

I'm Dreaming of a "Green" Christmas

Once again this year environmentally friendly gifts will be swamped by a national tidal wave of toaster ovens, video games, and battery- powered kiddy cars - all encased in packaging bound for the landfill.

But along with the millions of extra tons of trash generated this Christmas there are signs that the environment will be getting its own kind of Christmas bonus. Many Canadians say their lifestyles produce too much waste and want to "go green". They want less packaging and more recycling.

Welcome to new world of "environmentally conscious" holidays. Here are a few ideas "green up" your Christmas.

- **Recycled products** – The Recycling Council of Ontario has lists of organizations and companies who sell recycled and environmentally friendly products. Call 416-960-1025 or email rco@rco.on.ca.
- **Reused products** – You will be pleasantly surprised at the bargains available in Burlington: Reuse Centre, 3335 North Service Road, Habitat for Humanity Restore, 1800 Appleby Line, Salvation Army, 325 Fairview St., Amity Goodwill, 4051 New Street
- **Paper products** - Buy paper with the highest percentage of "post consumer waste" (PCW), and paper that is "processed chlorine free" (PCF). Better yet use the comics or other colourful sections from your newspaper as wrapping.
- **Energy efficiency** – Replace all your Christmas lights with LED type bulbs, extremely low wattage, but lots of light. Use timers to limit the duration the lights stay on. For light fixtures use the fluorescent type bulbs.
- **Buy local** - Support your local economy and reduce energy consumption by the global transport of goods. Farmers' markets, local "arts and craft sales" are wonderful resources.
- **Excess packaging** - A large percentage of our municipal solid waste stream is the result of unnecessary packaging. When given a choice, select the product that is not over-packaged. Reuse or recycle packaging.
- **Green labels** - Look for labels, such as Fair Trade coffee and tea that let you know the product is certified environmentally friendly. Careful - don't accept a product that calls itself "green" without substantiation.
- **Charity** - Teach the meaning of charity to young people (or anyone else), give a donation in their name to a charitable organization. See www.CharityVillage.com for links to Canadian charities and nonprofit organizations.
- **Gardening** - Gardeners will love an assortment of seeds, bulbs, gardening books or catalogues presented in a new planting pot.
- **Transportation** - Promote an environmentally benign mode of transportation by giving transit tickets or bicycle equipment such as helmets or wicker carriers.
- **Wrappings** - Use reusable cloth bags made from brightly coloured fabric instead of Christmas wrapping paper.
- **"Green"** products – vermicomposter, clothing made from hemp, organically grown cotton clothing, purse or belt made from recycled inner tubes, book binder made from computer circuit boards.

- For more ideas Google: [Environmentally Friendly Christmas](#).