



NOVEMBER-2010

HOLIDAY EDITION

The holidays, with their accompanying shopping, wrapping and celebrating, have us throwing away a lot more waste. Between now and New Year's Day we are poised to add 25% more trash to our cans, which translates into an extra 250-lbs. of waste per home! We don't have to throw it all away! We have many opportunities to reduce, reuse and recycle the remnants of our holiday cheer and we have assembled a list of ideas intended to help you "Rethink Your Waste"—Holiday Style!

- **Greener Gatherings:** At your holiday feast, or feasts, replace disposable table items with cloth napkins and washable flat ware, cups and plates.
- **Compost!:** Next month we will feature our first "Rethink Your Waste" New Year's Resolution. To *spoil* the surprise, we are going to commit (and help you commit) to backyard composting! If you already have a pile, add your kitchen food scraps minus meat and grease. If you want to start one now, visit our website to learn how (www.rethinkyourwaste.com/composting).
- **All Those Boxes:** After the post holiday un-wrapping frenzy, wrangle up cardboard boxes for reuse and collect all other cardboard boxes, packaging and shipping materials to add to your recycling bin. It is perfectly fine to place small boxes inside large boxes and put out next to your bin, but be careful that plastic and Styrofoam packaging are not included.
- **Packaging:** Everything arrives in something; our cards, our gifts, our groceries and on and on. We can recycle much of our packaging, just like our cardboard boxes, or replace them with reusable items. For example, envelopes, catalogs, cards, and paper packaging can go into our recycling bins. Plastic film and plastic bags (without food residue) can be bundled into one bag and dropped off at any retail location (look for a bin in the front of the store). Lastly, we can avoid packaging all together by buying in bulk when appropriate, using reusable shopping sacks or reusing packaging for future uses.
- **Gift Giving:** Give the gift of an experience - concert tickets, music or dance lessons, movie passes or sporting events make fine gifts. Plus you don't have to wrap them!
- **Batteries:** During the holiday stretch 40% of all battery sales occur. A strong recycling infrastructure exists for rechargeable batteries, plus they last longer and pay for themselves over their lifetime. When purchasing toys that need batteries, consider rechargeable ones!
- **A Fourth "R":** Because it is holiday time, we can add a fourth "R" to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle...Re-gift! Sure, it is tacky and maybe taboo, but at least you are saving money and not throwing it away! If you can't bring yourself to do it, consider donating.

- Compost your tree!: Most municipalities in Niagara County will pick up your tree and compost it. One tip; if you use a plastic bag or wrap to get it out of your house, remove it once your tree is outside. The plastic is not compostable and poses a problem for the collection crews.
- Christmas Lights!: Right now you can get rid of your old bulb-style lights and go LED. Some box stores are even accepting your old lights in exchange for cash off new LED lights. Or visit www.holidayLEDs.com to learn about sending your old lights in for discounts on LED lights.
- Donate your old stuff: When filling your closet with this year's bounty, pull out some of your old items that may not fit and donate them to local charities.
- Last tip, and maybe an obvious one...When you are ready to light up your home, put all your lights on a timer to save energy.

Have a wonderfully joyous holiday season! If you have any more holiday tips, post them on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/RethinkYourWaste) or e-mail us at recycling@niagaracounty.com



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