

UC San Diego

Books and Book Chapters

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DIY Makers' Day

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Peer reviewed

DIY Makers' Day

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NUTRITION INFORMATION

How can we inspire our users to actively engage with reducing, reusing, and recycling throughout the year? Host a DIY Makers' Day, of course. This hands-on event is jam-packed with DIY projects featuring creative reuse and sustainable ingredients. Participants leave with goodies they've made and recipes and instructions so they can continue creating at home. This is a great event for showcasing your library's and community's green resources.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In addition to learning how to make their own projects using recycled or "green" materials, participants have a chance to stop by a pledge station and commit to making a sustainable habit part of their everyday life.

NUMBER SERVED

60–100 people typically attend this event when it is held at the UC San Diego Library, but yours might serve more or fewer depending on your community, room size, and the length of the event.

COOKING TIME

1½–2 hours works well at our library, but you can make your event as long or short as you please.

DIETARY GUIDELINES

By focusing on individual actions, this event inspires our users to rethink some of their daily habits.

INGREDIENTS AND EQUIPMENT

- Large room to accommodate several tables with space around each so users can do hands-on projects.
- Supplies for each table vary depending on the project. Try to gather recycled supplies (e.g., newspapers or old yogurt containers) or reusable ones (e.g., Mason jars for the sugar scrubs).
- Copies of recipes at each table to take home.
- Volunteers to set up, clean up, and assist users at each station.
- Informational materials highlighting library and community resources.

PREPARATION

This is an annual event for our library. For planning purposes, we use an intranet page that we update each year with project ideas and notes about the previous year's event. Well in advance of the event, the Library Sustainability Committee (LSC) reaches out to library staff for donations of recycled materials used in the various projects, and we in-

ventory and order materials such as jelly jars, vinegar, and coconut oil. As the time draws near, we work with our campus partners (Staff Sustainability Network, campus Earth Month Committee, student organizations, etc.) to get the word out.

COOKING METHOD

LSC members plan the DIY projects. We like to repeat popular activities, but also add 1–2 new projects each year to keep it interesting for repeat attendees.

Sample projects include

- **Make your own cleaning supplies.** Visitors whip up all-purpose cleaners and disinfectant sprays with ingredients such as vinegar, baking soda, tea tree oil, and castile soap. These concoctions go home in Mason jars along with recipes for more.
- **Make your own buttons, magnets, and mirrors.** The library saves book jackets throughout the year. Users are invited to choose some favorites and get creative with the library's button-making machine.
- **Make your own body scrub or deodorant.** Using coconut oil, baking soda, arrowroot, essential oils, raw sugar, and even cocoa, users whip up green

personal care concoctions that they take home in jelly jars along with recipes for more.

- **“Green” pledge.** Attendees reflect on their current sustainability practices and think about one new activity they can commit to in the coming year. Using whiteboards and markers, they record their pledge and pose for a picture, which, with permission, can be posted to social media to help share new ideas and encourage others.
- **Gift bags.** Recycled newspaper, some staples, a bit of twine, and clever folding is all it takes to create unique gift bags. These are great for taking projects home along with instructions to make many more.
- **Succulent planting.** In Southern California, being water-wise is a must. Hardy succulents are easy to grow from cuttings and provide a splash of green no matter where you live. Library staff bring cuttings from their gardens and collect single-serving yogurt containers and similar sized cups for pots for the day of the event. Add a box of dirt from a gardener’s backyard, some peat pots just in case, and everyone leaves with a bouquet of beautiful plants.
- **3-D printing.** Staff from our Digital Media Lab demonstrate how to print items using 3-D printing filaments made from natural, sustainable materials.

In addition to the DIY projects, a tabletop display highlights books from the library’s collections and offers information from local organizations on water resources, gardening, recycling, and more.

CHEF’S NOTES

Put on your party hat! Be ready to chat, share ideas, and watch smiles grow as people move from table to table creating their own DIY goodies and sharing ideas about sustainability and crafty projects.

Partner up. Consider partnering with a nearby creative reuse center or other campus groups. If you like, reach out to artists, activists, and even the water department as you plan your event. The more the merrier.

Just in case. Have copies of the recipes and instructions for each DIY project. This can be a lifesaver if you run out of ingredients or attendees don’t have time to try every project. Alternatively, post recipes in sign holders so attendees can snap a picture for later use.

Picture perfect. Do post a sign or obtain releases for photographs that you intend to share on social media. You can even create a space for people to share their own pictures.

The UC San Diego Library’s event is always well attended with a mix of students, staff, and members of the campus and wider community.