

Have a Sustainable Holiday

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By Jaclin DuRant - Livability Educator

The holidays are a time for being thankful for what we have, and for spending time with family and friends. They are a time to be joyful and to give. The holidays are also a wonderful time to make small changes in our lifestyle that can make a big difference for our community and ourselves. Make your family's holiday more eco conscious by following some simple tips:

- Buy local. Greenville is home to many fantastic small businesses. Purchase gifts and food from local artists, farmers, and stores to help our community have a more prosperous holiday season.
- Change the focus of dinner and have more vegetables. Eating lower on the food chain is a great way to reduce your carbon footprint. Try using seasonal produce for a holiday feast filled with baked apples, roasted butternut squash, sweet potatoes, beets, pumpkin pie, and tasty greens.
- Gather your decorations. Forgo the electric blow-up characters and make your own decorations from seasonal greenery. Every year, I gather pine boughs and holly branches and arrange them on the hearth. Mix in some pine cones and bundles of sticks in glass jars for a rustic natural look that doesn't cost a dime.

- Reuse. Give gifts in reusable bags or wrapped in recycled newspaper. Let the kids paint the newspaper first for one of a kind wrapping paper that will be appreciated more than anything bought in the store.

- Turn off the electronics. Bring back some of the homey feel of the holidays by having an evening that doesn't involve the computer, the smart phone, video games, or the TV. Have a sing-a-long, tell stories, play board games, or get outside and take a family walk. Make it a weekly tradition throughout the holiday season.

- Donate your time. Giving isn't all about money. This time of year is a great time of year to volunteer at a local soup kitchen, to go spend some time with senior citizens, or to help a neighbor in need with a project around the house. There are many ways that we can give of our time and talents without spending a dime.

- Make something yourself. Homemade gifts or cards are doubly special to those who receive them. Whatever you choose to do and however you celebrate, we wish you and yours a joyful holiday season.

