



Tips for a “Green” Holiday Season



While the winter holiday season brings good cheer for most people, it also brings a lot more solid waste to the landfill, harm to the environment and additional debt to the average American family. Here are some environmentally-smart tips for a less wasteful holiday this year:

REDUCE - REUSE – RECYCLE

REDUCE

- Americans throw away about 25% more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve. That's an additional 5 million tons of garbage!
- Are there several catalogs in your mail everyday? Call the 800 number on the back of the catalog and ask to be removed from their mailing list. Or, sign up for the free service at <http://www.greendimes.com>. Magazines and catalogs can be recycled with our paper recycling.
- Reduce spending: it takes an average of 6 months for a credit card user to pay off their holiday debt.
- Reduce your energy use: installing only 6 compact fluorescent light bulbs will save the average American family \$60 per year.
- Turn down the thermostat, lowering the temperature five degrees can take 10% off your energy bill.
- Do you hate throwing away batteries when they die? Use Rechargeable Batteries that can be used over and over and then recycled: a great gift that keeps giving even after the holidays.
- Over the holidays, turn off and unplug all items from your outlets in your rooms and offices. In the average home (and office), 75% of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are plugged in and turned off.

REUSE



- Every year, there are 2.65 billion holiday cards sold in the U.S. That's enough to fill a football stadium 10 stories high! Please look for cards that contain recycled content or recycled materials. You can make your own cards out of scrap paper found around the house. Cut up old cards to use as name tags on gifts or as decorations.
- Wrapping paper is often used once and thrown away. Try using colorful pages torn from magazines to wrap small gifts, old maps, or the Sunday comics for larger boxes. Avoid using paper entirely: decorative tins, baskets or boxes will enhance your gift. If you do buy wrapping paper, look for ones made of recycled paper. Reusable cloth ribbons can be used in place of plastic bows. Finally, un-wrap gifts carefully and save wrappings for reuse next year. If every American family wrapped just 3 presents in re-used materials, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields.
- Use and reuse gift bags to wrap gifts.
- Look for gifts with an environmental message: a nature book, a refillable thermos bottle, a canvas tote bag, a battery charger or items made from recycled materials. Choose solar powered instead of battery powered products.



- 🍎 Take a reusable bag when you go shopping: keep a basket full of bags in the back of the car and grab it as you run into a store.
- 🍎 Other environmentally-smart gifts include homemade ones: home baked cookies, bread or jams, a plant or tree. Ones that don't create any waste at all: concert or movie tickets, dinner at a restaurant, or an IOU to help rake leaves, babysit, or repair a leaky faucet.

RECYCLE



- 🍎 Tree Cycle, by recycling your Christmas Tree, you are doing your part to reduce the amount of material in the landfill and help the environment by giving your holiday tree a second life as compost, mulch or wood chips.
- 🍎 For tree trimmings, try edible or compostable items like popcorn or cranberries on a string, gingerbread cookies or items made from "found" objects around your home.
- 🍎 If you send holiday cards, look for ones made of recycled paper. Recycle your cards with your local municipality or Messiah paper recycling. Send "electronic cards" or make a phone call instead!
- 🍎 Recycle your cardboard boxes: flatten and drop off at any of the locations on campus. Or, look for the drop off locations in your municipalities by calling your municipality or viewing their website.
- 🍎 Include organic and local foods to your holiday meals and support local farmers who grow sustainable meat and produce. Several supermarkets carry local products so check with your grocer or look at the labels.
- 🍎 Be an e-waste recycler and collector: if you get a new computer, digital camera or cell phone for Christmas, make sure your old one gets reused or recycled. Computer monitors, televisions and other electronic equipment should **NOT** be disposed of with regular garbage. Working TVs, monitors, computers and other consumer electronics can be sold or donated to extend their useful life. Nonfunctioning TVs, computer monitors and other obsolete electronics should be recycled by an organization equipped to handle them. Staples, Home Depot, and Lowes are a few retailers who will take your personal (not Messiah) property. Or find a recycling drop-off location near you. Messiah also recycles e-waste and there are several drop-off locations on campus. At this time, Messiah is **not** able to recycle TVs.
- 🍎 Recycle your batteries. Look for a local drop off location or drop them off in the bin in the entryway at the Murray Library.

With careful thought, it is possible to reduce waste, conserve resources and promote environmental protection during this busy season. If you have any questions pertaining to Messiah's recycling program, please contact Wes Bower (WBower@messiah.edu) or Hilary Kreider (HKreider@messiah.edu).

Have a safe and sustainable Holiday Season!!