

Climate Connections
Earth-friendly holidays November 19

Send picture of Holiday gift bag

Let's think about a different kind of holiday season this year that brings more joy, and less trash! We, the People, can help to reduce Methane, one of the emissions that causes climate change, by reducing our food waste and plastic that go into the landfills. Let's simplify the holidays and make them even more meaningful by buying less - and throwing away less. The six weeks from Thanksgiving to after the new year account for about 30% of the ANNUAL trash collected. Let's see if Nevada County can bring that down to 20%!!!

The holidays are traditionally about connecting from the heart. This year we can add connecting to the heart of the earth to reduce our negative impact on it. Start with gift ideas that are package-free and plastic free. Make a gift basket or bag of a variety of categories with new green ideas that work – and do away with the need for giant plastic jugs. Try a basket of personal cleaning items like shampoo in a box...bamboo toothbrush...reusable cotton cleansing pads, and more. Around the house items abound – like laundry soap in flat dehydrated leaves...bamboo paper towels that can be washed and reused many times...dish soap in bar form...and do you know that Vodka with water is an excellent cleaning agent? No sipping...

There are lots of kitchen things that can be reused over and over...reusable mesh bags for veggies...glass and bamboo food containers instead of plastic...reusable and compostable Swedish sponge cloths are great. You can take the old containers back to Gaia SOAP to be refilled with all kinds of products. A reusable metal water bottle or coffee cup is tops on the list. Check out Briarpatch and Gaia SOAP locally for new ideas. Look online at PackageFreeShop.com and ZeroWasteStore.com, or google Zero Waste Online Stores.

Non-plastic toys are possible! Look for them around town, and google it online. Maybe, instead of "stuff", give a fun adventure together, or a park pass, or plant a tree, offer to do a good deed for a friend, give money to help families who could make a livelihood with it. Set your mind on a different track and you will come up with lots of ideas.

Do you know that a lot of fancy sparkly wrapping paper and ribbons are plastic? And therefore unrecyclable? Reuse papers you already have – and use twine or some creative substitute for a ribbon. Family fun making natural decorations instead of buying a plastic blow up Santa.

Holidays are Party time! This year give a gift to our Earth and use only glasses that can be washed and reused...degradable plates like the new bamboo ones can be washed and reused year after year...ask guests to bring their own reusable glass or cup...and a non-plastic container for leftovers.

Holidays are for giving and sharing with those we love, and maybe all we need to offer is the appreciation of our friendship, and acknowledgement of our many blessings by getting *beyond stuff* this year. The Earth gives us all it can, but that is getting less and less as we witness many kinds of destruction. Let's help turn it around. Happy waste-free holidays!