

The Green Tip: Green Your Holiday by Susan Whitaker



Are you looking to add some "green" to your holiday season while saving some "green" at the same time? Here are some low cost, eco-friendly tips to help make your holiday special for you and your family:

Wrap Reusably - Look for paper around the house such as old maps or brown paper bags that can be reused and decorated as gift wrap. Consider using fabric to wrap gifts since this can be reused year after year. Using holiday gift bags that you purchase from the store is another good alternative that can be used over and over again. Consider shredding unusable paper to stuff bags or boxes. Recycle any unusable non-metallic wrapping with your other household recyclables in your curbside recycling bin.

Be Creative - Are you handy with tools or known for your culinary skills in the kitchen? If so, consider making something for your loved ones. An organized collection of family favorite recipes or photographs can make a great gift. A batch of cookies or a handmade piece of furniture could be higher quality and cost considerably less than the store bought equivalent. Handmade gifts that represent the time and effort of a loved one are much more memorable and provide a value that money cannot buy.

Give the Gift of Time - Can you help someone with a home improvement project or offer some babysitting services to a parent that needs a break after the holidays? Or, consider offering the little ones in your family a day at a science museum or local zoo in place of a store bought gift. Giving the gift of your time or sharing an experience with a loved one will be greatly appreciated and could make memories that will last a lifetime.

Support a Cause - Instead of giving yet another striped neck tie to Uncle Phil, consider giving a donation to a charity in his honor instead. Many worthy organizations are in need of funding this time of year and your donation could really make a difference given the recent downturn in the economy. You can also make this a family affair by volunteering your time as a group or deciding to contribute funds to a favorite charity that you would have otherwise spent on neckties or other unneeded items.

Get Carded - When time is of the essence and only a purchased gift will do, consider giving a gift card. Gift cards allow the recipient to pick out what they actually will use and avoids the wasted time and energy (and gas) spent purchasing and returning unwanted gifts. And for those who already "have everything" consider giving them a gift card to their favorite restaurant or coffee

shop. Many grocery stores stock gift cards for a variety of restaurants and retailers, allowing you to shop for everyone on your list all in one place.

For additional money saving tips and ideas to help make your holiday season meaningful and bright, visit [New Dream](#) or check out the book **Hundred Dollar Holiday: The Case for a More Joyful Christmas** by Bill McKibben from your local library.