



How Green are you?

A Green Christmas



At Christmas it is all too easy to go on an all consuming frenzy at this time. In 2007, around £12 billion was expected to be spent on Christmas Goods, creating over 3 million extra tonnes of rubbish, which equal about five extra bags of rubbish or rubbish per household. Also in 2008 it was estimated that £1.7 billion was spent on unwanted gifts in 2008 which equals £36 per person.

- 1.7 billion Christmas Cards (about 200,000 trees)
- 6 million Christmas trees
- 4,200 tonnes of aluminium foil
- 125,000 tonnes of plastic packaging
- 80,000 tonnes of textiles
- 8,000 tonnes of wrapping paper (around 50,000 trees)

Action Points for Christmas

- Cards – send e-cards; use communal cards or buy recycled cards which support charities and recycle old cards in the New Year
- Trees& Decorations – buy locally grown trees with roots. If these are not available ensure you recycle them afterwards (see what services your local council offers). To find where you can buy from sustainable source, check out the British Christmas Tree Growers Association at <http://www.bctga.co.uk/> where the trees are grown according to strict guidelines or has a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) accreditation. The Soil Association also certifies some trees as organic. Real trees are more suitable than plastic ones
- Tree Lights – turn off when not needed. Switch to be more environmentally LED lights, choosing those that are powered by solar power or rechargeable batteries, or installing an energy-saving bulb to offset the energy usage
- Decorations – Turn old newspapers, magazines and scrap material into decorations and reuse next year or

- buy ones that are fairly traded and ethically sourced
- Presents – buy local, Fair Trade or second hand;; make your own; give membership of environmental/conservation charities; give a ‘living’ gift through a wildlife charity e.g. plant a tree; or pay for a “day out” activity. (also see Greening your Shopping leaflet in this series)
 - Wrapping Paper – reuse where possible; fasten with string, wool or ribbon, so the paper can be reused. Various charities sell recycled paper products
 - Cosmetics – eco-friendly or organic cosmetics which have minimal chemicals which are better for your health and the water going down the sink. They are also not tested on animals
 - Bags and packaging – Buy a bag for life to eliminate the use of plastic ones; take old bags to avoid being given new ones; buy food and drinks in larger sized containers and products with less packaging
 - Turkey – around 10 million turkeys are eaten at Christmas. Buy an organic bird, where it will have had a better life and could taste better; consider going vegetarian or vegan

- Pop a cork – when buying wine, ensure it has a natural cork, and consider organic or Fair Trade wines
- Contacting friends and family - rather than phoning family on the day use your PC or laptop to contact them by a service like Skype – then need to use it too – so you can get free calls. If you don't have a landline, you can use your mobile and make cheaper calls by using service such Fring to make cheaper calls through Wi-Fi, or with an iPhone use the Skype application
- Buy local – visit your local farmers market and see what organic selection is also available.

