



December Waste Reduction Tips

Parties, decorations and gifts bring spirit to the holidays, but they can also create more waste. With a little planning, we can have more meaningful holidays and a positive environmental impact. Follow these waste-reduction tips to bring joy without waste this holiday season.

Decorations and wrapping

Reuse decorations, bows, and other wrapping materials.

Make decorations and gift-wrap out of materials you already have. For crafty reuse ideas from gifts to ornaments, check out earth 911:

<http://earth911.com/news/2012/11/28/double-your-use-of-common-holiday-items/>

Newspapers, magazines and paper bags can be made into bows and wrapping paper. Find instructions at: howaboutorange.blogspot.com/2009/10/make-gift-bow-from-magazine-page.html

Store decorations, lights, and gift-wrap properly, so they will be useable next Christmas. Look to fix Christmas lights before buying new sets. Learn how to repair Christmas lights at: www.ehow.com/how_4619820_repair-christmas-tree-lights.html

Buying a locally-grown real tree is your most environmentally-friendly option. Earth 911 explains why: <http://earth911.com/news/2011/12/01/buying-eco-friendly-real-vs-artificial-christmas-trees/>

Recycle and/or compost accepted items that you cannot use again.

Shopping and gifts

As always, remember your reusable shopping bags.

Think of gifts that will be useful and meaningful. Consider experience gifts. Shop local.

Look at your local consignment or thrift store before hitting the mall.

Buy recycled. Many local retailers create one-of-a-kind products from recycled goods. Start with our local recycled retailers: Alchemy Goods, InterConnection, RE Store and NuBe Green. For more recycled products, visit <http://earth911.com/news/2012/11/28/recycled-holiday-gifts/>.

Personalize environmentally-friendly gifts with homemade food and products. Many recipes are online for bath products, baked goods, and canned gifts.

For homemade gifts, visit: <http://www.thegreenestdollar.com/2009/11/the-master-list-of-homemade-holiday-gifts/>. Earth 911, even posted holiday cookie recipes using leftover produce: <http://earth911.com/news/2012/11/29/leftover-produce-cookie-recipes/>

If you shop online, try vendors who limit packaging. Start with these websites:

- www.ecomall.com
- www.greenshopping.com
- www.greenhotels.com
- www.realgoods.com

Entertaining and parties

Use real plates, utensils and napkins. If you don't have enough to accommodate your group, consider renting, purchasing from a local thrift store, or asking guests to bring dishes and silverware.

Use what's in your pantry. Build your menu around what you already have.

Serve locally-produced foods that require less packaging.

Make a list of exactly what you will need and know for how many you are planning. For portion planning, go to: <http://earth911.com/news/2009/11/16/8-easy-green-thanksgiving-tips/>

Label your inside bins, so that guests know where to find garbage, recycle, and food waste.

