



HOLIDAY SUSTAINABILITY

The following is an overview of different ways to be more sustainable this holiday season. From decorations to gifts, these are simple ideas for Montanans to have a less wasteful holiday season.

1. Wrapping Paper – Alternatives and what's recyclable

Wrapping paper with glitter, metallic accents, or that is shiny that is NOT recyclable due to their multi-material nature. Putting this wrapping paper will contaminate the recycling stream, please place this wrapping paper in the trash. The cardboard tube inside the wrapping paper is recyclable.

There are several options for wrapping paper that is recyclable. A good test for whether your wrapping paper is recyclable is the “scrunch test”. Scrunch up the wrapping paper into a ball, if it keeps its shape, the paper is recyclable, if it doesn't, it belongs in the waste bin. Another way to tell is if it tears like printer paper, it is recyclable. If it doesn't rip easily, it is not. Look for true “paper” wrapping paper when purchasing this year.

Additionally, if you are going to purchase non-recyclable wrapping paper, look at purchasing paper that is made from recyclable materials. If the wrapping paper is made from recycled material, it will be noted on the label.

Alternative Ideas for Gift Wrapping

○ Reusable gift bags

Reusable tote bags can double as part of the gift as well as the gift bag. This is reusable and handy for the gift recipient. Saving and reusing holiday gift bags every year helps cut down on packaging waste.

○ Newspaper

While newspaper is dwindling in households, a lot of homes still have old newspapers lying around. Consider wrapping your gifts in newspaper as a sustainable (and chic!) alternative to wrapping paper.

○ Furoshiki – Using fabric as wrapping paper

Furoshiki is the Japanese tradition of wrapping gifts with fabric. This option is great as it can be reused every year.



2. Organic Decorations

The majority of holiday decorations are plastic and ultimately end up in the landfill. This winter check out some ideas for beautiful and natural décor for this holiday season. Not only is this a more sustainable way to decorate for the holidays, it also is a fun activity to do with family and friends.

1. Homemade Garlands

This garland is beautiful and simple to make. Check out the instructions [here](#).

2. Pomanders

These homemade pomanders not only look festive but also have a refreshing holiday scent. Check out how to make them [here](#).

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1. Homemade Garland



2. Pomanders



3. Sustainable Gift Ideas

The sad truth is that many gifts given during the holiday season end up shortly in the landfill. Here are a couple of tips to help prevent waste this holiday season.

○ Give experiences not things

A simple way to help reduce waste is to give the gift of an experience: a concert ticket, a massage, a visit to the art museum, whatever it is. The gift of an experience can be more special and is more sustainable overall.

○ Ask what is needed

A lot of gifts shared during the season will be wasted because they weren't really wanted or needed. While it takes some of the mystique out of gift giving, asking what is actually needed or wanted by the recipient can ensure that the gift is not wasted.

4. Minimize Single Use Packaging for Food

Food is a huge part of the holiday experience. This year, try and be more mindful of the single use packaging products come in and reduce when possible. From baking vessels to the leftovers people take home, avoid single use packaging whenever possible.

Some tips to minimize food packaging waste include:

- Buying in bulk and limiting plastic packaging when possible.
- Bringing/providing Tupperware for leftovers.
- Composting unusable leftover food.