

Holiday Shopping & Gift-Giving Tips for a Cleaner Environment



As you venture into the madness of holiday shopping this season, here are a few things to keep in mind to shop and give responsibly, for a cleaner environment:

1. **Give gifts of experience.** Give tickets for the theater, concerts, museums, and aquariums as gifts, or gift certificates for restaurants and spas.
2. **Shop over and over again.** Buy and use cloth shopping/tote bags for groceries and gifts. Bring your clean, dry plastic grocery shopping bags to your local store for recycling.
3. **Buy products with eco-friendly packaging.** Many products are over-packaged or packaged with materials that persist in the environment. Make better choices and choose products that have recyclable or reusable packaging. Buying in bulk helps.
4. **Read the label.** Look for these terms on the label before purchasing a product: recyclable, biodegradable, recycled content, unbleached or chlorine-free bleaching, not tested on animals, and CFC-free/ozone-friendly.
5. **Shop at home.** Save money on gas and avoid the hassle of holiday traffic and parking by shopping from your home computer or catalogues.
6. **Send eco-friendly greetings.** Buy holiday cards made from recycled paper ("post-consumer" content) and printed with soy or water-based ink. Save on paper and postage by sending postcards instead of cards that require envelopes. Send electronic greeting cards. Also, save cards you receive to use as gift tags.
7. **Give a gift that gives twice.** Purchase your gifts from an environmental organization or nature center (*see insert*). Proceeds will benefit that organization's efforts. Consider giving a membership, which may offer extra benefits throughout the year.
8. **A gift for those in need.** Don't throw away used or extra items when you receive a new replacement as a gift. Donate the extra or unwanted items to thrift stores, shelters, or other charities.
9. **Recycle holiday wastes and save gift packaging.** Check with your town for the items that are mandatory to recyclable (e.g., plastic, glass, metal, newspaper, magazines/catalogues, and corrugated cardboard) and follow instructions for recycling. Also, save ribbon, bows, and wrapping paper in good condition for decorating next year's gifts.
10. **Make a "green" New Year's resolution.** Learn to compost, recycle more materials from your household, save water, resist disposable items and products with excess packaging, use your car less, clean your house with less toxic products, and replace items in your home with more efficient and economical ones.

(Portions adapted from the Better World Handbook, www.betterworldhandbook.com and USEPA)

For tips to live environmentally sound all year round, visit www.CleanOceanAction.org and follow links for Education. **Got a tip?** If you have any tips to add to our holiday tips or "10-Tips series", please send them to Education@CleanOceanAction.org, or call Holly at COA at 732-872-0111.

