

A Waste-Free Holiday

Why we care

For most Americans, gift-giving is an integral part of the holidays. But all that gift-giving creates a lot of waste. Americans throw away 25% more trash than usual between Thanksgiving and New Year's, and half of all the paper America consumes is used to wrap and decorate consumer products. Excess packaging, wrapping paper, and even unwanted gifts can all end up in the landfill; yet 70% of Americans say they would welcome less emphasis on gift giving and spending.

Simple, positive change

Recycle:

- Minimize store-bought gifts by drawing names, making your own, or giving services. See www.newdream.org/holiday.
- Choose classic products that will last over time. Avoid plastic and battery operated toys.
- Stay away from foil wrapping paper and foil-lined envelopes that cannot be recycled.
- Use decorative, reusable bags or the Sunday comics and colorful yarn for wrapping gifts.
- When placing a catalog order, tell the company you want no more than one catalog a year, and ask it not to share your name.
- For entertaining, use washable dinnerware instead of disposables. If you don't have enough, borrow or rent.

Reuse and recycle:

- After opening gifts, flatten wrapping paper, roll ribbons onto toilet paper rolls, and store for later use.
- Recycle your Christmas tree (call Metro for instructions, 503-234-3000).
- Take packaging peanuts and bubble wrap to a mail service shop, non-curb-side plastic to Far West Fibers, and block styrofoam to Total Reclaim or Recology (Pacific Land Clearing).

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.

