

Recycling Council of BC
Christmas 2009
presents...

Dreaming of a Green Christmas

North Americans love their holiday traditions. Traditions of festivity and gift-giving originated many centuries ago and continue to fill our holiday seasons today. Now, we can further enrich these traditions by not only giving gifts to our loved ones but also giving back to the earth.

Tradition and Trash

We exchange more than two billion Christmas cards each year and it is estimated that Canadians spend about \$4 billion on wrapping, decorations and gifts, most of which is tossed in the trash. Read on to find simple ways to save money and the environment this holiday season.



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ALSO ON WWW.RCBC.BC.CA:

- 12 Days of Christmas—Tips on Giving Green for the Holidays
- BC Tree-Chipping Events
- Recyclepedia—Online database of local recycling programs



Holiday Shopping Tips

When it's time to hit the mall, take a reusable shopping bag. If you forget your bag, put as many items as possible in the first plastic bag you are given.

Try to buy items with less packaging. Remember that styrofoam, bubble wrap, soft plastics and plastic clamshells are not commonly accepted in recycling programs in BC, and will most likely end up in the garbage.

Say 'no thanks' to extra tissue paper or boxes. Tissue paper is not accepted in

municipal recycling programs because it can not withstand the recycling process. Skip the filling and opt for a reusable gift bag instead. Better yet—skip the gift wrap altogether!

Single use items should be avoided and it is worth spending more for a durable product that won't become garbage itself in a few short months.

For more gift-giving tips, check out the **12 Days of Christmas Fact Sheet Series!**

Got any recycling or disposal questions? Need more information?

Visit www.rcbc.bc.ca or call the RCBC Recycling Hotline!

Lower Mainland: 604-732-9253 BC Toll-Free: 1-800-667-4321

Oh Christmas Tree!

Here are some tips to prevent your tree from filling up your garbage can at the end of the season:

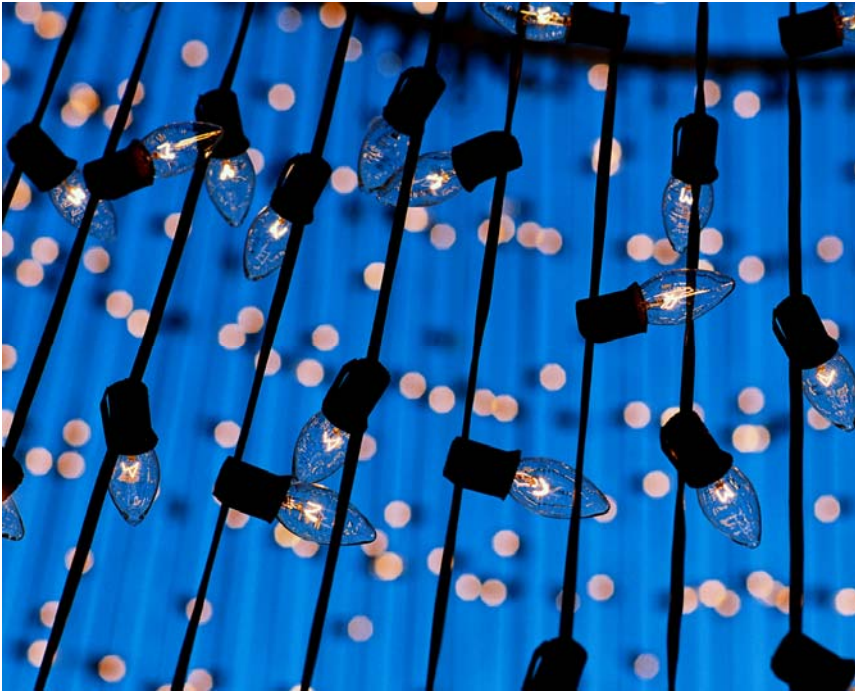
- Decorate the outdoor tree nearest to your window rather than purchasing an indoor tree.
- Consider buying a potted tree that can be transplanted into your garden after Christmas.
- Call the RCBC Recycling Hotline or check our Tree-Chipping Events section for local information on Christmas tree collection.
- Choose to decorate your favorite houseplants instead of buying a Christmas tree; you will save time, money and reduce your environmental footprint while still having a festive home.



Deck the Halls

Christmas decorations are made with a wide range of materials, such as glass, plastic, foil, tin, fabric, and even styrofoam. Ornaments and decorations may have limited recycling options in BC and they can accumulate in our landfills. Here are some tips on waste-free decorations for Christmas.

- Purchase handmade durable and reusable decorations from a local charity or craft fair.
- Instead of spending money on decorations, create them yourself! String popcorn and dried cranberries to use as garland or collect feathers, pinecones and twigs to create your own ornaments. As long as they are free from paints, dyes and glues, these materials can be placed in your backyard composter at the end of the holidays.
- Paper chains, paper snowflakes, images from old Christmas cards or dried flowers make great Christmas decorations. Make sure to keep paper decorations away from candles and any other flammable object to avoid the risk of setting them on fire.
- Edible decorations such as gingerbread cookies, candy canes, dried apple rings and cinnamon sticks make tempting ornaments. If you put them up well before Christmas, keep in mind that you might have to make more—these ornaments don't usually stay up for very long!



Still got incandescent light strings? LED light strings are brighter, more energy efficient, and last much longer.

Spread Cheer, Save Energy

LED bulbs produce more light per watt than incandescent light bulbs, which is what makes them brighter and more energy-efficient. Switching to LED light strings from incandescent light strings will definitely help decrease energy consumption. This will in turn translate into savings on your monthly power bill, which is something we can all use during the holidays!

- Use rechargeable batteries rather than disposable batteries. They can be used many times and are collected by numerous retail stores for recycling.
- Willing to try something new? Look into solar powered lights! They come in all shapes, sizes and colors. There are even models designed specifically for dark Canadian winters! A variety of choices are now available at most major home hardware stores.
- Purchase LED lights. They last 7 times longer and use one-tenth the energy of standard incandescent seasonal lights. They are available for both indoor and outdoor use and there are several colours to choose from.
- By using a timer for your Christmas tree lights you can reduce your energy consumption by 30-50%.
- When purchasing lights, make sure they have a safety listing from Underwriters Laboratories (UL symbol), and use lights only as intended.
- Turn your outdoor Christmas lights on in the evening and leave them on for 4-6 hours at the most. To help save energy, remember to turn the lights off before going to bed at night.



Wrap it Up!

Did you know?

- The annual waste generated in Canada from gift-wrapping and shopping bags equals about 545,000 tonnes.
- Packaging makes up about half our garbage by volume, one-third by weight.
- If everyone in Canada wrapped just three gifts in reused paper or gift bags, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 hockey rinks

Make the wrapping part of the gift: Use tea towels, baskets, bandanas, pillow cases, towels, socks, tins or bowls.

If you're giving an oversized gift, such as a bicycle, just tie a bow around it instead of wrapping.

Old shoeboxes, cardboard boxes or jars can be decorated with fabric, poster paint or magazine cutouts and used to wrap gifts. Best of all, they can be reused again each year.

Reuse wrapping paper, ribbons and bows from last year.

Use the coloured comics section of the newspaper, magazine pages or pictures from calendars to wrap your presents.

If you must purchase gift-wrap, choose a type that can be recycled. Tissue paper, metallic/foil wrapping and any type of wax-coated wrapping cannot be recycled.

About us...

The RCBC Recycling Hotline provides information on recycling, waste minimization, and waste disposal.

For more tips, call the

RCBC Recycling Hotline

Lower Mainland

604-732-9253

Toll-free

1-800-667-4321

Hours:

Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat 9-4

Or visit us on the web at

www.rcbc.bc.ca

After Christmas...

Save and reuse boxes, wrapping paper, decorations, ribbons, and bows.

Remember to reuse, recycle and compost as much as possible.

What to do with your Christmas tree:

Donate your live Christmas tree to a bird/wildlife sanctuary. Remember to remove all decorations, tinsel and lights.

Cut the branches off your tree and put them into your composter or use them to cover your garden.

Contact RCBC or your local municipality find out when Christmas tree chipping events will be held in your area.

Donate reusable toys or clothes to charities after your kids have outgrown them.



May holiday cheer
find its way into your
home this season...

Happy Holidays!

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