

Conservation

What goes up must come down!



Balloons can brighten up any celebration but they can be very harmful to wildlife if released into the air. They look great blowing away in the wind but they will eventually fall back down to earth and become unsightly litter. Some animals can confuse a burst balloon with food and if consumed it could harm or even kill them. The ribbons attached to balloons are also a threat. Not only can they litter the countryside or the sea, creatures that become tangled up in them may be unable to free themselves.



Image courtesy of Russ Lewis NOAA.gov

If you are planning a celebration or an occasion where you are thinking of releasing balloons, consider these alternatives:

- For a graduation—use bedding plants to represent each person that is graduating and plant them in a special part of the garden, in the shape of the year they graduate. This bed can change each year.
- Blow bubbles—give each person a bubble stick and soapy water. It can be very effective if everyone is blowing bubbles at the same time.
- Wave ribbons on a stick—tie a metre length of ribbon on a short stick, to wave in the air.
- Fly a kite—if there is a large area without overhead wires, flying kites would be fun.
- Flower heads—let flower heads go, to float down a river or a stream.
- Group photograph—take a group photograph, with everyone standing to form the shape of the numbers of the year, or in the form of a word or shape that is significant.
- Pinwheel—everyone holding a pinwheel would make a colourful picture.
- If using balloons, either hold on to them or tie them up when outdoors or let them go inside, where they can be collected afterwards.

