

GREEN TIPS HAPPY HOLIDAYS

➔ Many of us begin the holiday season resolving to spend less, eat less, and make less of an impact on the environment, yet the frenzy of festivities often compromises our best intentions. Still, keeping the earth in mind at this busy time will make our celebrations even more meaningful. **BY RHEA MAZE**

GIVE TIME Get into the true spirit of the holidays by volunteering for an environmental or charitable organization. And give some hours to loved ones, too—spending quality time with family and friends is too often overlooked. When company visits, organize a fun activity like an afternoon hike or bike ride. For your friends, host a cookie exchange party at which guests bring a few dozen homemade holiday cookies. Divide them up and everybody will go home with a variety of treats to share with others.



nature's aroma

Scent your home with whole cinnamon sticks, cloves, a dash of nutmeg, and a bit of orange essential oil in a saucepan of boiling water on the stove. The scent will fill the room for hours.

Want to donate money to a charity this season but don't know where to start? Charity rating websites such as www.givewell.org do the research for you, so you can feel good about where your money is going. If you'd rather give goods than money, rummage through your closets for gently used winter clothing and drop it off at your nearest thrift shop or Goodwill store.

SMART GIFT

THINK OUTSIDE THE GIFT

If gift giving is part of your holiday tradition, opt for low-impact intangibles such as gift certificates to a local organic market, theater, music venue, or spa. For the nature-inclined, consider a gift certificate for a whale watching tour or natural science museum.

Shun the cheap plastic stuff and get crafty with nature. Fill a basket or bowl with natural seasonal objects such as pine cones, winter plants, shells, or driftwood. Save ribbons and tie them around vases of leaves, flowers, or herbs. Prune an evergreen tree or shrub in your backyard and use the branches to make your own wreaths.

FOUND DECOR



IT'S A WRAP

If every family wrapped just one gift using materials found in their homes, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields. When you wrap gifts, get creative with comics, artwork, or even handkerchiefs. Colorful magazines run through a wide paper shredder make great packing strips.

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