

N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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REDUCE HOLIDAY WASTE – HAVE A GREEN HOLIDAY SEASON



RALEIGH – With the holiday season upon us, the Recycle Guys (www.recycleguys.org) hope that North Carolinians will do their part to ensure family celebrations are safe, happy and not harmful to the environment. Studies show holiday preparations, including gift giving, holiday decorations and food preparation, increase the nation's trash by an extra 1 million tons per week during the five weeks between

Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. The following tips will help consumers reduce waste and care for the environment while enjoying the merriment of the holiday season.

- Don't let the "Grease Goblin" (<http://www.p2pays.org/ref/13/12327.pdf>) spoil your holiday fun. With deep-fried turkey fast becoming a Southern tradition, the proper disposal of deep-fryer oil is essential. Be sure to pour or scrape the oil into cans or bottles and apply lids. A number of municipalities in North Carolina have collection programs for residential fryer oil. Contact your trash collection provider for the availability of services.
- Give home-baked goodies in reusable containers like baskets, tins or jars. Or give non-materialistic "green" gifts that do not require wrapping, such as gift certificates for massages, to restaurants, cooking classes, sailing lessons, etc.
- Use decorative, reusable boxes and bags for gift giving instead of wrapping paper. If you must wrap, use comics, old calendars or fabric. After unwrapping, save the ribbons, bows and decorative wrappings for future use.
- Use reusable plates, cups and silverware instead of disposable ones.
- If a tree is part of your celebration, buy one that can be replanted in your yard. If you can't replant your tree, compost it after the holidays along with wreaths and other live decorations. Contact your local recycling office (find yours at <http://p2pays.org/localgov/newaste.html>) to find out how.

Staying green during the holiday season involves more than trees, gifts and wrapping paper. Other ways to help the environment during the holidays include:

- Use LED holiday lights. They use about 99 percent less energy than larger, traditional holiday bulbs and last up to 100,000 hours when used indoors.
- Avoid placing food scraps such as turkey bones, potato peels and celery down the drain. Potato peels swell when wet, blocking the drain, and celery strands can jam the blades of in-sink garbage disposals. Instead, use a backyard compost bin to convert vegetable scraps into compost.
- Defrost frozen items in the refrigerator, not under running water.
- Purchase rechargeable batteries.
- Call toll-free numbers on unwanted holiday catalogs and have your name taken off their mailing list.

For additional tips on reducing holiday waste, please visit the Recycle Guys' Web site at:
<http://www.recycleguys.org/generalholidaywaste.html>.



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