



Partners for Environmental Progress estimates that Americans contribute 25% more volume to landfill between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day - approximately one million extra tons per week and the National Retail Federation states that consumers will spend an average of \$1,047.83 during the holiday season. The following tips are ways to reduce the amount of garbage generated during the season, how to give a gift without buying a gift, and exercise environmental stewardship.

Reduce Waste

- When entertaining, use reusable dishes, glassware, silverware, and napkins rather than disposables. Have containers on hand to send guests home with leftovers or freeze for another time. Donate unopened, shelf-stable items to a local pantry.
- Take reusable beverage cups and bottles while on the run.

- Compost food organics if service provided.
- Make a list to save time, money and last-minute shopping frenzies.
- Shop with reusable bags – smaller ones for produce and fruit.
- Reuse gift bags or wrap gifts in a piece of cloth or lace, pillow cases, blankets, holiday tins, or comics from the Sunday paper.
- Recycle - flatten cardboard boxes. Remove plastic labels.
- Recycle – glass and plastic bottles, metal cans and pans, food/beverage cartons and non-glitter wrapping paper – empty, clean and loose.
- Recycle burned-out lights – this is a community program – check locally.
- Contact your community to see if holiday trees are picked up for compost.
- Save energy by avoiding decorations that require an outlet.
- Turn down heat before family/guests arrive.
- If going out of town, UNPLUG electronic devices and home appliances.
- Collect water while waiting it to heat up for a shower and use for plants and trees.

Giving Ideas

- Visit with an elderly or housebound neighbor – take a decorated plant.
- Offer to shop for someone who is homebound.
- Babysit a newborn so his or her parents can get errands done or just catch up on rest.
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen or food pantry.
- Use the money you would spend on gifts to make donations to your favorite charities - either one large one as a family, or smaller ones for each member individually.
- Go gift-free and make the gathering about family being together.
- Give “gifts of the heart” – coupons for house chores, snow shoveling, making a meal, giving a massage, babysitting, etc.
- Give “certificates” for doing things together, like going to a concert, sports events, a movie, ice skating, bowling, or a bike ride.

- Check out SWANCC's *Eco-Friendly Marketplace Guide*.

Activities

- Sing Christmas carols at a nursing home.
- Put together a care package and send to troops overseas.
- Share the holidays with a military family whose spouse is in service and can't make it home.
- Put seed out for the birds.
- Make ornaments from nature, use a pine cone, twig, bark, etc.
- Take a ride or walk around the neighborhood to look at decorated houses.
- Watch classic holiday movies with loved ones.
- Attend the concert of a children's or youth choir.
- Host a tree-trimming party.
- Host a cookie exchange party.
- Share the religious traditions of your holiday with someone of a different faith.
- Make a family cookbook that showcases your favorite meals along with great pictures.
- Make handmade cards using card fronts from previous years.
- Decorate a large plant with lights and ribbons rather than a Christmas tree.
- Encourage "pay it forward" movements in your community. Start by doing something simple like buying a coffee for a complete stranger.
- Donate gently used books to a children's hospital.
- Make a fire in an outdoor fire pit and toast marshmallows while sipping hot chocolate.
- If weather permits, go sledding, build a snowman or have a snowball fight – no matter your age!



PERSONAL GIFT CERTIFICATE

Presented To: _____

Good For: _____

From: _____

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Presented To: _____

Good For: _____

From: _____