

## Keep Your White Christmas Green

It's simple. Christmas can be a wasteful time of year. More waste can mean more damage to the environment. Try these simple tips to keep your white Christmas green:

- 1) **When choosing a real tree, ask where it can be returned so it can be turned into mulch:** If you have the space, buy a potted tree that you can either re-pot for another year's use or replant outside.
- 2) **Artificial Christmas trees are realistic these days and come in a variety of shapes and sizes:** They are easy to put together and even easier to take down. Make sure it will last several years, because fake trees are usually made of plastic and aren't recyclable.
- 3) **Switch to LED lights:** They are available in indoor and outdoor versions in a variety of colours, and have an average lifespan of 100,000 hours. They can use up to 95 per cent less energy than larger lights.
- 4) **Cut back on your holiday lighting:** Smaller displays can be as attractive as larger ones. Instead of putting lights all around the outside of the house, select a couple of bushes and string the lights around them. Put the lights on a timer so they come on when it turns dark and go off before you go to bed.
- 5) **Go paperless:** There are several alternatives to gift-wrapping. You can use jars, bottles, photo boxes or cloth bags, among other things. If you decide to use paper, make sure it is recyclable so it doesn't end up in the landfill. Try to stay away from glittery, shiny paper because it is harder to break down.
- 6) **Buy less:** This doesn't just mean buying for fewer people or spending less on them. Give gifts that are personal, unique and take up less space. How about a gift certificate for a service such as an oil change or a massage? When you do buy, try to think in green ways, such as buying local or buying something made from recyclable material.
- 7) **Bring back old traditions:** For your tree, string popcorn and cranberries and make other homemade ornaments. Instead of throwing a huge soirée, have a small group of friends over for games and homemade eggnog. Or how about throwing a popcorn-stringing party?

Christmas can be a stressful time of year for many people, without the added weight on your shoulders of worrying what you are doing to the environment. Many of these tips are not hard and require little or no change to your holiday traditions. While everyone is dreaming of a white Christmas, you can be at ease that yours is green.

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