

Use your imagination!

Before you throw anything away, ask yourself:

- Could it be fixed or repaired?
- Could it be made more attractive?
- Could part of it be used to make something?
- Could someone else use it?
- Could it be recycled?

For county information

on waste reduction activities and recycling contact the:

Anoka County Integrated
Waste Management Department

763-323-5730

recycle@co.anoka.mn.us



Other references for more information

- Garbage, The Practical Journal for the Environment. Vol.II No. 6. November/December 1990. Old House Journal Corp., Brooklyn, New York.
- Heloise, Hints for a Healthy Planet. 1990, King Features Syndicate Inc., Perigee Books, New York, New York.
- Lamb, Marjorie. 2 Minutes a Day for a Greener Planet. 1990, Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., New York, New York.
- McCall's Favorite Christmas Ideas 1992.
- The New Green Christmas. The Evergreen Alliance. 1991, Halo Books, San Francisco, California.
- Practical Problem Solver. 1991, The Reader's Digest Association.

*Graphics provided by
the Minnesota Office
of Environmental Assistance.*

No Waste Holiday Ideas



Reducing waste and choosing
“greener” gifts during the holiday
season



Anoka County Integrated Waste Management Department
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No waste holiday

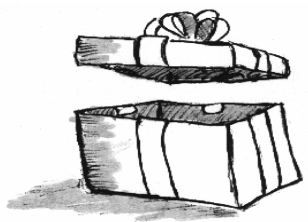
Anoka County and the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance have gathered ideas from many sources to help you reduce the amount of waste you generate during the holiday season. By using these ideas, you can also reduce holiday costs. Be creative and have fun!



Gift wrapping

Try these items from around your home to wrap gifts:

- Scarves, handkerchiefs or bandanas.
- Old posters and maps.
- A “Hollywood box”: individually wrap or decorate the top and bottom of a box with a separate lid. Encourage the recipient to reuse the box.



- Pages from a child’s coloring book taped together (especially nice for relatives who would enjoy the artwork).

- Old sheet music.
- Wallpaper scraps.
- Home-sewn cloth bags.
- Fabric scraps.
- Pictures or advertisements from magazines and catalogs.
- Sunday comic pages.
- A present in a present (for example, a hat in a matching scarf, jewelry in a wooden box, cookies in a reusable tin or cookie jar, utensils or picnic supplies in a tablecloth, kitchen gifts wrapped in towels).
- A plain box decorated with glitter, paint, markers, etc.
- A cake pan, basket or a wooden box.
- Reusable gift bags.
- Newspapers (foreign newspapers are great).

- Send used greeting cards (front picture only - any occasion) to St. Jude’s Ranch for Children, 100 St. Jude Street, Dept. MN, Boulder City, Nevada 89005. Children at St. Jude’s will earn money by using your old cards to make new cards.

- Recycle bottles, cans, newspaper, mixed paper, plastic and cardboard.
- Buy recycled products.
- Compost.
- Plant at least one tree.
- Turn off the shower while you soap to save water.
- Use biodegradable laundry soap rather than petroleum-based detergents.
- Reduce use of pesticides and other hazardous household chemicals. Use safer substitutes instead.
- Write or call legislators, store managers and others to let them know how you feel about environmental issues.
- Request to remove your name from future mailing lists by writing to:

Direct Marketing Assn.
Mail Preference Service
P.O. Box 643
Carmel, NY 10512

Green resolutions for the New Year

- Use only cloth cleaning towels.
- Install water-saving devices in your toilet and shower.
- Walk or bicycle at least one more weekly errand.
- Use cloth shopping bags (keep reusable shopping bags in your car so they will always be handy).
- Use a washable coffee cup at work.
- Switch to compact fluorescent lights to save energy.
- Turn down the thermostat at night.



Gifts to avoid

- Over-packaged, resource-consuming gifts.
- Disposable products.
- Gadgets that have limited use.



- Anything in aerosol containers (ask for non-aerosol alternatives).

Donation opportunities

- Give to your local food shelf.
- Donate outgrown winter clothing items such as sweaters, boots, coats, mittens and snowsuits to thrift stores and local donation centers. An item you no longer use could be someone else's treasure.

- Order a *Shop Used First!* guide for donation locations and places to find great things for very reasonable prices. Contact Anoka County Integrated Waste Management

763-323-5730

recycle@co.anoka.mn.us

**Save Money
Save Resources
Shop used first!**

- Check your local telephone directory under "thrift stores" for more ideas.
- Make a cash donation to your favorite environmental or community organization.

After the holidays

- Save packing material, gift wrap and tissue paper for reuse.
- Use leftover gift wrap to line shelves and dresser drawers.
- Save bows, ribbon, tags, festive bags and boxes for next year.
- Recycle your tree! Some communities chip discarded holiday trees into mulch for use in community parks. Call your city or county for more information.

- Last year's holiday paper (press with warm iron if wrinkled).
- Gift wrap made from recycled paper.



Bows and ribbons

These items make an eye-catching final touch:

- Bows saved from other gifts.
- Reusable items, such as hair bows, ornaments, shoe laces or small toys.
- Stencils or pictures from holiday cards pasted onto a plain brown paper bag or box.
- Last year's holiday cards cut up for gift tags.
- Spices, such as bundled cinnamon sticks or cloves in mesh cloth.

- Scrap fabric, lace, yarn, rickrack and seam tape.
- Scarves.
- Combinations of beads and buttons.
- Dried or silk flowers.
- Pine cones and raffia.

Packing

Consider these alternatives:

- Air-popped popcorn (and a note that it can be fed to birds).
- Biodegradable starch packing peanuts.
- Colorful neckties.



- Used packing peanuts from previous gifts (clean, unwanted packing peanuts are accepted by many packaging stores for reuse).
- Crumpled ads from the newspaper. The ink on glossy paper won't smear like the rest of the newspaper.

Holiday tree

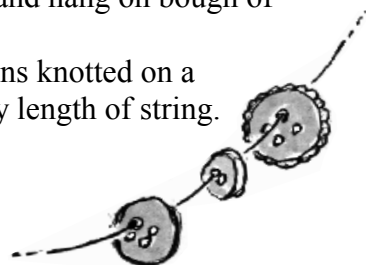
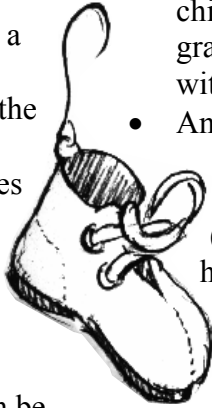
- Consider buying a potted Norfolk pine, fig tree or indoor house plant that can be used every holiday season as your evergreen tree.
- Purchase a tree from a tree farm rather than cutting one down in the wild.
- Use trimmed branches from your tree for decorating around the home or making wreaths.
- Consider buying an artificial tree that can be reused every year.
- Decorate evergreen bushes or pine trees outside a window with removable, reusable decorations.



Tree ornaments/ decorating

Here are a few ideas for adding a special touch to holiday decorations:

- Memorabilia, such as a child's first shoe or grandma's hankie scented with perfume.
- An old full skirt as a tree skirt.
 - Old jewelry (restring old necklaces, hang earrings or bracelets).
 - Items collected on vacation.
 - Small stuffed animals and toys.
- Cookie cutters.
- Miniature toy cars.
- Holiday card ornaments: cut up; glue felt fabric scraps on back; tie with yarn scraps.
- Edible cookie ornaments: use gingerbread or sugar cookie dough; poke a hole at the tip using a drinking straw; decorate and bake; thread a ribbon through hole; tie ribbon in a large loop and hang on bough of tree.
- Buttons knotted on a sturdy length of string.



- Gift basket filled with non-toxic household cleaners (try local co-ops or environmental stores for gift ideas).
- An old tricycle, bicycle, rocking chair, etc. fixed up to pass along as an heirloom.
- Reusable coffee cup.



- Energy-saving fluorescent light fixture or bulbs. Compact fluorescent bulbs last longer and use about 1/4 to 1/3 the energy of regular light bulbs. Substituting a compact fluorescent light for a traditional bulb will keep a half-ton of CO₂ out of the atmosphere.



- Quilts and comforters.
- Water-saving showerhead.
- Personalized "coupons," such as a night off from dish duty, a foot massage, breakfast in bed, etc.
- A bat roosting box – bats help control insect populations.
- Gourmet dinner for a busy couple.
- Bird feeder and seed.
- A subscription to a favorite environmental magazine.
- Stationery, made from recycled paper, and stamps.
- House plant.



- Car safety kit packed into a coffee can (e.g. candles, flares, etc.).
- Shutoff-timer for watering the lawn.

- Help someone recycle — give a can crusher, a set of recycling bins or a recycling cart.
- Draw names or share the cost of a gift with a sibling or friend.
- Give an experience (for example, a ride in a hot air balloon or day trip on a train).
- Make a giant edible cookie holiday card; write a personal greeting with icing.
- Give a garden! Seeds, gloves, tools, etc.
- Create a family recipe book.
- Give yourself or your children time to simply enjoy the season.

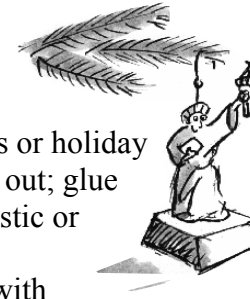


Other gift ideas:

- Season sporting event tickets.
- Membership to a museum or nonprofit organization.
- Theater tickets.
- Free baby-sitting service.
- For new parents, diaper service for a month.
- Shares in an environmental investment fund.
- Reusable lunch bag.
- Refillable pens.
- Automatic thermostat control (automatically turns down heat at night).
- Compost bin.
- Reusable food storage containers.
- Cloth shopping bag.
- Cloth napkins and rings.
- Durable wooden toys.
- Solar watch or calculator.
- Reusable razor.
- Durable hand tools.
- 100% cotton dish towels or sheets; look for unbleached cotton.



- Small pictures from old magazines or holiday cards: cut out; glue onto a plastic or metal lid; decorate with beads, buttons or jewelry; punch a hole and hang with string or yarn.
- Popcorn and cranberry strings (can be fed to birds after the holidays).
- Reusable glass icicles instead of disposable tinsel (keeps tree clean for mulching).
- Dressed-up doll as a tree-topper.
- Spices from the kitchen instead of commercially prepared and packaged products or aerosols. For example, create pomander balls by placing whole cloves in oranges or lemons to create decorations that look and smell great.
- “Gingerbread” people and reindeer from brown paper grocery bags (place on windows and walls for decoration).
- Tin can luminary (punch holes into empty metal can; place candle inside).



Party Waste Reduction Tips

These suggestions can really reduce the amount you have to throw away after a party:

- Use reusable tableware. If you don't have enough, ask to borrow reusable tableware from friends or family.



- Rent dishes, napkins, cups and saucers, tablecloths and glasses instead of using disposables.
- Cut up last year's holiday cards and use as place cards.
- Use outdated calendar pages taped together to make a unique New Year's tablecloth.
- Buy baking goods and snack foods in bulk or large volumes when possible.



- Place clearly marked recycling containers at your celebration so guests can recycle their pop cans, bottles, etc.



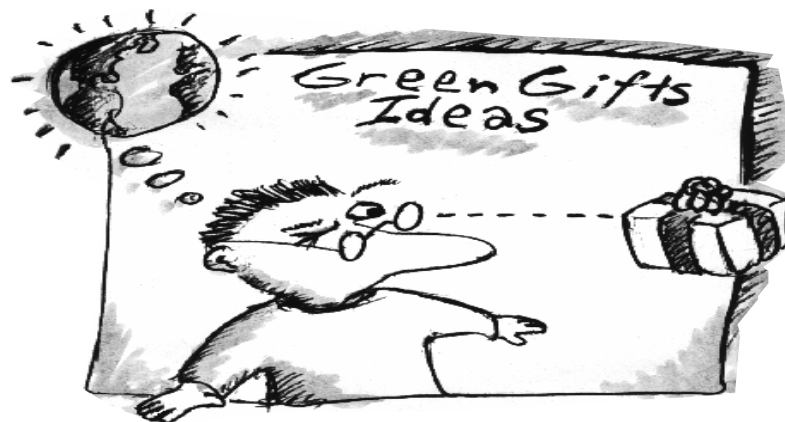
- Encourage the host or hostess to reuse and recycle bows, wrapping paper, cans, glass, etc.
- Point out the ways your party demonstrates waste reduction and recycling, and....

SPREAD THE WORD!



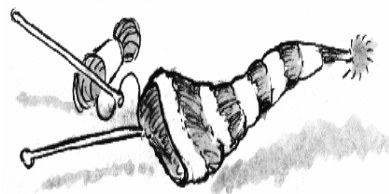
Pine cone fire starters

Make “fire starters” from pine cones. Melt old colored candle stubs, dip pine cones in hot wax and place on a piece of wax paper. Fill muffin tins half full with hot wax, place a wick on the side of the tin and dip wax coated pine cones into each tin. The wick will be anchored in the wax and attached securely to the pine cone. Cool in freezer five to 10 minutes. Turn upside down and cones should fall out. Place under wood and light.



Green gift ideas

Consider giving gifts that conserve resources this year. Some of the most treasured gifts are those we make ourselves, or simply the gift of our time. Avoid the trap of “How much should I spend?”



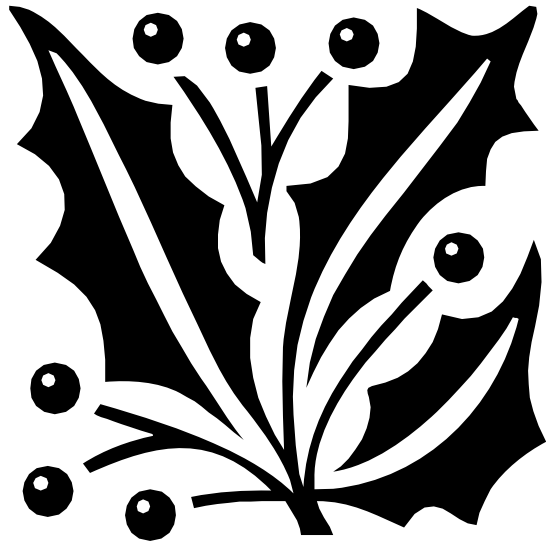
- Look for gifts that are unpackaged or minimally packaged, without unnecessary plastic wrap or cardboard backing.
- Evaluate the gift for simplicity and durability.
- Buy durable gifts with long-term warranties.
- Know the store’s return policy and include tags or

gift receipts for easier exchange or return.

- Consider the impact of your gift: Is it environmentally friendly and safe for children? Will it be reusable? Is it recyclable and/or made from recycled materials?
- Purchase holiday cards made from recycled paper or make your own.



Reuse and Waste Reduction Holiday Ideas



**Anoka County
Integrated Waste Management
Municipal Recycling Coordinators
and Recycling Service Providers**

This booklet is printed in conjunction with the Reuse and Waste Reduction Holiday video produced by the Anoka County Integrated Waste Management Department for release to local cable TV stations.

For more copies or further information call (763) 323-5730 or e-mail to recycle@co.anoka.mn.us.

Cloth Bag Instructions

Supplies: an old sheet or other material
measuring tape
scissors
trim, if desired

1. Determine the size of the bag you wish to make and allow for seams. For an 11" x 14" bag cut a strip of material 12½" x 33" (16½ height x 2"). I used an old sheet and doubled the material, matching the pattern, to make a sturdier bag. In that case, your strip of material is 12½"x 66".
2. Fold the material in half and sew the side seams. (You can make french seams or overcast the seam so there are no raw edges but that is not necessary.) Fold the raw edge under about ¼" at the top and make a 1" hem.
3. Cut two strips of material about 2½" x 15" long for the handles. With right sides together make a seam to form a tube. Turn it right side out and iron along the seam line. Attach the handles to the inside hem at the top of the bag, folding under the raw edges. I attached them 2½" from each side edge.
4. To make the bottom of the bag, turn it inside out. Position the side seam in the middle and fold the bag so that a triangle is formed at the bottom of the bag. Measure and mark about 2", from the pointed edge, on both sides of the triangle. Sew a seam from one mark to the other. Follow this same procedure on the other side seam.
5. Trim as desired.

Instructions courtesy of Sandra Coop, Anoka County

Cloth Covered Gift Boxes

Supplies: shoe box or similar type box with lid
scrap fabric or wrapping paper
hot glue gun or tacky glue
pencil
ruler
scissors

1. Press the fabric if it's wrinkled. Measure the height of the box side and add 1¼". Place the box in the center of the fabric and cut this measurement around the base. Measure the height of the lid and double it. Place the lid in the center of the fabric and cut this distance around the lid. You may want to finish the fabric edges with a serger, pinking shears or a small hem glued or sewed.
2. Center the box on the fabric. Glue the long edges to the inside of the box first, leaving about ½" of each outside edge unglued. Press one side of the fabric in place, and then the opposite side, pulling the fabric taut. Place glue on the inside edges of the short sides of the box's top edge, leaving about half of the inside edge unglued. Press the fabric in place, pulling taut. Pull the corners inside the box, folding the outside edges of the fabric to form a pleat on the outside of the corner. Glue the bunched up fabric to the inside corner and bottom of the box to secure.
3. Center the lid on its fabric piece and starting with the long sides, glue the inside edge all the way into the corner, pressing the fabric all the way into the corner. Pull it taut on the second side. Instead of corner pleating the lid, fold the fabric in, apply glue and secure the outside edges and then the corner section. Pull the fabric taut to avoid puckers.
4. Make a handwritten or computer generated note to glue inside the lid, telling the recipient who made the box and when, and how you want them to reuse it as much as they can to reduce holiday waste.
5. For an elegant look, use a scrap of complimenting fabric draped around the gift inside. Silky fabric looks great.

Instructions courtesy of Julie Jones, City of Fridley

Contact Paper Covered Boxes

Supplies: contact paper
shoe or storage box
pencil
ruler
scissors

1. Roll out contact paper, right side down, and place the lid, top side down, onto the paper. Hold the lid in place, and mark a dot at each corner using a pencil. If the contact paper you are using has a measuring grid on the backing, refer to it to keep your lid evenly spaced. Remove the lid, and connect the dots to make a rectangle.
2. Adding 2" to each side of the rectangle, cut out the shape. Draw a line from the corner of the outline to the corner of the contact paper. Repeat for each corner. Extend the long-side lines to the edges of the contact paper. Cut out the triangles created by those two lines. Trim 1½" from each end of the two side flaps, cutting off the points.
3. Peel back the protective backing of the paper, about ¼ of the way. Place the lid, top side down and centered, onto the sticky side of the contact paper. Peel back the rest of the protective backing while adhering the contact paper to the cover of the box. Smooth out any bubbles.
4. Adhere the side flaps to the sides of the box. Fold the tabs around the corners. Cut a slit into the contact paper at each corner, then fold down side flaps into the box. Fold up the remaining two flaps.
5. The steps are the same for covering the bottom of the box, only at Step 2. measure the depth of the box and then add 2". Continue with the remaining steps.

Instructions courtesy of Amy Ulbricht, Anoka County

Fire Starters

Supplies: used wax (candles or crayons)
sawdust or wood shavings
used egg cartons

1. Melt the wax over low heat and stir in the wood shavings; allow time for the wax to soak into the shavings.
2. Pour into empty paper egg cartons. Gently press to mold. Allow to cool.
3. Break apart and package in a reused container.

Instructions courtesy of Deb Gatz, Randy's Sanitation

Luminaries

Supplies: steel cans (any size)
hammer
a large nail

1. Wash the cans, fill them with water and place in the freezer. This minimizes the chance of denting when the design is punched.
2. After the water has frozen, punch a design into the can by pounding nail holes at regular intervals. The design may be freehand, or one that you have marked on the can. A paper design can also be taped to the can as a pattern, and removed when the design is completed.
3. Place a candle inside, anchoring it in sand, snow or a small candleholder. The can may be left plain or decorated with ribbon and small craft items.

Luminaries may be used inside or outside. They look great lining a walkway or in a grouping of various sizes at an entrance.

Tip: Shop at garage sales or thrift stores for holiday dishes and decorations.

Paper Gift Bag Instructions

Supplies: grocery bag or used wrapping paper
ruler
pencil
scissors
glue stick
paper punch

1. Press used wrapping paper with a warm iron if it is wrinkled. If you are using a grocery bag cut off the flat bottom area and the back seam.
2. Determine the dimensions you want to make your bag and cut the paper accordingly. Allow about an inch for seam overlap. Doubling the wrapping paper makes a sturdier bag. If you do not double the paper, allow a couple extra inches at the top to fold inside, doubling the area where the handles will be attached.
3. Glue the ends together; position the seam in the middle of the back and flatten. Mark $\frac{1}{2}$ of the side depth from the left outside edge at the top and bottom and crease it inward along the marks. Turn the bag over and crease this side inward the same way. Follow this same procedure for the right side of your bag.
4. To make the bottom, fold up the same measurement as the side depth and crease. Open the bag and starting at the left corner, fold the side depth into the crease and apply glue to hold it in position. Follow this procedure for all four corners. Fold the front flap over the back flap and glue them together. Place a cardboard insert on the inside bottom of the bag.
5. Make holes for the handles with a paper punch. Cord, yarn, ribbon or raffia can be used for the handles.

These same basic instructions allow you to make a bag any size. Gift bags made from grocery bags can be decorated with markers, stencils, cutouts, stamping, old holiday cards, bits and pieces of trim, silk flowers or craft items.

Instructions courtesy of Sandra Coop, Anoka County

Sew a SMART* Lunch Bag

Supplies: clean used jeans (or other washable clothing)
velcro
scissors

1. Cut one piece of jean material 10" x 25" (two pieces 10" x 13" can be sewn together to make a 10" x 25" piece). Fold the fabric in half so that the fold becomes the bottom of the bag. Pin the sides together and stitch 3/8" seams with a straight stitch. Restitch inside the seam with a zigzag stitch.
2. Measure 1" from the top. Fold to inside and press. Fold in again and press. The top hem should be 1". Sew close to the bottom edge of the fold all the way around and backstitch.
3. Turn the bag inside out, fold so the side seams are matched up in the center and the bag forms a triangle at the bottom. Mark a line across 2" from the pointed edge. Sew with a straight stitch and backstitch. Repeat for the other side.
4. Pin a 2" piece of Velcro™ in the center of the bag on the inside. Sew around the outside edges as close to the edge as possible until you have sewn around the rectangle and backstitch. Repeat on the other side, making sure to center the Velcro™, so the two sides match up.

Trim as desired with puff paint, buttons, patches, or appliqué.

*SMART means Saving Money And Reducing Trash

*Instructions courtesy of Betty Bergerson
SRC, Inc. / Town & Country Disposal.*

Printed on 100% recycled paper with 30%
post-consumer content and soy ink.

Reuse Ideas for Holiday Cards

Bookmarks: Cut a rectangle from the card, hole punch the top and tie with a pretty cord or ribbon.

Gift tags: Use the card itself, hole punch and put a string through it to tie on the package. Cut out a figure from the card and glue it onto a construction paper card, hole punch and tie on with string or ribbon.

Place cards: Cut a rectangle from the card, fold into a tent with one side longer than the other. Place a piece of white paper behind the short side, glue or tape it to the card and write the name on the white portion.

Postcards: Cut off the front and use as a postcard for holiday greetings or at other times throughout the year.

Instructions courtesy of Ruth Nelsen, City of Hilltop

More Reuse and No-Waste Ideas

- Make the wrap part of the gift:
 - Wrap a piece of jewelry or fragrance in a scarf
 - Wrap a toy in a child's T-shirt
 - Wrap a tool in an adult T-shirt
 - Wrap a kitchen utensil in a dishtowel
 - Wrap a homemade treat in a cloth shopping bag
 - Purchase a see-thru plastic container with a lid; line it with a scarf, T-shirt or towel and place a gift inside.
- Make computer-generated gift certificates giving of your time or a service (i.e. babysitting, washing windows, offer of transportation) or call Anoka County at (763) 323-5730 for a set of waste reduction gift coupons.
- Make candleholders from a round slice of wood cut from a birch tree branch. Drill a hole in the center and insert a candle or tea light.
- Spread peanut butter on pine cones and roll in bird seed. Place suet in a mesh bag (the kind onions come in). Put them all in a holiday ice cream pail.
- Make your own wrapping paper from brown craft paper or a grocery bag. Decorate with markers, stencils, stamping, or paints.