



December 2014

## Have an Eco-Friendly Holiday Season!

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This holiday season, why not try and minimize the amount of waste you create? Wrap presents with reusable materials where possible and make sure all of your discarded wrapping paper is recycled. Try and source food locally for big holiday feasts and serve dinner on ceramic plates with cloth napkins. Be sure to save the turkey (or ham) bones for soup! Don't forget to turn your Christmas lights off before you go to bed (or put them on a timer). These little changes will help make your holiday season a little greener.

### Transfer Station and Landfill Holiday Closures

Transfer Stations will be **CLOSED** on:

- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Years Day

Burns Lake Transfer Station  
Southside Transfer Station  
Area 'D' Transfer Station  
Vanderhoof Transfer Station  
Fort St. James Transfer Station  
Smithers-Telkwa Transfer Station  
Granisle Transfer Station

Landfills will be **CLOSED** on:

- Christmas Day
- New Years Day

Knockholt Landfill  
Clearview Landfill



# Christmas Trees: Real vs. Fake



OR



There are many things to consider when choosing a Christmas tree. Deciding whether to get a real or fake tree is one of the most common questions, along with which choice is more environmentally friendly? The answer is not as clear-cut as you might think. Each option has its own set of pros and cons.

## Fake Trees

### Pros:

- Last for many seasons—up to 6 years or more
- Convenient and can be set up quickly
- No maintenance required
- Low fire risk

### Cons:

- Produced overseas—travel long distances to consumers, burning fossil fuels
- Made of PVC (a non-biodegradable, petroleum-derived plastic)
- Not recyclable due to the difficulty of separating metal and plastic components, and end up in the landfill

## Real Trees

### Pros:

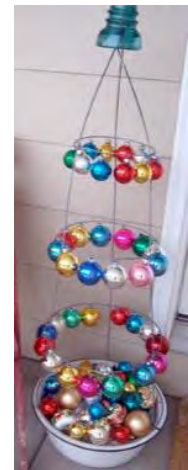
- Compostable and biodegradable
- Provide a natural Christmassy aroma
- Travel relatively short distances to consumers (there are hundreds of tree farms in BC)
- Tree farms help support complex ecosystems and stabilize soil while sequestering carbon

### Cons:

- Only used for one season
- Require regular watering
- Messy—needles fall on floor
- Pose a fire risk if tree is not properly cared for

There are numerous arguments for both sides. Supporters of fake trees state that cutting down trees every year only to have them set up for a week is unreasonable, whereas advocates for real trees argue that there is no way for plastic trees shipped from abroad to be considered eco-friendly. A number of studies have determined that out of the choice between a real or fake tree, real is the way to go. A study conducted in 2009 by the consulting firm Ellipso concluded that “when compared on an annual basis, the artificial tree, which has a life span of six years, has three times more impact on climate change and resource depletion than the natural tree.”

Want an even more eco-friendly option? Try one of these non-traditional Christmas tree alternatives:



Reclaimed pallets make great options

Driftwood Tree

Upside Down Tomato Cage

# Eco-friendly DIY Christmas Decorations

You might already have everything you need for these simple DIY Christmas decorations! Each of the crafts below repurposes a material that might otherwise be thrown away.



## Orange peel garland

Before you compost your orange peels, consider making this fragrant tree garland. You will need orange peel, some small cookie cutters and a needle and thread.



## Scrabble word decorations

Spell festive words or family members' names with some old scrabble letters, some ribbon and a glue gun.



## Cork reindeer decorations

To make these, you will need a few corks, some twigs and red pom-poms for the nose. Cut the twigs to size, poke holes in the corks and hot glue gun the legs and antlers in place.



## Bottle Cap Snowmen

Save your bottle caps! Paint three bottle caps white, and using a hot glue gun, glue all three to a piece of ribbon. Draw on a snowman face.



## Christmas Card Garland

Put all of your past year's Christmas cards to good use before you recycle them. With some scissors, a hole punch and some string, you can make a festive garland for your mantle.



## Twig Christmas Trees

With a few twigs, a drill with a small bit, a saw and some ribbon, you can make these eco-friendly Christmas tree ornaments.



## Christmas Card Gift Tags

Recycle holiday cards as monogram labels for gifts. Just draw out the recipient's initial onto an old card, cut it out and punch a hole for the ribbon.

# Reduce your Ecological Footprint this Holiday Season

## **Gifts**

Why not give the gift of experience? Concert/event tickets, a camping trip, cooking classes or a massage are all low-waste gift ideas. Experience-type gifts suitable for kids include museum/theatre memberships or a ski trip.

## **Charity Donations**

Why not donate to an environmental charity in someone's name? To make the choice a little easier, check out this guide to see how the listed charities spend donations:

[http://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/environmental\\_charities\\_in\\_canada.pdf](http://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/environmental_charities_in_canada.pdf).

## **Decorations**

Try your hand at making some of the decorations in this newsletter. Get creative using the materials you already have on hand! Decorating with spruce/pine boughs and other plants is a great idea, as they bring nature inside and can also be composted when you are done with them.

## **Lighting**

Switch to LED (light-emitting diodes) Christmas lights. They last 7 times longer and use 1/10th the energy of incandescent lights! Shutting off your lights before you go to bed will also reduce energy usage overnight.

## **Holiday Meals**

Be sure to serve all of your meals with reusable plates, cutlery, glasses and napkins. Use locally produced food if possible, and only cook enough for the people you invite to avoid unnecessary food waste. If you have leftovers, have your guests take some home, or refrigerate them and eat all leftovers within a few days.

## Homemade Cranberry Sauce + What to do with all the Leftovers!

Homemade cranberry sauce is a necessity for holiday turkey meals, but what do you do with the vats of leftovers? Below you'll find a healthy recipe for cranberry sauce along with some ideas for using the remainder after the holiday season.



### **Cranberry Sauce**

#### **Ingredients:**

- 2 12 oz. bags of fresh cranberries
- ¾ cup pineapple juice or orange juice
- ½ cup of unsweetened applesauce
- ½ cup of water
- Juice and zest of one orange
- 3-4 tablespoons of honey or to taste

#### **Directions:**

1. Put cranberries, pineapple juice, applesauce and water in a sauce pan and bring to a boil.
2. Keep on medium heat, stirring constantly until the cranberries start to explode (about 10-15 minutes).
3. Reduce to a simmer and pour the orange juice and zest over the cranberry mixture.
4. Simmer 10-15 minutes and remove from heat.
5. Cool completely and store in fridge at least 4 hours before serving.

#### **Now for the leftovers:**

- Try a ½ cup of cranberry sauce in a fruit smoothie.
- Puree the cranberry sauce and use it as jam in thumbprint cookies.
- Use it as a filling in turnovers.
- Add some maple syrup to thin out the cranberry sauce and use it as a pancake topping.
- Leave it thick and use it as a cheesecake topping.