

We wish you a Sustainable Christmas and a Happy New Year

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I don't know about you but being honest, Christmas is my favourite holiday. It brings families, friends, work colleges and strangers together, to celebrate and have fun. I find myself in a happier mood in general, singing along to the carols in shops and on the radio and smiling all the time at children who awe in the seasons decorations. However with the ups, come the downs and I find myself somewhat awestruck for the wrong reasons for this time of year.

Christmas or Christmess?

As soon as party season hits single-use plastic items seem to increase tenfold. Not only is plastic bad news because of the potentially harmful chemicals they are made from but it also takes hundreds of years to breakdown.



If you're hosting a party and don't have enough plates or crockery, why not ask to borrow a friend's? Or if that's a bit tricky then make a trip down to your local op shop and pick up some bargain crockery and glassware that you can return after.

And what about all those left overs? Try to cut back on the foil and glad wrap, store them in reusable plastic containers or do a little research about local community groups that help the homeless in your area that will supply your donated leftovers to give others a Christmas dinner.



Paper, Plastic or the Real Deal?

Other than Santa and his reindeer the Christmas tree has to be one of the most iconic symbols of the season, the debate of how soon is too soon to put up your Christmas tree is a hot topic this time of year. However, I would feel like a better question would be what my Christmas tree should be made from. In this day and age, with the help of social media and the internet everybody has access to amazing alternative ideas.

Instead of buying a fake tree, which is typically made of plastic and will eventually end up in landfill, invest in a potted plant as an alternative Christmas tree that you can keep forever. Try an Australian native pine like Wollemi or

Cypress, or have a go at making your own 'twigmas tree' made using an old tree branch and sitting it in a beautiful vase or pot of sand and decorate away.

Presentable Presents

When I was a kid my favourite part about Christmas was the gifts, not just getting something new but the excitement and anticipation of trying to guess what was inside and ripping of the wrapping paper and playing in all the paper once all of the gifts had been opened.



Unfortunately, this is also a major contributor to our landfills this time of year, all of that pretty glossy paper and the boxes and ties from the gifts. So what can you do to make this part of the day still fun but a little more sustainable? Firstly, you can reuse any gift bags or wrapping paper you have collected over the year (if you haven't, you could make a start this Christmas). Secondly, if you have children, you could use their artwork to wrap the gift, it's like a 2 for 1 gift! Alternatively, you could always wrap your gifts in a nice second-hand scarf or piece of fabric or tea towel that can be reused down the track.

There is so much more to Christmas than just the gifts, the music and the commercial aspects. Christmas is a time for family and friends to get together and spread the love and joy of the holiday season. I have only touched on a few sustainable ideas to try out, however there is so much more you can do to help spread Christmas joy to our planet. I recommend doing a quick Google search of sustainable Christmas ideas to get you going.

On that note, Integrate Sustainability would like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

