

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 one 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. Be sure to pour or scrape grease into cans or bottles and apply lids. Then throw it away in your household garbage.
- With deep-fried turkey fast becoming a Southern tradition, the proper disposal of deep-fryer oil is essential. A number of municipalities in North Carolina have collection programs for residential fryer oil. Contact your trash collection provider for availability of services.
- Use decorative, reusable boxes and bags for gift giving instead of wrapping paper. If you must wrap, use comics, old calendars, fabric or paper bags decorated with rubber stamps or homemade art.
- 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.
- Use reusable plates, cups and silverware instead of disposable ones.
- Give "green" gifts that do not require wrapping, such as gift certificates or a charitable donation in the recipient's name.
- Recycle used ribbons, bows and decorative wrappings. When you buy new wrapping paper, try to buy paper with a high recycled content.
- Purchase rechargeable batteries.
- Call toll-free numbers on unwanted holiday catalogs and have your name taken off their mailing list.
- Look for recycled products and items that contain high percentages of recycled content, like recycled content note cards.
- 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://www.p2pays.org/payt/ncwaste.asp>) to find out how.
- If your holiday gifts include new electronic gadgets and you need to discard your older electronics, recycle them instead of throwing them away. Talk to your local solid waste officials (<http://www.p2pays.org/localgov/PAYT/ncwaste.asp>) to see if your community has an electronics recycling program in place.



For additional tips on reducing holiday waste, please visit the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance Web site at <http://www.p2pays.org> and click on "Battery Guy."

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