made from tried-and-true natural materials: cotton and steel."

In its Lunchbox Waste Study, ECOlunchboxes.com calculates that a family (two children and one parent) packs lunches five times a week that include a sandwich in a Ziploc, one juice box, a yogurt cup with a plastic spoon, a snack pack of crackers and a paper napkin. Buying in bulk and packing in reusable containers can result in savings of $400 and 4,320 pieces of trash prevented annually, the study concluded.

ECOlunchboxes' stainless steel food containers and handmade ECOlunchbags are available at select Whole Foods, Natural Grocery Company in El Cerrito, many independent natural groceries as well as through e-tailers like www.taraluna.com, www.getngreen.com, and www.nubiusorganics.com

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