

# Tips for Eco Friendly Ganesh Festival

Ganesha is considered to be the Lord of wisdom and every year the festival of Ganesha Chaturthi is celebrated with great zeal.

But the most serious impact of the Ganesh festival on environment is due to the immersion of idols. The immersion of idols made out of chemical materials causes significant water pollution. The use of thermocol and plastic in pandals as well as for garlands and other decorations increases non biodegradable waste.

This festival symbolizes togetherness as thousands of people come together to celebrate this festival on a grandiose scale. But these days this festival is raising the burning issue of Environmental Pollution. Here are some tips to celebrate Eco friendly /Green Ganesha ;

- ✚ **Eco friendly Decoration:** In festivals people generally use plastic and non-degradable material. These materials add more danger to our environment when dumped as garbage later. You can use instead paper flowers or natural flowers for decoration. Natural materials like cloth, wood, paper can be used to decoration around Ganapati idol. Use recycled paper / Newspaper decoration instead of thermocol, which is also not degradable.
- ✚ **Limit number of public pandals:** More pandals means more noise more pollution Instead of individual celebration prefers community celebration. This will ensure reduced cost of celebration; paper pollution in a limited space and as compared to individual celebration, community celebration will cause less water and noise pollution.
- ✚ **Compost pit for organic material:** Collect separately after the festivals, the offerings of flowers, garlands often called “Nirmalya” and other organic material and put them in a community built compost pit. This compost material can be used to fertilize your garden. If you must immerse them, wrap them in newspapers instead of polythene bags as paper is biodegradable. Dried flowers can be used later to make natural colours or decorative paper for gifts.
- ✚ **Symbolic immersion:** Instead of immersing Ganesh idol in a water body, it can be symbolically immersed at home. Some people use a metal or stone idol and symbolically immerse this in a bucket of water, or even carry it in procession to the sea, hold it under the water, and then bring it back home for the next year. A betel nut in place of the actual idol can be immersed in a bucket of water. Another way of immersion can be sprinkling a few drops of water on the idol and then wiping it off and keeping it for next year’s use
- ✚ **3Rs-Reduce, Reuse and Recycle:** There are three key factors when thinking about how to recycle – The 3 R’s. The three R’s – reduce, reuse and recycle – all help to cut down on the amount of waste we throw away. Reduce is best way to manage waste. Reuse products in different ways. Recycling the Ganesh festival flowers and festival leftovers is another way to manage waste. Make natural color from flowers such as marigold and other festival leftovers can be used to make compost.

✚ **Avoid using Plaster of Paris or hazardous chemicals:** Ensure this Ganesh Festival, your apartment community or neighborhoods buy Green Ganesha and ensure you avoid using Plaster of Paris (PoP) Idols or idols made of hazardous chemical. These materials add up more damage to the environment. Instead opt for clay .

The material used for idols like plaster of Paris (POP) is mainly the compound of gypsum, sulphur, phosphorus and magnesium. Chemical paints comprise of mercury, cadmium, lead and carbon. Immersion of idols with such poisonous and toxic elements raises the level of acidity, solid matter, organic matter and heavy metals in water bodies.