



ECOLOGY NEWS

ACTION CENTER

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I'm Dreaming of a Green Christmas

We all might all be dreaming of a white Christmas, but here at the Ecology Action Center we think you should have a green one in order to lower your negative impact on the environment! There are many ways to have a green holiday season, but here are some of our favorite ideas on what types of gifts to buy, where to buy them, and how to properly recycle packaging and wrapping so that you can have a green holiday season.

Convenience is key to many holiday shoppers, which often leads to online shopping. Unfortunately, online shopping, compared to local shopping, results in higher emission levels from transport and increased packaging waste. Also, the first of the 3 R's – REDUCE, reuse, recycle means consuming less. Instead of turning to online shopping for trinkets, try purchasing experiences for your loved ones instead! Go on a dinner date to a hip vegan restaurant, see a movie put on by the Climate Change Film Series, attend a composting or rain barrel workshop, or enroll in the community composting program!

Feel as though you need to buy a gift? Shopping small at local businesses reduces transportation emissions, unnecessary packaging, and helps to stimulate our local economy! A great local seller we know is... well...US! The Ecology Action Center has reusable tote bags, tree cards, hats, and more! For that person in your life that has everything, plant a tree in their honor through our website or call us at 309-454-3169 x15 to schedule a home energy audit and give them the gift of saving on their energy bill.

If you cannot find what you are looking for locally and decided to buy online, make sure that you dispose of the packaging correctly. Cardboard boxes can be reused or broken down and recycled through curbside recycling or at drop off locations. Bubble wrap is not recyclable. Styrofoam is not recyclable locally, but can be taken to Dart Container Corporation at 1505 East Main Street in Urbana to be recycled.



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Green Christmas continued...

Once your gifts are purchased, it is time to wrap them. Wrapping can quickly become wasteful so try using alternatives to wrapping paper. Executive Director Michael Brown loves reusing gift bags so he doesn't have to subject anyone to his self-proclaimed poor wrapping skills. You can also save your brown grocery bags, newspaper, and even fabric to use as wrapping material! If you choose to buy wrapping paper, avoid the shiny, foiled, or glitter elements and instead opt for something that is 100% paper. One hundred percent paper wrapping paper can be recycled while wrapping paper with glitter, foil, or other non-paper elements cannot be put in your curbside recycling bin. Gift bags that are 100% paper can be recycled as well, but if it has fabric or plastic handle and/or elements they must be torn off the bag before it can be recycled. Saving tissue paper, bows, ribbons, and tags for years to come reduces waste and saves you money! However, when the tissue paper becomes too ripped it can be recycled while unwanted bows, ribbons, and other decorative elements are not recyclable.

If you are in doubt, throw it out, check Recycle Coach or call us at 309-454-3169. Here at the EAC we hope your days are merry and bright and that all your Christmases are green...and white.

Give the Gift of Energy Savings!

Here are some gift ideas to help your loved ones save energy and money for years to come!

- Looking for experience gifts instead of "things"? Purchase someone a gift certificate for a home energy audit (home audits are only available for Bloomington and Normal residents)! During the energy audit, the Ecology Action Center's Building Performance Institute certified staff looks over the home's insulation, air sealing, plug loads, lighting, HVAC equipment, and uses diagnostic equipment like a blower door and infrared imaging to measure the home's air-tightness and pin-point areas of heat and air transfer. Staff can also conduct an energy bill analysis for the home. After the audit, the resident will receive a comprehensive report detailing findings and recommendations for energy efficiency improvements. Purchase the energy audit gift certificate for your family or friends in the STORE tab at ecologyactioncenter.org.
- Buy someone a smart thermostat! Smart thermostats allow you to set a heating and cooling schedule, but you can also adjust the temperature from anywhere as long as you have a smart phone. They also learn your preferences and adjust accordingly.
- Purchasing electronics or appliances? Look for that Energy Star label! Energy Star qualified electronics and appliances are the guaranteed energy efficient models.
- Rechargeable Batteries – have gadgets or kids' toys that require batteries? Buy rechargeable ones and give the gift of a charger along with them!



'Tis the Season to Learn More

December is commonly known as the season of giving, so why not give yourself the gift of knowledge? The Ecology Action Center has been working tirelessly this season to bring you some solid waste related programs for adults, children, and businesses! In January the Ecology Action Center, in partnership with the Coffee Hound, bring to you our coffee lover's guide to recycling!



An interactive children's recycling program will be held at the Coffee Hound's CH3 location on Saturday January 7th from 10:00-11:00am with an interactive adult recycling program to follow from 11:30-12:30pm. These recycling programs will help you and your little ones of any age recycle correctly, decreasing contamination rates which plague our local recycling system. These workshops are free with no registration needed and include a free coffee for attending! You can find more information by visiting ecologyactioncenter.org and looking for the event under the BN Green Events calendar.

A business recycling program will be held on Sunday January 8th from 2:00-3:00pm at the Coffee Hound's CH3 location. This program is free and helps businesses start, increase, and/or expand their current recycling streams. All businesses are invited! The program also has ample time built in to ask the experts all your questions, while sipping on a free Coffee Hound coffee! There is no registration needed for this program. You can find more information by visiting ecologyactioncenter.org and looking for the event under the BN Green Events calendar.



**BNCOMMUNITY
COMPOSTING.ORG**

Paper, plastic, metal, and glass might be the only things you can recycle curbside, but did you know you can recycle food as well? Come to the Coffee Hound's CH3 location on Saturday January 28 to learn more about vermicomposting or composting using worms! Vermicomposting can be done whether you live in a home, apartment, or dorm. The children's workshop will be held from 10:00-11:00am with an adult program to follow from 11:30-12:30pm. The children's program is free with no registration needed and will allow kids of all ages to learn what vermicomposting is, the anatomy of a worm, and allow them to meet our wiggly food waste recyclers! You can find more information by visiting ecologyactioncenter.org and looking for the event under the BN Green Events calendar.

The adult vermicomposting workshop costs \$35.00 to participate and there is limited space available. The workshop fee includes all materials including worms, worm bedding, a bin to host your worm farm, and all the knowledge you need to start vermicomposting. Coffee Hound will even throw in a free coffee! Registration is required and can be found online at ecologyactioncenter.org via the BN Green Events calendar.





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