



10 Holiday Recycling Tips:

Between Thanksgiving and New Year's, household waste increases by more than 25%. Food waste, wrapping paper, shopping bags, Christmas cards, bows, ribbons, boxes, decorations, lights and more add an additional *1 million tons* of trash *per week* to our landfills. The holiday season is an incredibly wasteful time in our society, but it does not have to be that way. There are some simple things you can do to reduce your waste during the holiday season without sacrificing any of the holiday cheer.

1. Use reusable gift wrap

Half of the paper consumed in the US is used to wrap and decorate products. It is mind blowing that we spend so much time and money on gift wrapping that is only appreciated for a brief moment. Instead, try reusable or fabric gift wrap. It is a stylish, convenient, and sustainable alternative to paper gift wrap. Reusable gift wrap makes it especially convenient to wrap oddly shaped items. The fabric easily takes the shape of whatever item you place in it. And with no need for measuring, cutting, folding, or taping, it saves as much time as it does waste. After the gift unwrapping is over, you can either take the reusable gift wrap back, or spread the awareness about wrapping paper waste by letting the recipient keep it and reuse it on one of their own gifts.

2. Use a live Christmas tree instead of an artificial tree

There are many simple ways to recycle your Christmas tree, the key is to find the method that works best for you. Here are some ideas:

- Turn your tree into a bird feeder.
- Add your tree to your compost pile, if you have one.
- Donate your tree to your community to use for soil erosion barriers.
- Dry your tree out and chop it into small pieces to use as mulch.
- Bring your Christmas tree to the Preble County Landfill for free recycling from December 26-January 16.
- See if your community collects Christmas trees for curbside recycling pick-up in the weeks following Christmas.



3. Replant your live Christmas tree

Living Christmas trees offer an environmentally friendly option for people who want to enjoy a Christmas tree but do not want to produce any waste. Living Christmas trees are potted trees that can be replanted in the ground after the holidays. If you do not have space in your yard to replant a living tree, you can rent a living tree from a nursery that will replant your tree for you.

4. Give one thoughtful, generous gift, instead of several smaller gifts

Many of us tend to buy multiple gifts for close family and friends because unwrapping is more fun when there are more gifts to open. However, keep in mind that unwrapping lasts a few minutes while the gift itself is what leaves the real impact. When you buy multiple gifts for a person, you are decreasing how much you are able to spend on a main gift.

Buying one gift allows you to put more thought and money into that gift, which means the recipient will probably enjoy it much more. This reduces waste, cuts down on trash produced by packaging and wrapping, and eliminates the likelihood of giving unwanted gifts that end up being thrown away or never used.

5. Turn off holiday lights during the day

Not only is leaving lights on a waste of energy, it will also lead to more frequent bulb replacements, and more trash. Holiday lights are hardly visible during the day, so turn them off and leave the light show for night.

6. Use parallel light strands, so when one light goes out, the whole strand does not go out

Avoid having to throw out entire strands of lights when just a single bulb burns out by using parallel circuit strands. That way, when one bulb goes out, it is obvious which one it is and you only need to replace that single bulb.

7. Send electronic Christmas cards

Around 2.6 billion Christmas cards are sold in the US every year. That's enough to fill a football stadium 10 stories high. And that is not including envelopes, stamps, and return addresses. While holiday cards are a thoughtful way to keep in touch with friends and relatives, the truth is most cards are, at worst, thrown away the day they are received, and, at best, displayed during the holidays and tossed at the end of the season. Let's face it...cards are an incredibly wasteful form of waste. Sending your Christmas cards electronically (through email or Facebook) is convenient, no-cost, and zero-waste. Plus, they can be saved for your friends to access them when they want to, without the card taking up space in their home.

8. Donate unwanted gifts to charity

According to a survey, 60% of Americans will receive an unwanted gift for Christmas. What is more shocking is that 14% of people throw their unwanted presents directly into the trash. If you receive an unwanted or duplicate present this holiday season, donate it to charity. Donating unwanted or duplicate gifts to charity puts an otherwise useless product into the hands of someone who likely will not receive any gifts during the holidays.

9. Gift experiences, not things

An effective way to reduce the number of products produced and wasted during the holiday season is to not give any. Not only are experiences zero-waste, studies show that experiences bring more happiness than possessions. So take someone on a trip, to a concert, on a hike, on a bike ride, to a movie, to a sporting event, or to a play. Not only is an experience zero-waste, people are more likely to remember that gift longer than a material one.

10. Recycle at your holiday gatherings

Remember to put out a recycling bin when you're hosting a holiday party this year. If your guests know where recycling should go, they are more likely to recycle. ***Adapted from an article found at: <https://wastelessthinking.com/10-ways-to-reduce-waste-during-holidays/>**

Rumpke wants you to know: The most common recycling mistake is **placing items inside a plastic bag instead of letting them sit loose in the container.** Plastic bags tend to tangle in recycling equipment. Other items that are often wrongfully recycled include clothing, batteries, pans and scrap metal.