

## ***Considerations for a Sustainable Festive Season***

By Sophie Monaco

Christmas is right around the corner bringing with it the stress of organising Christmas lunch, finding presents for those picky people and the annoyance of spending prolonged periods of time with family members in confined spaces. Yet, in all the hustle and bustle of December, the festive season can lace additional pressure on the environment what with increased waste to landfill, rampant consumerism and increased emissions to the atmosphere. With a little imagination it is possible to celebrate the festive season and have a sustainable Christmas which can reduce the environmental pressures on the earth.

Here are some ideas to keep in mind to prepare and celebrate a sustainable Christmas.

### **Cards and Wrapping Paper<sup>1</sup>**

One of the biggest sources of waste each Christmas is wrapping paper and cards with more than 8000 tonnes used on annually – that's 50,000 trees! Making small changes to the choice of Christmas cards and wrapping paper can have a huge impact on the amount of waste entering landfill.

- Choose recycled paper cards and wrapping paper where you can.
- Get crafty and make your own cards.
- Re-use last year's cards as gift tags or postcards.
- Try an e-card instead.
- Re-use wrapping paper where possible.
- Wrap gifts in newspaper, children's artwork, gift bags or fabric/scarves.



### **Gifts<sup>1</sup>**

Buying gifts can often be an incredibly difficult, expensive and overwhelming exercise. The gesture of giving and thoughtfulness can be pushed aside in the pre-Christmas sales and Christmas Eve rush. Rather, shortening the Christmas list and spending less on gifts which are personal and unique can simplify this daunting task. Other ideas might include:

- Think local. Check out local farmer's markets for handmade local crafts or goodies and support a local business at the same time.
- Choose eco-friendly and recycled products ([Biome](#) and [Eco Toys](#) are good on-line stores).
- Choose fair-trade and ethical (there are often great finds at the [Oxfam](#) shops).
- Try DIY or homemade biscuits, slices and other treats ([Taste](#) has a great collection of Christmas baking recipes).
- Give the gift of an experience or donation.
- Re-gift if appropriate.
- Remember to recycle old gadgets.

## Decorations<sup>1</sup>

Checking out all the Christmas lights at this time of year is thoroughly enjoyable but not necessarily good for the environment. It is worthwhile considering the use of LED lights and even solar powered lights, both of which can be found in store these days. It could also be fun to make your own Christmas tree and table decorations. Try painting or spray-painting dried Jarrah branches, pinecones and honky nuts.

## Food and Drink<sup>1</sup>

Festive food often evokes images of lavish tables overflowing with roast meats, seafood, salads, condiments and a grand turkey with a delicious stuffing. Thinking about where food has been sourced from and how much goes in the bin can make a huge difference to your Christmas environmental footprint.

- Choose local. For seasonal produce try a local farmers market and select alcohol from a local brewery/winery.
- Take re-useable bags to the supermarket.
- Try a vegetarian dish in favour of meat.
- Buy sustainable seafood (the app [Australian Seafood Guide](#) is great).
- Cook as much as is required.
- Save food scraps for chickens, worms or compost.
- Freeze leftovers.
- Recycle. Cardboard packaging, glass, aluminium and some plastics can be recycled.

By making a conscious choice while shopping and preparing for Christmas it is possible to have a more sustainable festive season and remove some of the pressure on the environment during this time of year.

*Merry Christmas from Integrate Sustainability!*



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<sup>1</sup>Information in this blog post was sourced from the following websites. For more information, please see these references.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-19/christmas-waste-what-to-do-with-it/5974026>, <https://www.australianethical.com.au/news/10-tips-more-environmentally-friendly-christmas/>, <https://www.foe.co.uk/living/articles/25-eco-friendly-christmas-tips>, [http://eartheasy.com/give\\_sustainchristmas.htm](http://eartheasy.com/give_sustainchristmas.htm), <http://yourenergysavings.gov.au/guides/christmas?page=0>.