

# Green Holidays

presented by the Woodbridge Clean Energy Initiative  
December 1, 2008

The holiday season can be an excessive time of the year.

## Higher energy use

Electricity at home (decorations, cooking, etc.)

Gasoline for your car (shopping trips, travel, etc.)

Manufacturing gifts requires consuming resources in the form of raw materials and energy.

Processing garbage and recycling

## Gifts

Extra packaging and consumption adds up to an increase in waste.

*The average American's trash output is 25% higher between Thanksgiving and the New Year.*

Material gifts that go unused/thrown out

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Going Green for the holidays will help the planet, but can also save you money.

## Decorating

Holiday lights left on  
for 10 hours a day  
for 12 days will produce  
enough carbon dioxide  
to inflate 12 balloons.

# Decorating

## **\$ If you need to replace your holiday lights, switch to LED or solar-powered string lights**

- LED lights last longer than traditional bulbs AND use 90% less energy  
most retail stores (Target, Costco, Home Depot, etc.)
- Solar-powered lights use 100% less energy  
[www.ecogeekliving.com](http://www.ecogeekliving.com)

## **\$ Put lights on a timer**

(or don't forget to turn the lights off before you go to bed)

## **Decorate naturally**

- Decorate with things like strings of popcorn and cranberries (no energy required AND can be reused after the holidays (feeding to wildlife))

# Decorating

## **Purchase a sustainable tree**

- Consider purchasing a live tree that can be planted after the holidays
- If you can't purchase a live tree, "recycle" your tree as compost, wood chips or once it dries kindling in your fireplace

## **Use soy, vegetable or beeswax candles in your menorah or around the house**

- These candles are better than the average candle because the paraffin in most candles comes from petroleum. These materials are also renewable and biodegradable.

## Holiday Cards

Skip the paper cards and send e-cards or set up an online holiday slide show.

Many electronic cards can be personalized.

**Does not require physical resources to make or distribute**

**\$ Save money on purchasing cards/postage**

If you do send paper cards, look for cards made from recycled paper (and printed with vegetable or soy inks).

## Gift Wrapping

Without recycling, up to one billion holiday cards and as much as 32 square miles of wrapping paper ends up in landfills.



# Gift Wrapping Alternatives

## **Choose wrapping that can be reused**

Wrap in socks, scarves, reusable bags, dishtowel (great for a cookbook or kitchen tools)

- \$ Decorate plain kraft paper, newsprint or paper bags**  
**Use the front page of holiday cards you receive to make gift tags**

These types of materials can be recycled, unlike most traditional wrapping paper.

**If you do buy paper, buy wrapping paper made specifically from recycled content.**

Due to its high clay and ink content and low fiber content, wrapping paper is difficult to recycle. In many cases, it is a contaminant to other papers.

# Shopping

Plan shopping trips in advance so you don't make extra trips to malls or grocery stores

Bring your own reusable bag to the store when you are holiday shopping not only for groceries but gifts too

Avoid gifts with excessive packaging, especially packaging that can't be recycled

Keep in mind the three W's

Who made it?

Where did it come from?

What's it made out of?

## Gift Giving

It is estimated that the pollution from the manufacturing, transporting, use and disposal of holiday gifts is greater than that caused by automobiles each year.

Try to choose gifts that will not ultimately add to the waste stream

### **Consumables (with limited packaging)**

- Food / personalized gift baskets / Restaurant gift cards / coupons for services like babysitting
- Electronic gift cards / iTunes gift cards
- CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Share

### **Experiences**

- Movie coupons, Concert Tickets, Sport Events, subscription to Netflix

### **Memberships**

- Museums, zoos, science centers, children's museums

# Try to choose gifts that will not ultimately add to the waste stream

## Reused items

- Antiques
- Vintage items
- Used books (Friends of the Woodbridge Library Used Bookstore)

## Charitable donation in someone's name

- Cause gift receiver is passionate about (i.e. medical research, environment, animal welfare)
- Offset CO<sup>2</sup> emissions, have a tree planted for someone (plus they get an upcycled gift)  
[treesforchange.com](http://treesforchange.com)

# Think about sustainable materials

## **Bamboo**

- Cutting boards and kitchen tools
- Clothing
- Toys

## **Hemp**

- Shirts, socks, bags and wallets
- Soaps

## **Soy**

- Candles, soaps and cleaning products

## **Organic cotton**

- Clothing, bath towels, sheets, tote bags

# Think about sustainable materials

## Recycled soda bottles

- Clothing (Patagonia's Capilene line)
- Laptop and tote bags ([www.act2greensmart.com](http://www.act2greensmart.com))
- Cleaning products ([www.terracycle.net](http://www.terracycle.net))

## Other "upcycled" materials

- blog with products created from recycled materials: [www.greatgreengoods.com](http://www.greatgreengoods.com)
- Tote bags from Green Goods 2 Give ([www.gg2g.com](http://www.gg2g.com))

# Give gadgets that save energy

**Watt's Up? / Energy Meter**

**Solar gadgets** Backpacks, Solar-ovens, Chargers for electronics

**Crank gadgets** Flashlights, Charger for cell phone

**Water powered clock**

**Gifts that don't use electricity or batteries**

**If your gift does require batteries, give rechargeable batteries and a charger**



# Inspire others to go green

## **Make your own "Go Green Start-up Kit"**

*Include things like:*

- CFL bulbs
- Stainless Steel water bottle
- Reusable shopping bags
- Energy meter

[green-kits.com](http://green-kits.com), [greensender.com](http://greensender.com) and [jumpstarttogreen.com](http://jumpstarttogreen.com) also sell kits like this

# Online resources

[greenmomfinds.com](http://greenmomfinds.com)

[treehugger.com/giftguide](http://treehugger.com/giftguide)

[green.yahoo.com/gift-guide](http://green.yahoo.com/gift-guide)

[ecomall.com](http://ecomall.com)

[gaiam.com](http://gaiam.com)

# When the party is over...

## Reuse!

- Got new clothes for the holidays? Donate the old ones.
- Received gifts you don't like, but can't return?  
One man's trash is another man's treasure.  
Donate them to a thrift store or put them on [freecycle.org](http://freecycle.org).

## Recycle!

- Make sure that all packaging and wrapping that can be recycled, does.
- Got new electronics? If your old ones can't be donated, find out where to recycle them.