

Holiday Recycling Ideas

Less stuff and more cheer!

Tips for reducing, reusing and recycling with holiday cheer!

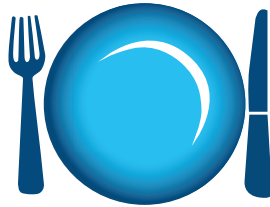
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates the average American household throws away nearly 125 pounds of trash per week. From Thanksgiving to New Year's, Americans discard 25 percent more trash than normal, or approximately 940 pounds of waste. Roughly 80 percent of what is discarded during the holidays could be recycled or reused.

We encourage families to make recycling a part of their holiday tradition. It's a simple way to make a positive difference in the local environment by diverting items that can be recycled. It can also potentially save your family money by identifying items that can be reused in creative ways.



ENTERTAINING

- Send email invitations, or for more formal occasions, use post-consumer recycled paper.
- Minimize food waste by carefully planning your menu. According to the EPA, more food ends up in landfills than any other single item. Only 5 percent of the nation's food waste is diverted from landfills for composting.
- Make your own refreshments to cut down on excess packaging.
- Use durable, reusable plates and serving ware when possible.



DECORATING

- Be resourceful – Consider repurposing recycled items such as glass bottles and aluminum cans, or discarded household items like light bulbs, into unique holiday crafts, gifts and decorations. Several web sites, such as Pinterest, have creative tips for recycled and repurposed holiday crafts.
- Live trees – After the holidays, consider planting your holiday tree in your yard.
- Reuse cut trees – If you have a cut tree, consider using it as mulch.



GIFTS

- Consider gifts that are environmentally friendly and sustainable.
- Choose gifts with minimal packaging.
- Consider alternative gifts such as charitable donations or volunteerism in the recipient's name.



GIFT WRAP

- Save gently used gift wrap, gift bags, ribbons, and bows for reuse.
- Repurpose packaging such as foam peanuts and bubble wrap, and start your own packing utility box to store these materials for future use.
- Use shredded newspaper for packing material in lieu of purchasing new foam peanuts or bubble wrap.
- Reuse gift tags by converting them into holiday cards or decorations.



Check with your local recycling service provider to confirm which items can be recycled in your community, as well as holiday collection times and special pick-up instructions.

