

# Tips to Reduce Waste This Holiday Season



*Provided by the Solid Waste Agency Of Northern Cook County*

Partners for Environmental Progress estimate that each year Americans throw away 25% more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, which equates to approximately one million extra tons of trash per week. With this in mind, here is a compilation of tips on how to cut down on the amount of garbage generated during the holiday season and ways to be a more environmentally-conscientious consumer. For more waste-reducing ideas, visit [www.use-less-stuff.com](http://www.use-less-stuff.com).



## PARTIES

- Use reusable dishes, glassware, silverware and napkins for entertaining rather than disposable ones.
- For formal affairs, consider buying clothing from consignment shops.
- Give leftovers to guests to take home, put in containers and freeze for another time, or compost.
- Turn heat down. Guests will warm up the room naturally.



## CARDS

- Postmasters report that up to 20% of all mail is incorrectly addressed or otherwise undeliverable. Save time, money and resources by updating and paring down your list, and by sending e-mail wishes.
- Avoid cards with laminated, foil-stamped or metallic inks - look for cards printed with soy-based ink.
- Avoid glitzy foil-lined envelopes - they cannot be recycled.
- Look for a high post-consumer waste content for recycled paper cards (100% if possible).



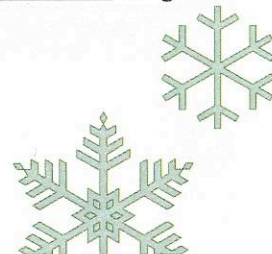
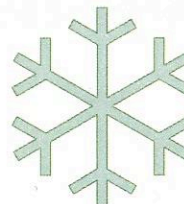
## GIFT GIVING IDEAS

- Plan ahead. Making a list and checking it twice will save time, money and last-minute shopping frenzies.
- Give gifts of the "heart" - give your time or talents. Offer to baby-sit, wash the car, do house chores, run errands, make a "trash to treasure" gift from odds and ends, give baked goodies, etc., or make a charitable donation in a loved ones memory.
- Keep it simple - less can be more. Think carefully about what gifts friends and family really need and want. One thoughtful gift may be better than six wrapped packages of unwanted gifts.
- Start a savings account or give a savings bond for children. It is fun to watch the money grow and it teaches children the value of fiscal conservation.
- Shop for gifts at an antique store, estate sale or a flea market, since one person's trash is another's treasure.
- Give waste-less gifts such as tickets to concerts, museums, or sporting events, gift certificates or house plants.
- Give durable products that will last.
- Need a stocking stuffer? Give packets of seeds. Plant indoors and transplant to the garden in spring.
- Bring your own durable cloth shopping bag to the store with you and consolidate purchases into one bag rather than getting a new bag for each purchase.
- Donate unwanted or unused gifts to charity or a shelter. Be sure to call your local charity or shelter to find out what donations are accepted.
- See SWANCC's "Closing the Loop" brochure and "Eco-Friendly Marketplace" at [www.swancc.org](http://www.swancc.org) for gifts made from recycled materials and eco-friendly fibers.



[www.swancc.org](http://www.swancc.org)

see reverse side





## GIFT WRAP

- Make your own personalized, festive gift wrap using materials you already have around the house or classroom (shopping bags, scraps of fabric, buttons, stencils, paint, etc.).
- Use the Comics for kids, the Financial Section for your favorite banker, an old map for the traveler, etc.
- Decorate packages with your own stamps. Draw a design on a potato, sponge or cork, then cut the material away from the outside of the design. Press the design into paint or an inkpad and stamp away.
- Make shiny ribbon by cutting strips of potato chip bags (inside of bag).
- Make your own gift tag from old cards or decorative paper, use pinking sheers for fancy edges.
- Reuse a container, bag or box that might have been thrown away to box a gift.
- Reuse packing cartons, bubble wrap and peanuts.
- Make paper beads from pieces of oddly shaped gift wrap and magazines. See instructions below.



## DECORATIONS

- Approximately fifty million Christmas trees are purchased each year in the United States. Consider a potted tree that can be planted in the yard, or an artificial one to be reused for years to come.
- The smaller bulbs on a light strand, the lower the wattage. Low-wattage bulbs consume less energy and give off less heat.
- Homemade Ornaments: Make a nature ornament from twigs, bark, pine cones, etc., or drill a hole in fast food meal toys to create an ornament when a hook is added, or laminate a special photo for the tree.
- Tie old buttons on to a length of string to make old-fashioned looking garland.
- Make your own luminaries. Rinse out empty soup or coffee-type cans, remove the label and punch holes into the sides to make a snowflake design. Then place a candle in the bottom and light it.
- Save some fresh evergreen needles in a dish and set it in your bathroom. Whenever the air needs a fresh scent, stir up the needles.
- Use dried-out tree sprigs as kindling for a cozy fire.