



Green Days

Holiday Guide Book

2010

Fun, Festive and Green Ways to Celebrate the Season

This guide was written by Merleanne Rampale, SWALCO's Public Information Officer who directs the agency's educational and community outreach efforts. For More Information or questions on this Guide, SWALCO's programs, recycling guidelines or on living a more sustainable and environmentally friendly life, contact her at mrapale@swalco.org or visit the website at www.swalco.org.



GIVE GREEN GIFTS

- *Choose sustainable, organic and eco-friendly gifts when you can.*
 - Consider giving a Smart Strip Electric Power Strip or the Kill A Watt Electricity Usage Monitor for the techy/TV watcher on your gift list – not only will they save energy but they'll save on the electric bill. Available at Amazon online and other stores.
 - Compost bins and rain barrels offer nature's recycling at its finest. SWALCO subsidizes compost bin sales in Lake County—visit the website and our composting page at swalco.org for locations. You'll also find links to information about how to compost, and other resources. It's really made a difference in my garden. You can do it too!
 - You can find everything from wonderful clothing and fashion accessories to cosmetics, furniture and home décor products made in an environmentally friendly manner or made from recycled materials. Check out area shops or online stores including patagonia.com, greatgreenbaby.com, bluecanoe.com, bluelotusblankets.com, greatgreengoods.com, greenloop.com, burtsbees.com and gaiam.com just to name a few. There are more and more stores to choose from as the eco-friendly product industry continues to grow. Buying products made from recycled materials really closes the loop and you can find so many unique items for that person who's hard to buy for!



- Looking for something really different? Check out the fashion and artists bracelets made from recycled guitar strings on wearyourmusic.org. What's even cooler is that they use recycled DVDs to package them and the organization and music artists involved, support a number of wonderful charities. See if you're favorite artists are participating. Music fans can also purchase "green concert tickets". Another item for the music enthusiast.... visit Green Music Group's website to purchase "green" concert tickets.



- You can purchase wallets made from recycled tires and other green gifts at therainforestsites.com. Ten Thousand Villages has a fair-trade store that sells products from artisans around the world. Search "recycled" on their site and you'll find a number of wonderful gift ideas.

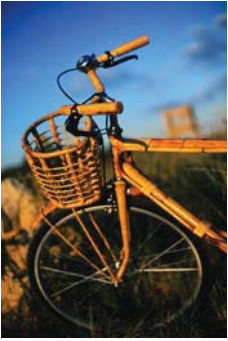


- Look out.... This is not your grandmother's dollhouse. Wooden Toddler Toys (woodentoddertoys.com) has one, complete with solar panels, recycling bins and a rain barrel.



- With cooler weather approaching you'll be thinking about winter wear. Why not buy recycled? There are a number of quality options that are soft and comfortable. Rei.com has warm and cozy recycled fleece gloves, or try one of the beautiful wool and cashmere scarves made from reclaimed materials at uncommongoods.com.

GREEN GIFT IDEAS (cont.)



- You may have heard the saying that one person's junk is another person's treasure... Ever wonder what someone might create with old bicycle parts and gears? Take a look at some innovative clocks that are made from these recycled parts. They make great gifts for your cycle enthusiast. You will find these and other recycled and eco-friendly gifts at Uncommon Goods as well as other stores.



- Speaking of bikes, you can help keep old bikes out of the landfills by purchasing a refurbished one from Working Bikes in Chicago. You'll also be supporting a great charity. To find out more about Working Bikes, their mission, and how to donate or purchase a bike, visit workingbikes.org.
 - As a pet owner, I was excited to come across a wonderful company called Purrfect Play here in the Midwest. Consider an eco-friendly toy for that special pet or pet-loving friend. You can purchase toys and other pet accessories made from organic and reclaimed materials. This company is doing great things in the name of reuse, recycling and our pets! Another ingenious reuse idea.. even the tags are made from upcycled dog calendars to save paper. They highly recommend their leash pouches and blankets made from reclaimed sweaters and denim. To find out more or to purchase them, visit purrfectplay.com.
 - Another great gift for your pet-lover: leashes made from recycled mountain climbing rope. Find these at krebsrecycle.com
 - VivaTerra.com offers a unique collection of gifts. For the gardener or chef they offer art made from recycled soup and juice cans, as well as other home décor including recycled glassware and other eco ware.
 - Angel ornaments and decorations made from recycled soda cans can be found at GiftswithHumanity.com as well as [Ten Thousand Villages](http://TenThousandVillages) and other organizations that support fair trade.
 - New appliances to help you prepare for those holiday parties and clean up after? Look for the Energy Star label. Not only will they save you money, but will help protect the environment by conserving energy. ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy. They reported that, with the help of ENERGY STAR, Americans saved enough energy in 2009 alone to avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 30 million cars, and, saved users nearly \$17 billion on utility bills.





MORE GREEN GIFT SUGGESTIONS

- Go **package-free**. Consider gift cards, homemade cookies or meals in reusable containers, tickets to a special event, or memberships to a favorite museum. You can even purchase a gift card from Ticketmaster. One of my favorite museums is the Science and Industry. The Smart Home exhibit is on through January 9, 2011. If you go to see it, don't forget to check out the Earth Revealed and Climate Matters exhibits as well.
- **Make a donation in someone's name to an environmental group or charity** of choice like WWF, Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club, American Forests, Ocean Futures Society or others. You can also adopt a tiger, a polar bear or find other great gifts on WWF's site at worldwildlife.org.
- Just Give (justgive.org) offers a chance for you to purchase a donation and let your gift recipient select a charity that they'd like to support.
- Use/give **rechargeable batteries** with electronic gifts. When purchasing, look for the most energy efficient models.
- Send holiday greetings online or purchase cards made from **recycled paper and printed with soy ink**. Think about a holiday postcard—no envelope, less postage.
 - Purchase recycled holiday and greeting cards from St. Jude's Ranch for Children— a facility for abused and abandoned children. You can also **donate used cards** to them. For details about their mission and the St. Jude's Recycled Greeting Cards program visit stjudesranch.org.
 - There are a number of crafts you can make from recycled cards including boxes, ornaments and bookmarks. Use last year's received cards for this year's gift tags.
 - There are many varieties of shade-grown chocolate or coffee and who doesn't like at least one of those options...
 - As always, reusable shopping and produce bags/totes, and refillable water bottles make great choices.



HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

- Send party invitations online. Use free e-vites (like Evites, Zoji, Invitastic, Punch Bowl and others) or personalized email. Think of all the trees and fuel you'll be saving as well as the money you'll save on the cards, envelopes and stamps!



HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING



- Set an **earth-friendly holiday table**. Use washable tableware and fabric napkins and avoid disposables. Consider purchasing beautiful **recycled glassware** available for sale at greenglass.com and [elsewhere](#). Many home/gift stores now carry recycled glass products including Macy's, Walmart and Crate & Barrel. Viva Terra offers a variety of dinnerware, glassware and other home décor products.
- If you are missing a few pieces of dinnerware that have been broken or lost over the years, don't throw that set away. Visit replacements.com. Or, set a sustainable table by using **vintage and gently used dinnerware, flatware and serving pieces** available there and at other resale stores.



- Serve **organic or locally grown foods**. Purchase local when you can. Visit localharvest.org. Select organic wines, champagne, or ales to serve at your special holiday party or dinner. A wide variety are now available. Develop a menu and let your guests know where their food and drink came from.
- Goose Island Beer Company in Chicago makes an organic pale ale that has been placed on a few favorites lists.
- Visit Sokol Blosser Winery's website pages. Their wines are produced in a very sustainable manner – they operate on 30% solar power, have vehicles that run on biodiesel and were the first winery in the county to gain LEED certification.
- Consider packaging. Select food products in containers or packaging that can be recycled in Lake County—see [Curbside Recycling Guidelines](#) at SWALCO online. This one page guide was put together by SWALCO staff to streamline recycling in Lake County and answers many of the most frequently asked recycling questions that residents have asked. It provides a list of everything that can go in your curbside recycling container. Take a look – there have been a number of new items added to the list since it was created approximately one and a half years ago, including beverage and paper cartons like those for soy and rice milks, chicken broth, and milk cartons. Paper cups from Starbucks and other places are also recyclable in Lake County (no straws or lids please).



HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING



- Set a festive mood. Simmer cinnamon sticks and citrus peel on your stove for a cozy, **natural (and healthy) scent** instead of using fragranced products, sprays or candles which often contain harsh chemicals.
- Use **beeswax** or other natural **candles** like soy, that do not contain petroleum-based ingredients or other additives.
- Use **environmentally friendly cleaning products** to clean up before or after parties and gatherings – they are not just available at specialty stores, but available everywhere now. Martha Stewart has a line and I've used Earth Friendly Products which are made by a local company here in Illinois.
- Or.... make your own green cleaning concoctions with natural ingredients. I have been green cleaning since the 1980's and love to use recipes from my mother's Vinegar Book and a variety of others I've collected or developed over the years. Homemade recipes are just as effective for most household cleaning and a much healthier alternative. Buy spray bottles or containers you can continue to reuse over and over again.
 - ◆ *For a natural wood polish mix 1 cup olive oil, 1 tablespoon water and the juice of 1/2 lemon. Mix in spray bottle and shake well. Apply with cleaning rag or cloth– use dry side for polishing. Or, just use a natural lemon oil. It smells great!*
 - ◆ *For mirrors and windows, combine 1/4 cup undiluted white vinegar, 1 tablespoon cornstarch, and 1 quart warm water in spray bottle. For a lint-free shine, wipe dry with a sheet of crumpled newspaper or a coffee filter.*
- Don't forget, you can bring any of your unwanted household cleaning chemicals and other household chemical waste to a **SWALCO's HCW Collection Event**. Visit Swalco.org's HCW page online to find locations and dates. In addition to mobile events at various locations around the county, SWALCO offers a year-round drop off program by appointment.



DECORATING



- Deck your halls with **LED lights**. LEDs are 80-90% more efficient than traditional holiday lights, produce less heat and will continue to glow even if one burns out. Since they last longer, fewer sets will need to be replaced, which means less landfill waste. Holiday LEDs, holidayleds.com, will recycle your old lights and give you a coupon for 25% off their products. ComEd is currently offering a discount on LED holiday lighting at their online store at comed.com. Don't forget to put lights on your timers.
- Make ornaments from found and natural items like pinecones, cranberries and cinnamon sticks or bake your own.

DECORATING (cont.)

- Decorate your tree with **natural decorations** such as strings of popcorn and cranberries. After the holidays, set them out for the birds to enjoy. If you purchase a live tree, consider a local farm that sells **pesticide and chemical colorant free trees**. Ask your seller or visit localharvest.org to find organic farmers near you.
- Use items like potted trees to decorate. Plant them outdoors next spring or donate to a local church, school or park. Use greenery from your own yard to trim the boughs and deck the halls! Dare to be different!
- Many communities have **tree recycling** programs. If you purchase a live tree be sure that this year's holiday tree becomes next year's mulch. Visit lcfpd.org to find out about the Lake County Forest Preserves holiday tree recycling program. Donated trees will be chipped and used for trails and landscaping. The National Christmas Tree Association at christmastree.org can also help you find a tree recycling center near you.



OTHER TIPS

- Take your **reusable totes or bags** with you when doing your holiday shopping. Remember the 4Rs: **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle & Recover (Buy Recycled)**. Sometimes you'll hear about a 5th R... and that's Rethink.
- Plan ahead and **carpool** to holiday events or shopping with family and friends.
- Electronics are some of the most popular gifts around the holiday season, but what do you do with last year's gadgets and all the old technology and equipment you are replacing? Residents can bring them to one of **SWALCO's Electronics Recycling Collections**—check online for a list of accepted items and collection locations and times. Along with computers, cellular phones, printers, TVs and small appliances, we'll also accept and **recycle your old holiday lights!** Visit the website for more info.
- New shoes? Recycle your worn-out athletic shoes through **SWALCO's Reuse-A-Shoe Program (in conjunction with Nike)**. We also donate gently worn shoes to a local shoe charity. If you have a handful of shoes you'd like to recycle, look online for locations. If you'd like to have your school, corporate or community group collect and participate in the recycling/donation program, contact mrampale@swalco.org. Visit **SWALCO** online at www.swalco.org or call **847-336-9340** for more details on these and other programs.



Between Thanksgiving and New Year's, Americans throw away an estimated 5 million+ tons of extra garbage. An important part of SWALCO's mission is to help educate the community about the 4Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle and buy recycled) and to share information and ideas that will help support them. With that mission in mind, I've written this guide and put together some fun and interesting ways to turn your holidays a little greener this year. You'll find loads of ideas to help you celebrate in a more sustainable and environmentally friendly fashion, green gift suggestions, eco-friendly decorating and entertaining ideas, as well as helpful information and resources. Whichever holiday or holidays you celebrate this year, I hope they'll be your best yet and that you'll discover some ideas inside that will inspire you to do something a little different. It really is true that little changes can make a big difference.

I hope that you'll enjoy the read and will take away a number of new options and ideas for celebrating.

Please contact Merleanne Rampale for more information on this guide. For more on SWALCO's programs and services, contact her or the SWALCO staff at 847-336-9340. Visit the website at www.swalco.org.



Hoping All Your Holidays will be Green,

Happy and Healthy



The links and resources listed here are not an endorsement of any company, product or service, but rather examples of a variety of environmentally friendly options and products that are known to the author or that she has used.

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