



Audubon's Tips for Greening Your Holidays



Make your holidays green, and be sure to recycle, reuse, and remember Mother Nature by following these simple guidelines:

Conserve Paper

An astronomical amount of forest resources goes into wrapping gifts and sending cards. Luckily, this problem has many simple solutions.



Did You Know:

If every family reused just 2 feet of ribbon, the amount saved would total 38,000 miles — enough to tie a bow around the Earth!*

- Most gift-wrap is not recyclable, and neither is ribbon. Wrap your presents in something that is, such as the Sunday comics, old road maps, and plain brown paper decorated with stamps or sponge art.
- Place gifts in reusable bags or baskets, and don't wrap presents for Fido.
- Children's artwork makes heartfelt cards and wrapping paper, especially for relatives.
- Natural fiber raffia is a great replacement for ribbon; not only is it recyclable, it can also be left out in the spring for birds to use in their nests.
- Snip the front of old greetings cards into colorful gift tags, or mail them as holiday postcards.
- Drop off extra packing material and Styrofoam peanuts at mailing centers or moving companies for reuse.

Trees and Trimmings

Each year, more than 35 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States, as are 10 million of the artificial variety,** which consists of metal and plastics made from nonrenewable petroleum. Consider how you decorate and dispose of them — real trees can give back to wildlife, but both kinds will last for centuries in a landfill.



Did You Know:

Christmas trees make great mulch for spring gardening! Check with your local community garden or municipality about recycling them.

- Consider buying a live tree (with a rootball) that's native to your region, and then plant it outside after the holidays are over.
- Instead of buying even more new decorations, thrift and antique stores can be a treasure trove of ornaments and lights.
- Decorate an indoor tree with biodegradable items from nature, such as seedpods, dried flowers, autumn leaves, nutshells, milkweed fluff, and berries.
- When it's time to take down the Christmas tree, place it outside as valuable shelter for birds and small animals during the long cold winter.
- Decorate an outdoor tree just for wildlife. It can be adorned with strings of unsalted popped popcorn, dried fruit, and peanuts in the shell, and with ornaments like pinecones spread with peanut butter and suet.

Smart Party Planning

Big holiday parties can be lots of fun — and quite the strain on landfills. This year, cut back on the excess waste, not the guest list, while entertaining.



Did You Know:

Americans produce up to 1 million extra tons of garbage each week between Thanksgiving and New Year's!*

- Reuse plastic containers to send leftovers home with guests.
- Fruit and vegetable scraps (no dairy or meat!) can be composted into a nutrient-rich spring fertilizer.
- Avoid relying on Styrofoam and paper cups by inviting guests to bring their own unique mugs or glasses.
- Provide containers for recycling aluminum and glass beverage bottles.
- Wash and reuse plastic plates and flatware since they cannot be recycled.
- For big parties consider renting supplies (less environmental impact than relying on disposables).
- Buy paper products with recycled content, or, even better, use cloth tablecloths and napkins.

Gift Giving

Consumers are projected to spend over \$219 billion*** this holiday season. Think of how much money could be diverted to environmentally responsible organizations and businesses by choosing your gifts wisely. And imagine how much money you could save by giving the gift of your own time!



Did You Know:

[Audubon's Marketplace](#)

is filled with great holiday gifts for everyone on your list, including your feathered friends. Visit www.audubon.org for gifts that include:

- Bird houses
- Wild bird seed
- Singing bird ornaments
- Children's books
- Plush bird toys
- Nature calendars
- Jigsaw puzzles
- Shade-grown coffee
- Membership

- Consider gifts that support your community and create minimal waste, such as theater tickets or certificates to local restaurants and businesses.
- Give yourself to friends this year by offering to take them hiking or birding, or by volunteering to tutor, baby-sit, or help clean house.
- A hand-painted pot with a bag of compost and native plant seeds is a gift that will keep on growing.
- Everyone enjoys home-baked goodies. Package them in a shoebox or cookie tin and be sure to include the recipe.
- Don't be afraid to re-gift a past present you didn't need to someone you know would really appreciate it.
- Give a membership to organizations such as Audubon that support conservation.
- Encourage others to adopt an environmentally friendly lifestyle by giving things like countertop composters, bird feeders and seed, and gift baskets of organic foods and shade-grown coffee.
- "Adopt" an animal, a butterfly garden, or even a classroom in someone else's name. They'll get a unique, meaningful gift and your money will have gone to support wildlife and nature education.

Classroom Curriculum

Give a subscription of Audubon Adventures, an environmental education program for children, to a classroom in your community.

<http://www.audubon.org/educate/aa/>

(212) 979-3184

Audubon Center Field Trip

To send a class of students on a nature adventure, see Audubon's Center Locator and contact an Audubon Center near you.

<http://www.audubon.org/local/sanctuary/AllCenters.html>

(916) 649-7600

Wild Puffins

Adopt a puffin through Audubon's Project Puffin and you'll receive the history of the bird and updates on its progress.

<http://www.audubon.org/bird/puffin/virtual/feeding.html>

(607) 257-7308

Injured Raptors

Select the species you'd like to support at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey and your money will be put toward its care and feed.

<http://www.audubonofflorida.org/conservation/adopt.htm>

(407) 655-0190

* *The Use Less Stuff* report, The Cygnus Group

** National Christmas Tree Association

*** National Retail Federation, 12/02/04 news release