

ECO-WORRIER
ANNA SHEPARD

Present and correct



Q Is it ethically acceptable to pass on unwanted presents to others?

A This practice, known in the US as regifting, is supported by a website (regiftable.com) that includes advice such as "if you have to dust it off, it is not regiftable" and "never feel guilty about regifting once you've done it".

As an eco-ending for an unloved pair of musical socks or an unwatched box set, it strikes me as a perfectly sensible way to ensure that things you don't want are passed on to someone who will appreciate them. What else would you do with them? Stuff them in the back of a cupboard? Take them to an overburdened charity shop?

Be careful, though. The ultimate regifting

disaster is to give something back to its original owner. But so long as you follow the tips on the website — use Post-it Notes to remind yourself who gave you what and make sure that you wrap the gifts in good quality paper with a new gift tag — you shouldn't have any problems.

If you're still feeling uncomfortable, you could think about confessing and letting the recipients know that they are playing a part in the regifting movement, an exciting green phenomenon that will spare the world from being burdened by more stuff.

Next Christmas, be more explicit about what you want. Perhaps suggest a charity donation or a homemade gift, or set your friends and relatives a price limit. Alternatively, follow in the footsteps of a friend of mine who hosts a party every January to which everyone brings at least one unwanted Christmas present. Guests turn up for mulled wine and mince pies to trade presents or simply donate them to a "free" pile, from which anyone can take. It's a bit like clothes-swapping with a festive theme.

How Green Are My Wellies? (Eden Project Books, £14), by Anna Shepard, is available at www.amazon.co.uk



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GREENIE POINTS

✓ DO IT
Book tickets now for the two-day climate change festival hosted by the London forum for debate Intelligence Squared (iq2greenfestival.com). The debates on January 24 and 25 will include speakers such as Tony Juniper, of Friends of the Earth, and David King, the former chief science adviser to the Government, as well *Times* columnist Camilla Cavendish.

🖱️ CLICK IT
Hats off to a product that gives a strictly sustainable boost to our sex lives. At the risk of taking green living a step too far, you may wish to take note that the first lubricant to be certified organic by the Soil Association has hit the shelves. Made from plant extracts and free of parabens and petroleum, you can purchase a bottle of the suitably named Yes on yesyesyes.org (£5.39, 25ml), or at any Fresh and Wild store.

✗ SKIP IT
Frugal times call for careful shopping habits, but think twice before heading to Lidl, the discount retailer. It came bottom in a report by *Ethical Consumer* magazine on the social and environmental records of supermarkets, failing on workers' rights and environmental behaviour. The good news is that there's now a reason to splash out on luxury items at Marks and Spencer, which came top of the list. See ethicalconsumer.org