

# Happy Mindful Holidays!

Put Value Back Where it Belongs



**G**o Green Winnetka encourages one and all to simplify their time and practices around the holidays. Say 'no' to a consumer holiday season and a thousand 'must do' traditions, and say 'yes' to a quiet time of reflection and love for your family, friends, and community. Stay home, and enjoy what you already have.

On average, Americans contribute 25% more volume to landfill between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day—approximately one million extra tons per week. The following tips provide ideas to cut down on the amount of garbage generated during the holiday and ways to be a more environmentally-conscious consumer.

## GIFTING

**Go gift free.** Make the gathering about the gathering and your time together about being present, not about giving presents. Leave the housecleaning for another time and unplug from phones, laptops, and other electronics. Play a game, do a jigsaw puzzle, listen to music, dance, put on a holiday show. Create new traditions that don't involve stuff. Go on a hike, create a scavenger hunt, bake cookies, have a White Elephant gift exchange.

Use the money you would spend on gifts to make donations to your favorite charities. Sit down with the kids and discuss different charities you're considering supporting and make decisions as a family.

Give the gift of time, attention, and experiences, rather than stuff. Spend time with a loved one doing or learning something you love together. Give coupons/certificates for experiences like going to a performance, enjoying a meal, sporting event, or other shared outing. Give memberships to botanic gardens, museums, zoos. Offer to do a chore for someone like go shopping, dog-walking, or yard work. Give the gift of Nature: Send self-made cards with packets of native flower seeds inside or plant a tree in someone's honor.



**Gift homemade and second hand.** This reduces waste and carbon emissions. Create a family photo album or cookbook of family-favorite recipes. Bake your favorite holiday treat, can your famous spaghetti sauce or salsa. Sew, knit, draw, paint, or write. Normalize second hand and re-gifting—your trash could be another's treasure.

**Buy local and sustainable.** When you do buy gifts, keep your money in the community. This strengthens the community fabric through connected and invested residents and business owners. Buying local supports local



businesses, economies, and governments. Buying local can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by not having to drive as far. Shop sustainable brands. Buy products that encourage sustainability. Be alert for "greenwashing."

Think about a gift's life cycle. What materials is it made of? Where was it made? Who made it? How long will the recipient use it? How will it be disposed of after use? Look for gifts that are well-made and Fair Trade.

Get creative with your gift wrapping. Reuse gift wrap, ribbons and bows, and gift bags, or try wrapping your gifts in fabric like traditional [Japanese Furoshiki](#).

## ENTERTAINING

**Dinnerware.** When entertaining, use reusable dishes, glassware, silverware, and napkins rather than disposables. If this is not possible, use paper plates, bamboo flatware, and/or BPI certified compostable products and dispose of them with your food scraps and other organics in any of Winnetka's residential drop-off commercial composting containers. [\[Find out more\]](#)



**Bubble wrap.** Recycle bubble wrap with other film plastics at your local grocery store.

**Polystyrene.** Recycle clean, dry block and food service polystyrene (aka Styrofoam) at Winnetka's polystyrene recycling collection. [\[Find out more\]](#)

*Best wishes for a wonderfully mindful and meaningful holiday season from all of us at Go Green Winnetka!*

Got a question? We'd love to hear from you. Email us at [gogreenwinnetka@gmail.com](mailto:gogreenwinnetka@gmail.com). You can also sign up for our newsletter on our website at: [gogreenwinnetka.org](http://gogreenwinnetka.org). And don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Instagram.



**Food.** Try to prepare only as much as will be eaten. Avoid waste. Have containers on hand to send guests home with leftovers, freeze for another time, or compost.

## WHEN IT'S ALL OVER

Save packing boxes, bubble wrap, and peanuts for reuse.

**Gift Wrap.** Save for reuse, or recycle gift wrap that does not have any glitter or foil. Compost tissue in any of Winnetka's residential drop-off commercial composting containers. [\[Find out more\]](#) Remove handles from gift bags before recycling. Save bows and ribbons for reuse.

**Boxes.** Break down the boxes and recycle them with your curbside collection. Remove molded plastic windows from cardboard and dispose of in the trash.

