

WISHING FOR A GREENER HOLIDAY

I'm wishing for a greener holiday season this year. No, I don't wish that the snow will disappear. By "a greener holiday season" I mean one that is environmentally friendly. Here are some ideas that we can all use to make this holiday season more "Earth-Friendly."

Recycled paper products and newspaper comic pages make unusual gift-wrap. You can also re-use your last year's holiday wrappings and save them for next year's wrapping and decorations. Last year's holiday cards make great gift tags and homemade cards for this year. If every family reused just 2 feet (0.6 meters) of holiday ribbon, we would have 38,000 feet (61,000 kilometers) and could tie a bow around the entire planet. Even if you don't want to reuse your holiday papers, you can shred old gift wrap and use it for colorful packing material. Every year, Americans throw away a million extra tons of garbage, including packaging materials, each week during Thanksgiving and the December holiday season. Anything we can do to reduce this waste would certainly help the environment.

When selecting a Christmas tree, keep in mind that nearly all the trees sold at seasonal Christmas tree lots are grown on tree farms, and meant to be harvested. If you want a potted tree, it is best to leave it outside and decorate it there, since potted trees do not thrive in unseasonably warm homes.

If you do choose an artificial tree, you should be aware that artificial trees also consume a great deal of energy during the manufacturing process.

If you choose a freshly cut pine, refrain from decorating with artificial snow, and please remove all tinsel, because these items cannot be recycled, and you will want to recycle your tree. Our Summit Metro Parks system also has a tree-recycling program for wildlife habitat. The trees are also chipped and the chips distributed on the park trails. There are six areas set up in the parks, where you can drop off your trees. To find out where these areas are, call 330-867-5511, or go to <https://www.summitmetroparks.org/park-initiatives.aspx> for more information and locations. Here is a message from our Summit Metro Parks.

"Make 'Merry' Mulch

Since the early 1970s, tens of thousands of Christmas trees have been dropped off by local residents and chipped into mulch, used by crews to beautify Summit Metro Parks.

You, too, can enjoy your Christmas tree well beyond the holiday season.

Annually, live Christmas trees – cleaned of all decorations, garland and tinsel – can be dropped off at the following locations, December 26 through January 31:

- [Firestone Metro Park](#) / Little Turtle Pond: 2400 Harrington Rd., Akron

- [Furnace Run Metro Park](#) / Brushwood Area: 4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield
- [Goodyear Heights Metro Park](#) / Main Entrance (rear parking lot): 2077 Newton St., Akron
- [Nimisila Reservoir Metro Park](#) / South Main 2 Lot: 5531 S. Main St., Green
- [Sand Run Metro Park](#) / Treaty Line Area: 995 Treaty Line Rd., Akron
- [Silver Creek Metro Park](#) / Big Oak Area: 5199 Medina Line Rd., Norton

Visitors should look for the small signs that identify the drop-off locations.

On average, more than 2,000 trees are collected each year. The resulting mulch is spread out near trailheads and used to create landscaping compost.”

You can purchase gifts made from recycled items by checking on-line at home, or on-line at your local library. Simply bring up your favorite search engine and enter “environmentally friendly gifts.” Also check your local news media for “greener” choices. There are also many worthy charities where you can protect and sponsor wild and domestic animals, plant a tree, or even provide a goat or a small flock of chickens for a family halfway across the world. These can be purchased as a gift in someone else’s name and will have a positive ecological impact. Most of these groups can be found online, and include such organizations as “The National Wildlife Federation,” “The World Wildlife Fund,” “The Humane Society of the United States,” “The Fund for Animals,” “Heifer International,” “The National Arbor Day Foundation,” “The Nature Conservancy,” “The National Audubon Society,” and many more, as well as many local organizations dedicated to helping people, animals, and plants.

These are just a few suggestions but with a little imagination, you can find a lot more. These ideas will help our planet and improve the quality of life for all who live on it. With a little shared effort, we can all have “Greener “ holidays and all the days thereafter.

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