

A Green Guide to Gift-giving

'Tis the season of snow, family, giving and...waste? Unfortunately, as we enjoy this wonderful time of year, we also tend to generate dramatically more waste—a staggering 25% more! This year, instead of creating an avalanche of waste and destroying more of our precious resources, you can create awareness about environmental issues and even help save our limited resources by reducing your consumption and by giving presents that help your friends and family take part in making the world a better place. Here are some earth-friendly gift ideas for the holiday season:

Share your gifts. Rather than wrapping up a present, give a “mock” gift certificate for your talents, like cooking or knitting. Or give a gift certificate for a service, like shoveling snow, babysitting, cleaning or helping with yard work.

Choose a used treasure. One person’s trash is another’s treasure. Find your next treasure at local consignment stores, thrift shops, used sporting goods retailers or antique dealers. You can find all things reusable at Eco-Cycle Exchange (www.ecocycle.org), where you can find and swap free reusable items with other community members, as well as check out links to other online resources such craigslist.com or freecycle.org, recyclebouldervalley.org and listings for reuse stores and organizations in our community.

Give gifts that keep giving. Choose holiday gifts that will help your loved ones reduce their resource consumption all year long, such as a reusable tote bag, a new bike, bus passes, a bike tune-up, an energy- or water-saving device, a compost bin, a pack of rechargeable batteries and a recharger, or a case of compact fluorescent light bulbs.

Contribute in a loved-one’s name. For the person who has everything they need, consider giving to someone who is in need through a donation to a favorite organization or group.

Take them out to the ball game. Give the gift of an activity, such as an event at the new Broomfield Event Center, a movie, museum visit, dinner at a local restaurant or a day on the slopes. To make your gift even greener, purchase carbon credits to offset the greenhouse gases created during your travel.

Buy from businesses that support your environmental values. Purchase presents from businesses that use sustainable resources (such as reused, recycled or organic materials). Check companies’ websites for information on their environmental policies and practices—and support those businesses working toward a sustainable future. Whenever possible, buy from a locally owned and operated business. This will support our local economy and reduce the amount of resources needed to get your gift to you. For suggested online sources to help you find green gifts in our community and around the country, the next time you’re dropping off your recyclables, swing by the Eco-Cycle/Broomfield Recycling Center office to pick up a copy of the *Eco-Cycle Holiday Guide*, or you can also check it out on the web at www.ecocycle.org.

For more tips to help you creatively avoid and reduce waste this holiday season, come out and join the fun and meet Eco Elf, who will host this festive workshop on December 9th from 10am-noon. We’ll also cover recycling options for those difficult items specific to this time of year.

By practicing the 3Rs—Reduce, Reuse and Recycle—you'll find yourself feeling less stressed and having more reasons to rejoice this holiday season than ever before.

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