

Sustainability Spotlight

Sustainable Holiday Season



With the holiday season upon us, it's easy to get wrapped up in the festivities, treats, and gatherings that make this time of the year very special. However, it's critical to think about how much extra waste is being produced from the many holiday celebrations. If you are looking to be sustainable this holiday season, you may want to think about the following:

- **Food Waste** – Most party hosts go above and beyond for their guests and will make or buy food for more people than their confirmed guest list. Make sure to have a plan with any extra food like packing food as leftovers, giving food to guests on their way out, bringing food to share with your coworkers or classmates, or donating food to a local shelter.
- **Holiday Decorations** – Most people reuse their holiday decorations annually. If you get to a point where you need to dispose of some items, you may want to consider donating gently used items or recycling items that are worn out. Make sure to understand your local recycling guidelines to properly sort decorations that may require special methods of disposal, like electronic lights or battery-operated items.
- **Christmas Trees & Natural Decorations** – Real Christmas trees, wreaths, garlands, and pinecones are biodegradable and can be composted. Be sure to remove any ornaments, ribbons, lights, and other non-natural components before composting.
- **Gift Wrapping** – Not all gift wraps are created equal in terms of material. Most wrapping paper cannot be recycled due to the glossy, shiny, and glittery features that are on the paper. The amount of energy it takes to recover paper fibers from decorative paper makes it unsuitable for recycling. Consider placing presents in gift bags instead of wrapping them. Gift bags can be reused many times before requiring disposal.



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