

Christmas has traditionally been a season for giving. However, few gift recipients would welcome a gift of trash, food scraps or old tires. Careful consideration during the purchase of gifts will reduce the amount of useless packaging material, unusable product or senseless do-dads that end up in the wastebasket before Christmas day is over.

Darke County citizens are not alone in producing large amounts of waste materials during the year, but with careful planning and a clear concern for the environment and the health and safety of family and neighbors, less waste production is a worth while goal for the coming new year.

Following are some suggestions as to how this important waste reduction effort can begin.

Buy gifts that are made of recycled materials. i.e.: welcome mats, irrigation hose or surface cushion tiles made of recycled tires; clothing or items made of recycled plastic bottles; crafts or products made of scrap wood or reclaimed lumber.

Buy rechargeable batteries to go with new electronic toys. Encourage proper disposal of used small batteries. i.e.: small battery disposal programs offered by participating Wal-Marts, ACE Hardware, and other local retailers in Darke County.

Buy high quality, durable goods to reduce waste. A higher priced item may last longer and reduce the amount of junk merchandise ending up in landfills. i.e.: leather shoes rather than vinyl or cloth; high efficiency fluorescent light bulbs; or well made clothing items. proper disposal of Christmas trees . To preserve the spirit of giving, don't try to give too much. Less stuff means less waste and a healthier environment for everyone.



Don't Be The Grinch That Trashed Christmas, have a Green Christmas

Look for reuse and recycling opportunities as you replace appliances, electronics and computers.

Discarded cell phones may be taken to the Solid Waste District or your local cell phone store for recycling.

Discarded electronics (computers, copiers, fax machines, printers, monitors) may be donated to our local Greenville Goodwill. In May of every year, the district offers an Electronic Recycling Day. Parts that cannot be refurbished can be sent for dismantling.

Large appliances may either be donated or saved for the districts Appliance Recycling Day in March.

Outgrown toys and clothes and furniture may be donated to organizations like Salvation Army or Goodwill.

Look for ways to avoid creating garbage. Rather than wrapping gifts for the youngsters, hide the presents, and turn Christmas into a treasure hunt. Create you own recyclable wrapping paper by using the Sunday comics, magazines and wrapping paper recovered from previous events.

Practice "pre-cycling" by taking recycling or reuse into consideration when you buy. How do you do this? Simple. Consider an artificial tree that does not have to be discarded or recycled and is not a fire hazard. You can buy a live tree and plant it in your yard after the holidays. If you buy a cut tree, plan your decorations to minimize flocking, tinsel, and decorations that will have to be removed before recycling. Trees that have lights, ornaments, excessive tensile, spray or flocking or include stands or plastic bags simply add to the garbage collection. The Darke County Solid Waste District and Darke County Park District partner to provide area residents with a Christmas Tree Recycling event held from December 26 to mid-January. Call the district for more information at 937-547-0827



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Tips for the *Holiday* *Season*





Gift Wrapping, Gifts & Cards



❄ Buy gift wrap that contains recycled material and avoid buying foil or plastic coated paper that cannot be recycled.

- ❄ Save and reuse gift bags and bows from last season.
- ❄ Instead of wrapping gifts in paper, be creative. Use decorative gift boxes, reusable containers, scarves, or fabric remnants.
- ❄ Make gift tags from old greeting cards.
- ❄ Give gift certificates. They save wrapping paper and eliminate returned merchandise.
- ❄ Give non-material gifts such as savings bonds, money, or tickets to a game, play, movie, or concert
- ❄ Give the gift of time. Nothing costs less or means more than spending time with friends and loved ones.
- ❄ Donate unwanted gifts, old or used clothing and toys to a local shelter or charity.
- ❄ For electronic and portable gifts that require batteries, buy rechargeable batteries to go with them.



Holiday Trees

- ❄ Choose a reusable tree. An artificial tree can be used over and over again and doesn't have to be discarded.
- ❄ Mulch or compost your holiday tree if you don't have an artificial tree. Recycle your cut tree during the Solid Waste District's Annual Christmas Tree Recycling Event. Call the district at 937-547-0827 for more details.



- ❄ Buy a live tree and replant it after the holidays.
- ❄ Use reusable decorations on your tree or make handmade tree ornaments from things you already have around the house or from materials in the back yard like leaves, twigs, bark, and pine cones.
- ❄ Put timers on out door and indoor holiday lights so that they turn off on their own.



Facts on Holiday Waste

From Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, household waste increases by more than 25%. Added food waste, shopping bags, packaging, wrapping paper, bows and ribbons all adds up to an additional 1 million tons a week to our landfills. (Source: [EPA](#))

In the U.S., annual trash from gift-wrap and shopping bags totals 4 million tons. (Source: [Use Less Stuff](#))

Cards

An estimated 2.6 billion holiday cards are sold each year in the United States, enough to fill a football field 10 stories high. Electronic holiday greeting cards, offered through a variety of web-sites, are a convenient, no-cost, waste-free alternative. (Source: [CalRecycle](#))

If we each sent one less card, we'd save 50,000 cubic yards of paper. (Source: [Use Less Stuff](#)) [Here](#) are ideas to recycle, buy recycled and reuse cards.

Ribbons

If every family reused just two feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet. (Source: [CalRecycle](#))

Food

At least 28 billion pounds of edible food are wasted each year - equating to over 100 pounds per person. (Source: [Use Less Stuff](#))

Gifts

About 40% of all battery sales occur during the holiday season. Buy rechargeable batteries to accompany your electronic gifts, and consider giving a battery charger as well. Rechargeable batteries reduce the amount of potentially harmful materials thrown away, and can save money in the long run. (Source: [EPA](#))

