



## 8 ways to have a “Greener” Christmas.

Christmas does not have to be a burden to the planet. With a little effort and imagination, we can reduce the environmental impact of the holiday season.

1. **Give services** rather than material gifts...Such as, massages, a meal at a favorite restaurant, tickets to the movies or sporting events, gift cards, museum passes, music, art or dancing lessons, offers to babysit, wash cars or walk dogs etc.
2. **Eliminate extensive gift giving** by drawing names.
3. **Reconsider the impact of gift wrapping.** This holiday, Americans will use over 4,000,000 tons of gift wrap and shopping bags. That is almost 6,000 football fields and 20,000,000 trees every year.
  - Buy recycled, paper or reusable fabric wraps online.
  - Don't buy wrapping paper or cards with glitter on them as they cannot be recycled. This also includes tissue paper, which is usually too thin to be recycled and is usually made from metallic dyes.
  - Consider using gift bags that can be used from year to year.
4. **Regifting** can be environmentally sound, but the regifting has to be done with care as not to offend the original gift giver.
5. **Make handmade greeting cards.** Store-bought cards consume a lot of natural resources for a throwaway item. The amount of Christmas cards used in the United States every year could fill a football field 10 stories high! Children's artwork is always a fun way to make your cards and grandparents love them!
6. **Buy a live tree** instead of an artificial one. Live trees, while growing, absorb CO<sup>2</sup> and it is estimated that 90% of trees are recycled into mulch. Artificial trees depend on fossil fuels to produce and are not compostable. Buy your live tree at a local tree farm to avoid the transportation impact.
7. **Switch to LED Christmas lights.** When it comes to eco-friendly Christmas decorations, LEDs are far better than twinkling incandescent lights because they use 80% less energy. Switch to solar powered lights for outdoors.
8. **Remember the true meaning of Christmas.** Ask yourself what is truly important. Is it the gifts, excess food, decorations, and sparkly clothes, or is it spending time with loved ones, reflecting on the year past, being grateful for what you have and remembering the Hope that the Christ Child continues to bring us?

*“It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you...Yes, it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer him your hand.”* Mother Theresa

Submitted by your Environmental Action Committee