



BREATHE
CALIFORNIA

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Going Green This Holiday Season

SAN JOSE, CA -- With the holidays around the corner, food, family and fun are abundant. However, studies show that the holiday season also brings significant increases in trash and energy use.

Fortunately, there are things you can do to ensure that this holiday season truly is green:

Shop Green: Many store items utilize recycled content in their products and/or packaging. In addition, as holiday shopping its full steam, the number of shopping bags also increases greatly – most of which end up in landfills. So, remember to bring your reusable tote bag when going shopping. Finally, about 40% of battery sales occur during the holidays, so consider buying rechargeable batteries and recycling your old used batteries instead of throwing them away.

Use Green Gift-Wrapping: Many types of wrapping paper are non-recyclable, so look for the kind that can be recycled or reused. Or get creative by using old scraps (or even old newspapers and paper bags) and adding a decorative bow or ribbon! Decorative boxes, gift bags and tins are also nice alternatives since they can be saved and reused.

Go with a Green Holiday Card: Many more holiday cards are now made of recycled content, so be picky when choosing your cards! Or if you're so inclined, save paper altogether by sending e-cards to family and friends.

Save Energy: Energy use rises significantly during the holiday months, so be conscious of your electricity and gas usage. Consider keeping your thermostat a few degrees cooler in favor of blankets and warmer clothes. Also take advantage of timers for your house and Christmas tree lights so they don't stay on all night. In addition, use this as an opportunity to switch old light bulbs out to more energy efficient fluorescent or light-emitting diodes (LED's). These bulbs have been shown to use less energy and last longer – not only reduce pollution, but saving you hundreds of dollars!

Keep the Air Clean: The wintertime can also see weather conditions conducive to high air pollution levels. Wood burning is a major source of wintertime "particle pollution." Avoid burning wood on "Spare the Air" nights and use burning low-moisture firewood or fireplace pellets when making a fire. Also consider converting to a cleaner natural gas fireplace. Furthermore, take advantage of public transit or carpooling to your many holiday functions!

“Tree-Cycle”: At the end of the season, be sure you recycle your Christmas tree. Christmas trees can be recycled into compost or mulch that can serve a number of environmental purposes. Most local cities and communities provide will pick up your old Christmas tree along with your garbage and recycling bins. Those cities that don’t provide the service might have venues where you can take your tree to be recycled into compost or mulch. Check with your trash/recycling provider as the holiday approaches or visit www.earth911.org for other tree-cycling services near you.

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