



Simply Green Newsletter



With Christmas near, it is inevitable that there will be an abundance of garbage bags full of wrapping paper and packaging in the days towards the end of December. There are numerous ways to reduce and re-use during this holiday season with some thoughtful planning and creative thinking. 'Tis the season where more material is thrown away than any other time of year, so let's all be more resourceful by re-using and recycling this Christmas!

CHRISTMAS CARDS AND DECORATIONS

- 1. Christmas Cards:** Send your Christmas cards via email (E-card), buy cards made of eco-friendly stock, or use a holiday photo card which may be used as a keepsake instead of thrown away. If you get a lot of Christmas cards in the mail, use them the next year for kids' Christmas activities or crafts such as homemade gift tags.
- 2. Holiday Decorations:** Before throwing out old Christmas decorations, consider if someone else may appreciate them. Donate them to a thrift store like the Salvation Army or other organizations if they are in acceptable condition. Even [old Christmas lights are readily accepted for recycling](#) or trade-in now in exchange for the more energy efficient LED lights.
- 3. Christmas Trees:** Don't throw away your natural Christmas tree. Most areas have some [Christmas tree recycling options](#) such as curbside recycling, non-profit pickups, or other creative ways to re-use Christmas trees such as mulching programs, soil erosion barriers, and bird feeders.

GREEN GIFT GIVING & SHOPPING

- 4. Re-Usable Shopping Bags:** Just like any time of year, utilize re-usable shopping bags to [reduce the number of plastic bags](#) that are thrown in the trash later.
- 5. Gift certificates:** Gift cards are a great way to minimize waste and [drive down your transportation footprint by keeping business local](#).
- 6. Handmade Christmas gifts:** Get creative (or help your kids get creative) with Christmas crafts and holiday baking. Homemade Christmas gifts like goodies, bread or Christmas ornaments and decorations made of materials around your home make meaningful and resourceful gifts.
- 7. Buy earth-friendly gifts:** Consider giving green gifts, or gifts made of durable materials or recycled content to minimize the impact on the environment.
- 8. Gift Wrapping Paper:** Most Christmas wrapping papers are not recyclable, especially if they are made of foil or metallic materials. Purchase wrapping paper made of recycled material whenever possible or have kids draw or paint their own designs on paper shopping bags for a fun Christmas activity. Other green wrapping paper substitutes include the Sunday comics or the Sports section of your newspaper. [Here are more great Eco-wrapping ideas](#).
- 9. Gift Tags:** Make your own gift tags using recycled wrapping paper or last year's Christmas cards.
- 10. Wrapping Accessories:** Re-use ribbons, bows, gift bags, and boxes whenever you can. Reusing ribbon may seem like a small step, but if every family in the US re-used just 2 feet of holiday ribbon, it would save 38,000 miles of ribbon and tie a bow around the planet!

Anytime of year, but especially Christmas, is a perfect time to practice your green recycling habits. Make recycling during Christmas a new holiday tradition for your family. *What other ideas do you have for making your Christmas a little more green and earth-friendly? How does your family or workplace recycle during the holiday season?*

*Article taken from <https://harmony1.com/10-ways-to-recycle-minimize-waste-this-christmas-season/>

How to Have a “Greener” Christmas Shopping Experience



- **Simplify the “gift-go-round”.**

Feeling overwhelmed by a gift list that’s just too long? Here’s an idea to help shorten your list and simplify the family gift giving ritual. Before the holiday season begins (Thanksgiving is a good time because the extended family is often together) put the names of all adult family members on separate slips of paper and put the slips in a hat. Take turns picking one name per adult– the name you pick is your gift recipient. Keep your chosen pick a secret for an element of surprise. Your gift list for adults has now been shortened to just one! Also you can even pick a gift amount that you don’t want to exceed, say \$10-\$15 to save money and encourage gifting creativity.

- **Look for locally made gifts.**

Save money and the gas it would have cost to drive to or ship your gift by buying locally. Holiday craft fairs are a great place to find interesting gifts that usually have a local story behind them. The profits stay in your own community.

- **Choose gifts made from recycled sources.**

Companies like Terracycle (which collects items like candy wrappers, juice pouches, etc. and turns them into items like wallets) and Eartheasy (which sells items like bike chain clocks and recycled plastic children’s tool-boxes) are a good source to find great gifts while reducing America’s waste stream. Check out their websites for more recycled gift options.

- **Give battery-free gifts.**

According to the EPA, about 40% of all battery sales occur during the holiday season. Discarded batteries are an environmental hazard. Even rechargeable batteries find their way into the waste stream eventually. Consider buying toys that are naturally powered (i.e. wind-powered, solar-powered, etc.) One company to check out for these types of toys is One I Love. You can see their full line of eco-friendly toys at oneiloveshop.com.

- **“Re-gifting” is Ok.**

There’s much discussion these days about the etiquette behind the trend to “re-gift” or to pass on a gift received that you don’t need. Re-gifting makes perfect sense. If you receive something you really don’t need, look for ways you can reuse the gift by passing it on to someone who can. Of course, re-gift with care so as not to offend the original giver, but keeping a gift you don’t need is wasteful. *Adapted from an article found on Eartheasy.com (http://eartheasy.com/give_sustainchristmas.htm).

For more great tips about recycling, please visit our website: www.pblecountyrecycles.org

Congratulations to Camden Elementary for receiving our office’s 2017 Business Recycling Grant!



Mark Roberts and his third grade classroom has received \$500.00 to buy recycling collection equipment for students to collect recyclable items from the schools classrooms. There will be quite a few special events planned to celebrate and we will follow all of the fun!

Look forward to more exciting details about the efforts to recycle at Camden Elementary in a special edition of our Simply Green Newsletter to come out in early 2018!