

SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

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Tis the Season to Think About Our Carbon Footprint

Wrapping Gifts

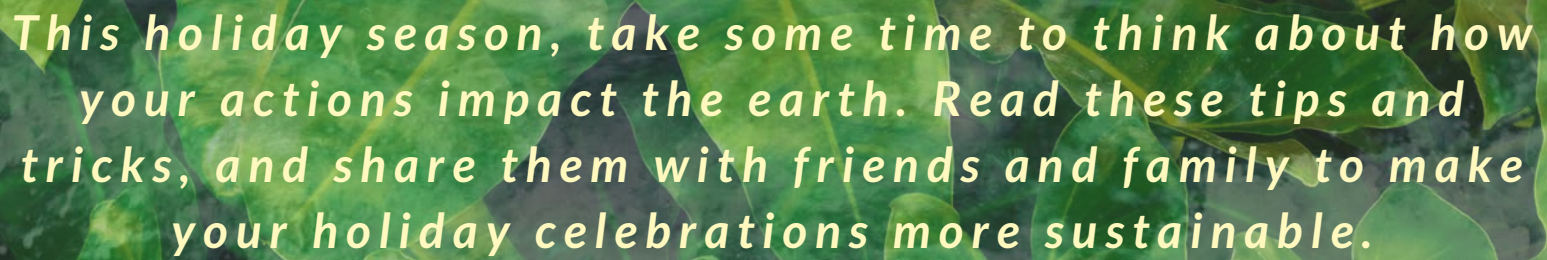
Although wrapping gifts is aesthetically pleasing, our planet is not pleased with us about this one. If you are trying to shift towards a lower waste lifestyle, or are giving a gift to someone who is, consider alternatives to gift wrapping.

If you have a newspaper on hand, you can use that to wrap presents. You can make it more personable by using a section of the paper that your recipient might enjoy, such as comics, sports, or horoscopes.

Try to be creative when wrapping gifts. Can you keep the present in the bag or box that it came from in the store? Would a scarf or sarong do the trick? Does it even need to be wrapped? You can always save gift bags and reuse them the next year, too!

As this decade comes to a close, focus your time, money, and energy on the things you find truly valuable. In the midst of the climate crisis, it is critical that we look at our actions and values, and educate ourselves about how we are impacting the earth. When the floods and fires come, you won't be able to ask Siri or Alexa for help. Your roomba vacuum cleaner will be futile, and you won't be concerned with the new six step skin care routine you bought on sale. Rampant consumerism is part of the reason we are in this climate crisis, and the earth cannot sustain it. This holiday season, think about the environmental implications of your actions and gifts, and go the extra mile to be more eco conscious.





This holiday season, take some time to think about how your actions impact the earth. Read these tips and tricks, and share them with friends and family to make your holiday celebrations more sustainable.

GIFTS

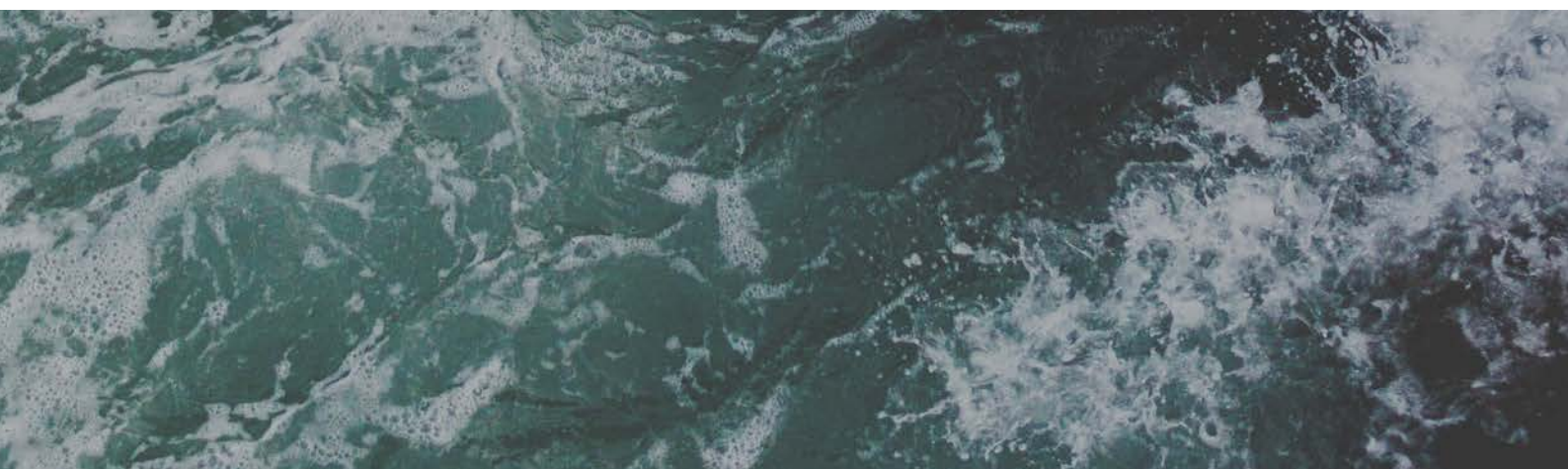
Although holidays shouldn't be centered around materialism, it often feels like they are. This year, try to give gifts that are useful or meaningful, and hopefully will not end up in a landfill.

The best gifts are typically experiences, not things. Is there something your family has been itching to do together, like an escape room or zip lining? Tickets for sporting events, movies, and concerts, are great low waste gift ideas; you can even send tickets electronically!

Homemade and secondhand gifts are often both economically and environmentally sustainable. It's hard to beat homemade food, and the possibilities are endless. Whether you make a triple batch of cookies to share with all of your loved ones, or go out of your way to make something especially for someone, homemade food is always appreciated. Anything you make, whether it is an intricate piece of art, or a simple homemade body scrub, will put a smile on your recipient's face. If you aren't in a DIY mood this year, then looking around at thrift and secondhand stores for gifts is a low waste alternative.

Perhaps you know someone who loves to cook who would appreciate some gifts to make themselves more environmentally friendly, such as a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscription, or a kit to start composting at home. Maybe you have a loved one who is interested in living more sustainably, and might be encouraged by receiving a gift that can help them in their mission, such as a portable utensil kit, bamboo straw, water bottle, bike, or house plant.

If you aren't sure what you should get someone, and still feel the need to give them something, a gift card is the best solution. Although that little plastic gift card is made of fossil fuels, it is better to let someone pick out their own gift than giving them something that they may never use.





FOOD

For many families, one of the most important aspects of every holiday is the food. From large meals to sweet treats, there is, at times, a seemingly endless supply of food around during the holidays. For many Americans, a large chunk of our carbon footprint comes from our food. The food we eat, the food we waste, and the packages our food comes in can have severe effects on our environment.

One of the most impactful ways you can lower your environmental impact is by decreasing meat consumption. Meat production is more resource intensive than vegetable or grain production, and animals release carbon and methane, two of the most harmful (and plentiful) greenhouse gasses. Although many holiday dishes are centered around meat, we do not need it in every dish, or even at every meal. This holiday season, try a new recipe that's meatless, or consider how you can make your favorite dishes differently. Can you think of a vegetarian at your dinner table who would appreciate you leaving the meat out of the green beans this year?

While it's important to examine what we are eating, we also need to consider how we are eating and transporting it, too. Although it might be easier and "more festive" to eat off of disposable holiday themed paper plates, it is important that we shift away from single use items whenever possible. Similarly, when bringing food to potlucks and friends, aim to use a reusable container when transporting food. Although the holidays are busy, it's worthwhile to take the extra time to wash your dishes, rather than mindlessly throwing things away and creating more waste. Perhaps a family member or friend you rarely get to see would be willing to help you wash the dishes at the end of your meal!

