

Organic and Recycled Clothing

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Organic and Recycled Clothing

Organic and recycled fibers are catching on in mainstream retail, although it's not always easy to do a thorough diligence on whether a material is truly organic or recycled. Still, it's a start.

It's still difficult, however, to figure out who actually offers these products. So to help you walk the talk, here's a list of retailers who offer clothing made from organic cotton, scrap fabric, or recycled synthetic fibers.

Feel free to add additional sustainability details if you've done some further research on a brand.

Business Wear

This is probably the hardest to find: formal and business wear that is made from sustainable resources or socially responsible manufacturing. Most organic clothing are goofy yoga pants and poofy loose-fit shirts, but it's hard to find nice-looking suits and shirts.

One could say, however, that high-end couture is already somewhat sustainable. The classic men's and women's suit is made from wool, undoubtedly a renewable resource (although one begs for a detailed sheep-versus-cotton water footprint analysis). Silk, which give us fine neckties, blouses, and other niceties, is a tougher call. One assumes that silkworms will probably require a somewhat chemical-free diet, but mulberry tree farms can range from integrated, efficient [operations](#) to conventional, chemical-intensive [monocultures](#).

But we digress. For the poor grad student, here are some retailers to consider when putting together that holiday wish-list...

- **Boll Organics** offers men's dress shirts -- button-down and spread collar -- made from organic cotton. Their sizing is limited, however. (I've emailed the owner before, and he is interested in marketing opportunities with Nicholas Students. If anyone is interested in organizing a bulk order, you may be able to earn yourself some discounts. B.L.)
- **Arrow**
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Organic Cotton

Organic cotton products are ever-increasing. However, due to limited suppliers, they do rack up some mileage compared to conventionally farmed cotton fibers. Anyone know a good LCA/CBA on the current state of the organic cotton market?

- Levi's ECO line
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Scrap Cotton

Some companies are hawking clothes made from "scrap fabric" -- leftovers from the production process that would otherwise be thrown away. Not sure this is exactly a green innovation (smacks of additionality...), but it's something.

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Recycled Fleece and Synthetics

These are fabrics made from used synthetics and fleeces returned and remade into new products.

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Recycled Plastic Fibers

These are fabrics created from recycled plastic bottles.

Jackets and Fleece

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Blankets