



Recycling 103: Learning How to Generate Less Waste

# Talking Trash

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# Agenda

- ❖ Simplifying the Holidays
  - ◆ Modifying Your Traditions
  - ◆ Gift Giving Alternatives
  - ◆ Entertaining Ideas
- ❖ Recycling in Massachusetts video
  - ◆ Where Does the Trash Go?
  - ◆ Landfills and Incinerators
- ❖ Q&A

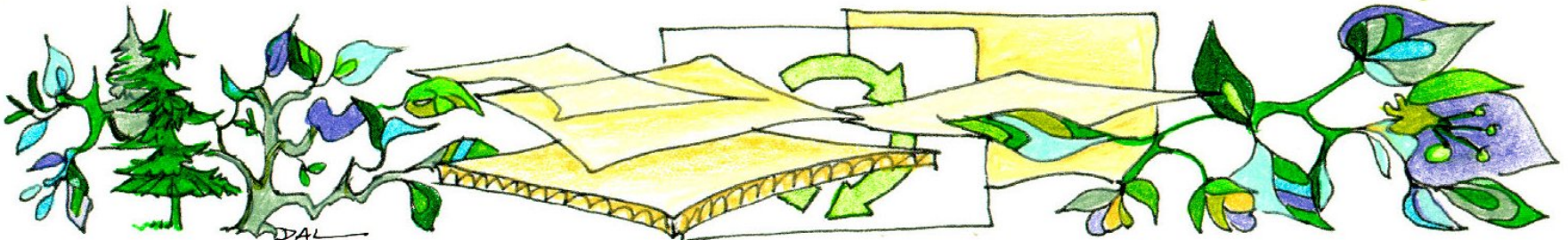
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# Holiday Excess

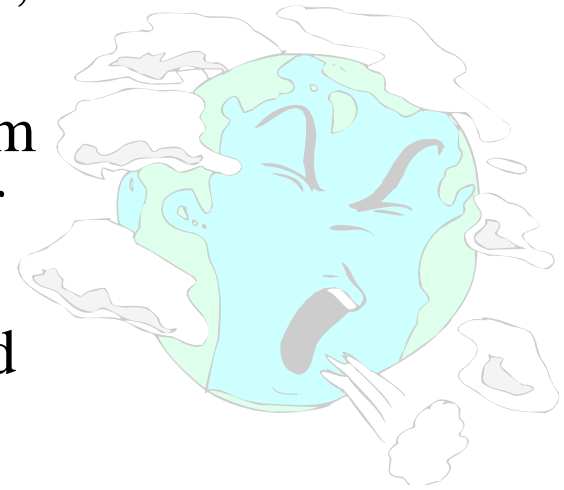
- ❖ Americans throw away 25% more trash during the Thanksgiving to New Year's holiday season than any other time of year.
- ❖ This extra garbage amounts to 25 million tons of trash or about one million extra tons of garbage per week.

(Bob Lilienfeld/The Useless Stuff Report)



# Be Kind to the Earth

- ❖ Save paper by wrapping gifts in newspaper comics or paper bags decorated with homemade art, topographic maps, fun thrift-store fabrics, children's drawings, or artwork from old calendars.
- ❖ Buy products produced locally by small businesses and artisans. When possible, reject overpackaged goods.
- ❖ Reuse gift bags, boxes, and ribbon from last year. Save this year's gift wrap for reuse next year.
- ❖ Call the toll-free numbers on unwanted holiday catalogs and have your name taken off of their mailing lists.



# Talk to Your Family

- ❖ If you are planning to change your usual holiday celebrations and rituals, talk about it ahead of time and get their feedback.
  - Explain why you want to make the change.
  - Assure everyone that you want to emphasize the traditions that foster the greatest sense of meaning
  - Let them know you don't want to take anything away from the holiday.
- ❖ Skeptics may change their minds after giving a few new ideas a try.
- ❖ You may also be pleasantly surprised by who shares your concerns and enthusiasm.

# Change Gift-Giving Traditions

- ❖ Have a “Yankee Pot Luck” or “White elephant party.”
- ❖ For large gatherings get everyone together in advance, put all the names in a hat, and have each person draw the name of one other person to buy for.
- ❖ Designate a dollar limit on gifts in advance.
- ❖ If you celebrate Hanukkah, shift the focus to avoid giving gifts for eight consecutive evenings. Consider having a theme for each night: hosting a party, working on a charity project together, making homemade presents or baked goods for others, playing games, etc.



# Connect with Your Children

- ❖ Help kids put on a holiday play, talent show, or puppet show.
- ❖ Hand-dip candles together for use in menorah, kinara, or advent wreath.
- ❖ Help your children prepare gift boxes for the homeless (filled with items like food, treats, and toiletries.)
- ❖ Create a new tradition by playing a game together.



# Gifts and Spending

- ❖ Often we are simply not conscious of how much is flying out of our wallets during the rush of the season.
- ❖ Look and see how much you purchased using your charge card last year. How long did it take to pay it off?
- ❖ If you don't feel the level of enjoyment you received justified the amount you spent, try setting a budget to spend less.



# Homemade Gifts

- ❖ Give someone a personalized basket, filled with homemade muffins, cookies, and jam
- ❖ Make a family calendar marked with important dates, such as birthdays, anniversaries, and family gatherings; decorate the calendar with family photos
- ❖ Put together a photo album, scrap book, or framed collage containing pictures and mementos
- ❖ Make an emergency kit. Do you know someone with an unreliable car? Create a gift basket with a blanket, flashlight, gas can, jumper cables, and flares
- ❖ Buy a plain T-shirt and customize it for your recipient with iron-on transfer paper



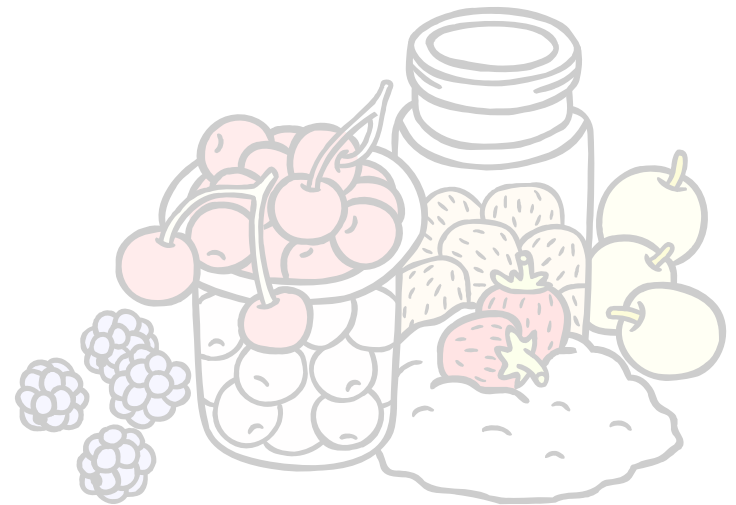
## Low Cost Options

- ❖ Give away the last great book you bought and enjoyed to someone who enjoys your taste. You'll get to talk about the book later, and you can always reread a library copy
- ❖ Plant a tree or perform some other “random act of kindness” in your recipient’s honor.
- ❖ Put together a little book of favorite family recipes



# Gifts of Experience

- ❖ Offer to teach a skill you possess, such as canning, swing dancing, knitting, furniture-making, or doing the butterfly stroke.
- ❖ Offer a talent such as photography, gardening, or financial planning



# Gifts of Charity

- ❖ Donate to a cause in the name of family member. See [altgifts.org](http://altgifts.org) for ways to give.
- ❖ Sponsor a child refugee, support a homeless shelter, or protect an acre of rainforest.
- ❖ Designate an amount of money to donate to charity and let your kids pick which causes will receive it.



# Simpler Entertaining

- ❖ If friends and relatives are willing, have a gourmet potluck party instead of doing all the cooking yourself.
- ❖ Instead of having a party centered around a full meal, have people over for coffee and dessert alone.
- ❖ Host a cookie swap.
- ❖ Delegate some of the decorating, especially if you have young helpers in your home.



# More info

Catalog Choice: get off catalog mailing lists for free  
[www.catalogchoice.org/](http://www.catalogchoice.org/)

Earth911.com: print out a paper tree ornament  
[www.earth911.org/green-your-holidays/trecycle-ornament/](http://www.earth911.org/green-your-holidays/trecycle-ornament/)

Alternative Gifts International  
[www.alternativegifts.org/](http://www.alternativegifts.org/)

Center for a New American Dream  
[www.newdream.org/](http://www.newdream.org/)  
[creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/)

Boston's Alternative Gift Fair  
[www.giftitup.org/](http://www.giftitup.org/)

# MIT Resources

## Working Green at MIT

[web.mit.edu/workinggreen](http://web.mit.edu/workinggreen)  
[staffrecycles@mit.edu](mailto:staffrecycles@mit.edu)

## Facilities Recycling FAQs

[web.mit.edu/facilities/environmental/recycling-faq.html](http://web.mit.edu/facilities/environmental/recycling-faq.html)  
[recycling@mit.edu](mailto:recycling@mit.edu)

## Environmental, Health and Safety Office

[web.mit.edu/environment/index.html](http://web.mit.edu/environment/index.html)  
[environment@mit.edu](mailto:environment@mit.edu)