

Tools and Adhesives

Gift wrapping requires only a few essential tools, which I've highlighted below with asterisks. The rest of the things on the list, if you don't already have them in your arsenal, are readily available from any art or craft outlet, as and when you need them.

1 CUTTING MAT A non-slip, self-healing surface for cutting paper, card and other materials, with guidelines marked for cutting accuracy.

2 PAPER TRIMMER A tool designed to cut several sheets of paper or a single piece of card quickly and cleanly, achieving a perfect straight edge with one smooth movement. It can also be used to create paper ribbon as well as other trimmings. A basic version is shown here and this should be used on a cutting mat. For more frequent use, consider investing in a good quality, heavy-duty paper cutter.

3 WOODEN RULER Only suitable for accurate measuring and drawing a straight line.

4 *STAINLESS STEEL RULER Unlike a wooden ruler, this provides a sound guide for scoring and cutting with a blade. An extra-long version gives a solid straight edge for tearing wrapping paper on a roll.

5 TRANSPARENT LINE GAUGE RULER

Most often seen in the graphic art or printing industries, the extra line guides can be used for measuring type and line spacing.

6 ROUND HOLLOW PUNCH

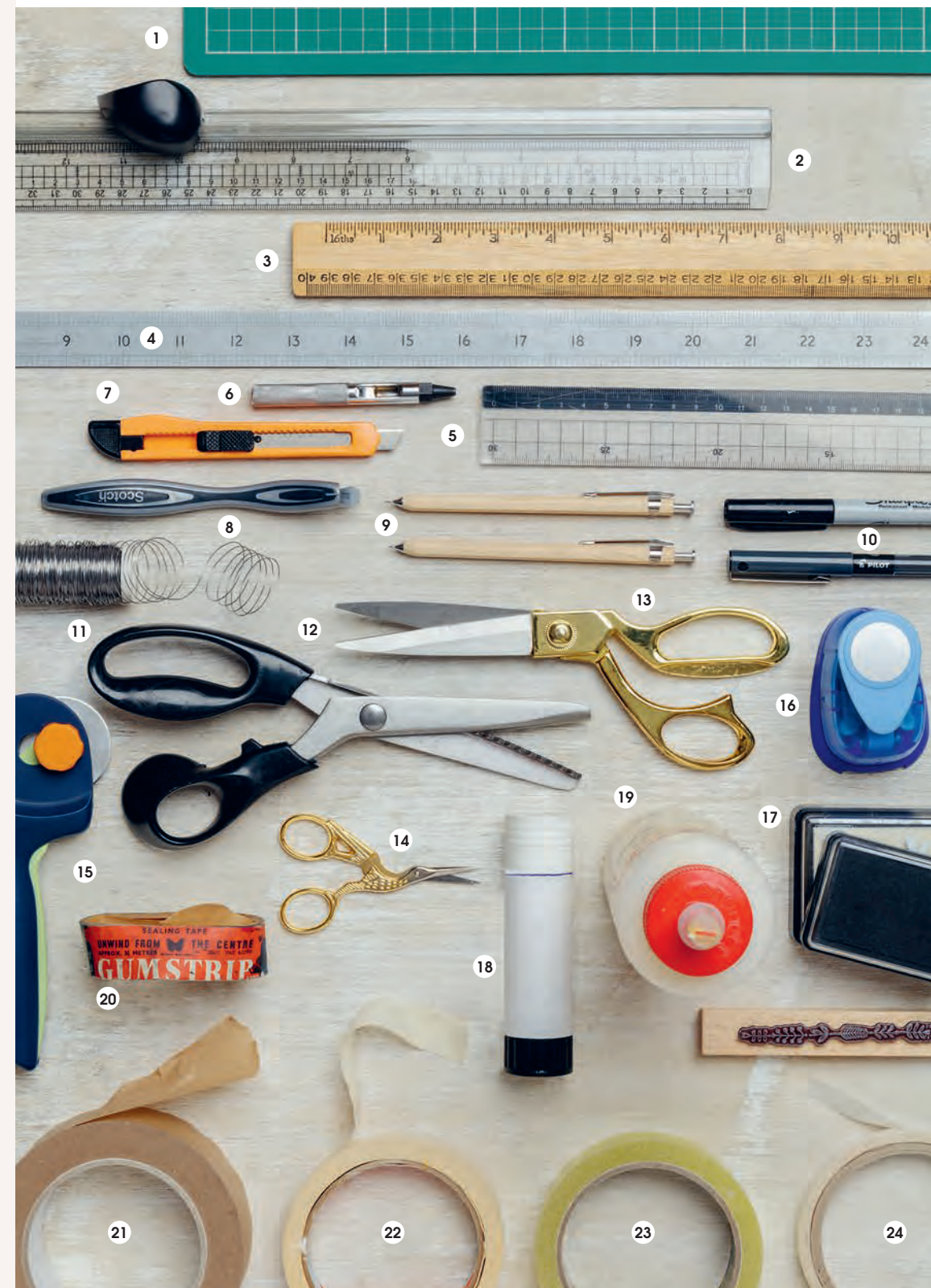
Available in a variety of sizes for punching a single hole, essential for making gift tags from scratch, and if you plan to make vast numbers, choose a product that punches through several layers of card at once.

7 *RETRACTABLE CRAFT KNIFE

For cutting paper and card with confidence and precision; its flexible tip is especially good for smaller projects.

8 GIFT WRAP CUTTER One example of many products designed to easily glide through paper to give a smooth cut, especially useful for those who may find cutting difficult.

9 *PENCIL Choose a precision pencil for unprecedented control.



10 PENS Choose marker pens and precision roller balls in a variety of widths and colours for a smooth, skip-free illustrating and lettering experience.

11 CRAFT WIRE For most gift-wrapping decorations, a medium-thin wire (0.64mm/22 gauge) is best.

12 PINKING SHEARS These have serrated blades for making zigzag cuts to stop fabric edges from fraying and as well as these, you'll need a good pair of ***FABRIC SCISSORS**, essential for getting a good finish when working with ribbon. Never use these to cut paper or materials that can dull their ultra-sharp blades.

13 *PAPER SCISSORS The thicker the paper, the larger the scissors should be, and the sharper the better. Choose a comfortable pair with long straight blades that glide easily through the entire length of the cut.

14 SMALL EMBROIDERY SCISSORS Vital for any intricate cutting jobs.

15 ROTARY CUTTER Boasting ergonomic handles and titanium-enhanced blades, a rotary cutter with a 45mm (1¾in) blade is ideal for cutting fabric, felt, vinyl or paper, and is the perfect size for a variety of tasks including cutting multiple layers and straight lines.

16 CIRCLE CRAFT PUNCH For the effortless creation of precise circles time after time.

17 STAMP AND INK PADS With hundreds of different stamp designs to choose from and eco-friendly, vegetable-based inks available in a variety of colours, these are useful for decorating papers and labels.

18 *GLUE STICK Available in eco-friendly forms, made of entirely natural ingredients, meaning your wrapping can be safely recycled. I find these small tubes of semi-solid, water-based adhesive to be the most efficient, convenient and easy-to-use method to bond eco-friendly wrapping papers together. You only need to apply glue to one of the surfaces, but it helps to reinforce

the edges with an extra swipe of glue before you make your bond to ensure good adhesion, though it will touch-hold Kraft paper in seconds. Any excess smears on unwanted areas can be gently wiped away with a barely damp cloth. Look for a quality brand with a low-water formula to avoid stretching or wrinkling the paper. A little goes a long, long way and the tubes can be recycled.

19 PVA GLUE A non-toxic glue with a smooth consistency, this adhesive can be used to stick paper, card, cloth, wood and other porous materials. Washable and clear-drying, it can also be used as a glazing medium.

20 GUMMED PAPER TAPE Wet the shiny side with water to make it sticky, ready for use.

21 KRAFT PAPER TAPE With a silicone-free backing, this biodegradable tape is 100 per cent recyclable.

22 FRAMER'S MASKING TAPE Not recyclable.

23 CLEAR ADHESIVE TAPE Polypropylene-based, pressure-sensitive tape often referred to as 'sticky tape', which, if left attached to wrapping paper, makes it unpulvable. Leading manufacturers have developed environmentally friendly, plant-based versions of this gift-wrapping mainstay, which should be sought out if you choose not to use an alternative.

24 DOUBLE-SIDED TAPE This is often considered the professional's choice for gift wrapping as it results in an invisible finish. However, it has an almost instant bond, making it hard to reposition, and its protective backing can be time-consuming to peel off. Seek out the more environmentally friendly versions being developed by leading manufacturers.



Choosing Paper

As long as the paper is durable enough for your needs and your gift is neatly encased, just about anything goes as far as paper is concerned! This selection offers food for thought, but if in doubt, the ubiquitous 80gsm Kraft paper has endured in popularity for good reason.

BEING ECO-FRIENDLY

We all have an obligation to our planet to be conscious consumers. The holiday season always brings this into stark focus when, despite all we know, the shops are full of gift-wrapping paraphernalia that is neither sustainably made nor recyclable, meaning that, yet again, most of what is bought will end up in landfill.

Gift wrapping is part of our gift-giving culture but it needs to evolve for a greener future. There are so many cheap, and often free, found or repurposed materials all around us that with a little bit of lateral thinking could be used to start a gift-wrapping revolution. Once you start looking, you will begin to see interesting options for gift wrap everywhere.

The selection of papers shown here represents eco-friendly options that can safely be used to gift wrap – but you can go further. It is my dearest wish that the ideas in this book will enable you to have the

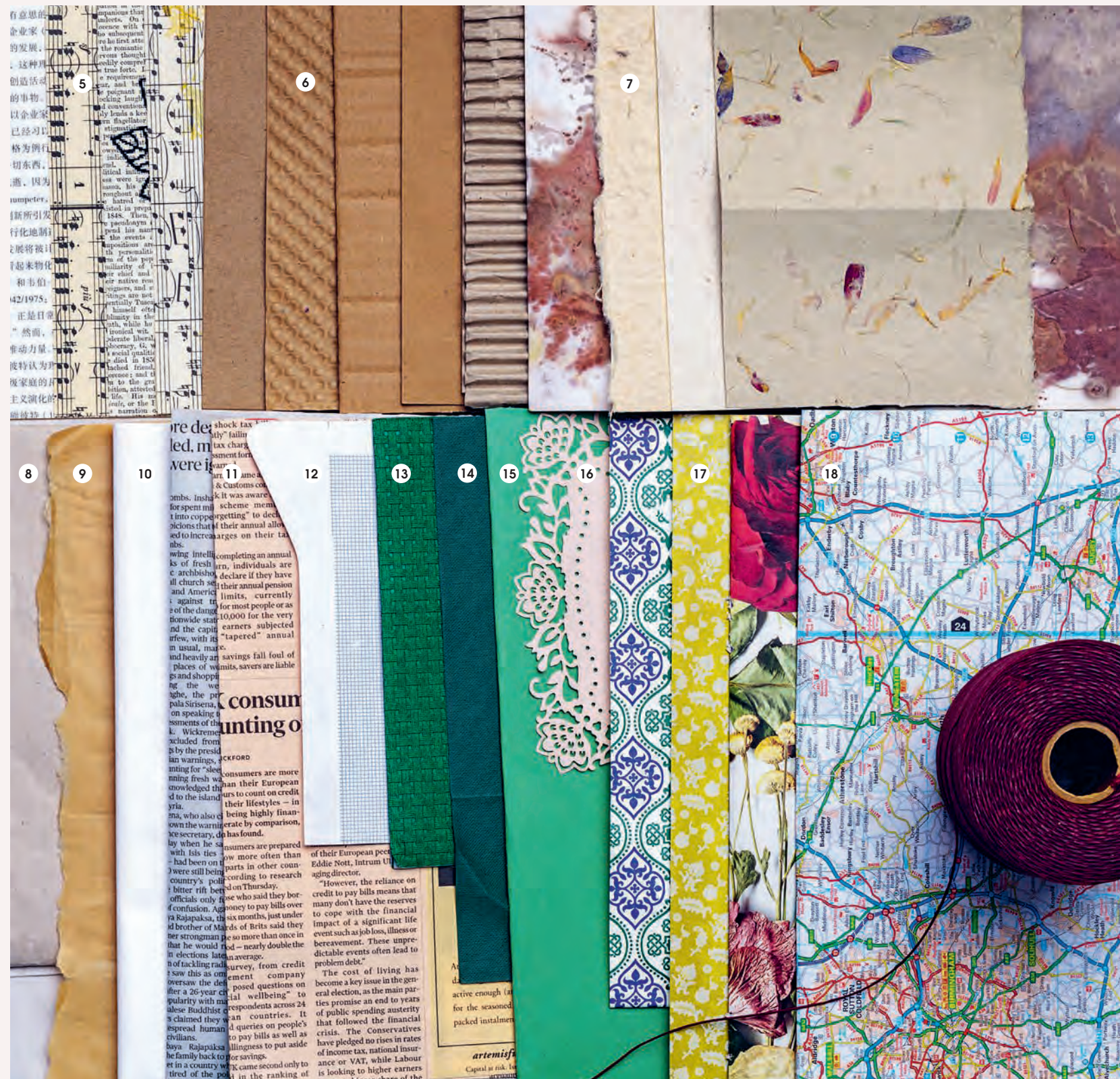
confidence to use what is already available to you when gift wrapping, rather than going out to buy more.

I am not entirely against regular gift wrap – there is a vast array of stunning papers available in every conceivable colour, in eye-catching prints and designs, and I do understand how those shiny, tempting rolls of loveliness can draw you in. Sometimes they are simply the best option for your requirements. If you want to purchase traditional wrapping paper, keep a look out for products made from recycled materials that can themselves be reused or recycled, and always do the scrunch test (see page 16). However, I encourage you to discover a new freedom with your gift-wrap choices, to deconstruct the usual notions of what a wrapped gift is supposed to look like. So, in addition to giving consideration to your purchased paper materials, start collecting instead of buying more.

- 1 Parcel paper (page 14)
- 2 Plain Kraft paper (page 14)
- 3 Coloured Kraft paper (page 14)
- 4 Hand-printed wrapping paper (page 14)
- 5 Various book pages
- 6 Cardboard and packaging
- 7 Handmade papers
- 8 Plain packing/blank newsprint paper
- 9 Greaseproof paper
- 10 Tissue paper
- 11 Newspaper
- 12 Used envelopes
- 13 Napkins
- 14 Magazines and leaflets
- 15 Sugar paper
- 16 Doilies
- 17 Printed card stock
- 18 Outdated maps

THE SCRUNCH TEST

Not all types of wrapping paper can be recycled. The easiest way to determine this is to do what is known as the scrunch test. Simply scrunch the wrapping paper in your hand: if it remains scrunched, it's recyclable; if it springs back, it's more than likely to be covered with a plastic film, which can't be recycled.





Ribbons, String and Other Fastenings

A box of scrap ribbon is a beautiful thing in itself: a wild riot of colour and texture, filled with possibility. Below is a list of my personal favourites, although there are so many other options.

1. Paper ribbon Made from thin, creased paper that creates a delicate texture and holds a bow.

2. Braided cord or rope This rope's construction gives it flexibility and durability. It is often referred to as braid-on-braid rope.

3. Double-sided satin ribbon One of the highest qualities of ribbon you can buy, with the same glossy surface on both sides.

4. One-sided satin ribbon A soft silk, cotton or nylon ribbon with one shiny side and one more matt.

5. Raffia ribbon Made from natural palm fibres, this is easy to tie and knot and is completely compostable.

6. Grosgrain ribbon A sturdy yet supple matt ribbon with distinctive ridges across its width.

7. Cotton twill ribbon A versatile woven cotton herringbone tape.

8. Organza ribbon A sheer, translucent, lightweight ribbon that has an open weave.

9. Twine Twine is available in a selection of natural fibres – jute, flax, cotton, hemp – and comes in different weights.

10. Burlap ribbon Made of jute or hemp, this multipurpose ribbon has a natural, rustic charm.

11. Lace ribbon This adds a touch of elegance and class to any occasion.

12. Plaid ribbon Tartan or gingham is always attractive and versatile.

13. Brocade ribbon This type of ribbon has the design woven into it.

14. Linen ribbon For lovely gift wrap with colour and character.

15. Velvet ribbon This has a plush texture, perfect for special events.



Labels

What you need

Scissors | Thick paper or card stock | Glue stick | Hole punch | 3mm ribbon or twine

Useful extras

Coloured thread | Paper trimmer | Fineliner pen | Tag punch | Stamps and ink pads

METHOD

A finished gift needs a gift tag, not least to ensure that it is received by the right person. Pictured opposite are some ideas for gift tag designs. You can make them from scratch using card stock or repurposed materials such as index or library cards. Instructions are given here for making a basic tag from thick paper or card stock. Alternatively, you can use luggage or parcel tags as your base, decorating with a well-placed scrap or two left over from your main gift wrapping – a strip of fabric perhaps, or maybe a button – for a loosely coordinated look.

Or why not repurpose swing tags from clothing and other purchases? In the same way that a box can be repurposed (see page 103), you can use the same technique to disguise the print on pre-existing tags. See a before-and-after example in the centre of the picture (below the feather tag). To finish, I reuse ribbons from inside clothing and offcuts of twine: too short for most things, but perfect for hand-crafted labels.

1 Simply select your card to suit your gift wrapping and cut it to the desired shape and preferred size. For a regular tag shape, note that the usual proportions are for the length of the tag to be twice the width. Round the corners at one end. For something a little different, make a banner shape with flagged ends, a circle tag, or letter outlines for a monogrammed gift.

2 Once you have your shaped tag, punch a hole at one end. If pushed, you can use one of the holes of a regular two-hole punch and to keep the hole in proportion, a smaller hole is required.

3 To make a tag tie, take a length of ribbon or twine, fold it in half and with the right side of the label facing you, thread the folded end through the hole. When the loop emerges at the back, take the ends and thread them through the loop and pull tight.

Using Foliage

Of all the embellishments, in my opinion, it is the natural ones that reign supreme. Nature never gets it wrong. It's fast, often free and ultimately sustainable. In the spring and summer, greenery is bountiful – all you need is a little sprig plucked from a bush or tree and hey presto, it's ready to tuck into a pocket, or through a wrap of twine or recycled ribbon. If you have a garden or herbs in a pot, you can add an aromatic dimension to your gift giving. Not only will they look delightful, they will smell lovely too.

The leaf fall of autumn lays its gems at your feet in a riot of colour, like mountains of copper and bronze ingots. On a dry day scoop some of these treasures up and let them dry out somewhere cool and dark. A cardboard box under the stairs is perfect for preserving acorn caps and pine cones. Tuck fiery red Japanese maple leaves and the sycamore's helicopter seeds between the pages of a heavy book, sandwiched between layers of kitchen paper to prevent damaging the paper.

In winter, try drying out slices of orange and apple in the oven. It takes no time at all and the scent will be amazing. Use them on their own or combine with cinnamon sticks for a classic look. Alternatively, you can find dried chillies and the like in grocery stores.

Here I have wrapped the gift collection in printer paper, which provided a crisp, clean background that made the fresh foliage embellishments and delicate blooms pop.



Using Jewellery

Using old costume jewellery sourced from a flea market or boot sale, and repurposing beads from redundant necklaces, can take you in a direction that you may never have envisaged with your gift wrapping, as the two examples opposite illustrate.

When using jewellery as your embellishment it tends to become the centrepiece of your design and its colour, shape and size all need to be considered when choosing your materials. The two leaves in the top example were so shiny and bright that it called for something plusher than plain Kraft paper, so I opted for gold Kraft paper and a satin ribbon. The little copper bird and heart charm lent itself to something a little more rustic, so I paired it with a wide ribbon to show it off over a belly band of gauze.

I have a weakness for wooden beads, but I am sure you have your own preferences. Just remember that sometimes it is the unexpected that works best, so be willing to play with those gems.



Gift Wrap Green

Camille
Wilkinson

Techniques
for beautiful,
recyclable
gift wrapping

