



Performing Eco-Friendly Pujas

A Guide from Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus

A leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water; if any of these are offered with love and devotion, I will accept them.

– Lord Krishna, Bhagavad Gita 9.26

Murthis

- Take the murthi back home after immersing it.
- See if your temple can install a tank or large tub for devotees to immerse their murthis and perform puja.
- Use murthis made entirely of **soft** clay, with no paint. These will dissolve almost immediately in the water, causing no harm.
- Use a coconut as your murthi, and when the puja is over, cook or eat the coconut as prasad.
- **Do not** place murthis or any objects which are not completely biodegradable into the bay.

Bamboo Sticks

- Use them as needed in your puja, and then take them home with you.
- Burn them in your backyard -- this will nourish your garden and will also keep mosquitoes away.
- Use them as fencing or as supports for your house and garden plants.

Fruits & Flowers

- Please use them as needed in your puja and then eat as prasad, or use to decorate your home altar.
- Even though they are technically biodegradable, the U.S. National Park Service requests that we do not place them in the water. They wash up on the beach, and the beach is then lined with rotting bananas and flowers that were likely sprayed with pesticides.

Saris and Fabrics

- Use saris and fabrics as needed in your puja, but take them home with you.
- Wash and press them the used saris, and give them to a needy or elderly person who could use them.
- Give them to Sadhana. We will find a way to get them to needy people here or in India or the Caribbean.
- **Do not** place saris and fabrics into the bay.

Diyas (Lamps)

- Use them as needed in your puja and then take them home with you, even if they are clay. Once hardened clay diyas break due to the elements, they are harmful to the living creatures of the waters and sea.
- If you want to let them float on the bay, please make sure they are made of dried leaves rather than clay.

Other Religious Items

Ghee: Donate to your temple or use to make your own diyas at home.

Agarbatti/Incense: Light them at home for prayers or as an air freshener.

Lentils & Rice: Soak them in water for two hours and feed to birds.

Sindoor, chandan, & dhoop: Bury in a dedicated space in your garden, perhaps near a special tree.

Attar: Can be used as an air freshener or for aromatherapy by placing it in diyas in your home.

If you must put offerings into the water, it is best to do so far from the shore. Anything placed into the water should be completely biodegradable, with no paint.

Join us in seva at our monthly **Project Prithvi** beach cleanups from April through November, on the first Saturday of the month at Jamaica Bay's North Channel Bridge from 10am-1pm. Garbage bags, gloves pickers, and a light lunch are always provided! If you are part of an organization or temple that would like to co-sponsor a cleanup, let us know!

Please show your devotion to Prithvi Maa (Mother Earth) by ALWAYS taking your puja materials home with you!