



ECOLOGY NEWS

ACTION CENTER

Volume 19, Issue 4

Winter 2021

Have a Low Waste Holiday

The holiday season is here, which means many of us will be doing some extra shopping, wrapping, and gift giving. The EAC can help you celebrate the holiday season with a lower negative impact on the environment with tips on what types of gift to buy, where to buy them, and how to properly recycling packaging and wrapping.

During the pandemic, online shopping increased which means more shipping boxes, bubble wrap, Styrofoam inserts, and other miscellaneous shipping packaging. Cardboard boxes can be reused or recycled in curbside recycling carts or at local recycling drop sites. Please break down your boxes before putting them in the recycling. Bubble wrap is not recyclable in your curbside recycling. Styrofoam packaging inserts are not recyclable in your regular curbside recycling pickup, however, you can take them to Dart Container Corporation at 1505 E. Main St, Urbana, IL 61802.

Online shopping creates additional packaging waste, and also results in higher levels of emissions from shipping. There are gift options that produce less packaging and transportation waste. Consider purchasing experiences for your loved ones instead of things (there are a few EAC specific options listed below). Maybe a date for dinner and a movie with you, your treat! If you do need to purchase gifts, shopping locally reduces transportation emissions, packaging, and stimulates the local economy!

The Ecology Action Center has tote bags, tree cards, hats and more in our online store. You could gift that special someone a tree planted in their honor, a community composting subscription, or a home energy audit! Visit the EAC store at ecologyactioncenter.org or contact us for more information about these gift ideas.

Opening gifts is one of the best parts of the holiday season, but in order to open gifts, someone needs to wrap them. Wrapping paper can be wasteful, but there are alternatives to wrapping paper that you may find more useful. Reusable gift bags, can be kept and used again next holiday season for another gift. If you like wrapping paper, you could wrap your gifts in newspapers or brown grocery bags that you no



continued on the next page



BNCOMMUNITY
COMPOSTING.ORG

recyclecoach



RECYCLEBN.ORG



TREE CORPS
TREE-CORPS.ORG



BN CLEAN AIR FUND
ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER



continued from the previous page

longer need. Newspaper and brown grocery bags are completely recyclable after your gifts have been torn into! Fabric wrapping is another fun alternative to traditional wrapping paper. Fabric wraps can be reused from season to season, and can add an extra element of fun to your usual wrappings. If you need to purchase wrapping paper, avoid paper with shiny, foiled, or glitter elements.

After gifts have been exchanged, and the wrappings torn into, what can be recycled in your curbside recycling in Bloomington-Normal? Traditional wrapping paper that is 100% paper can be recycled. Wrapping paper that has glitter, foil, or other non-paper elements cannot be recycled in your curbside recycling. Gift bags that are 100% paper can be recycled, but if the gift bag has a fabric or plastic handle, the handle cannot be recycled (tear it off and then recycle the bag). Tissue paper can be recycled. Ribbons, bows, and other decorative elements cannot be recycled. Remember, if you are in doubt whether something is recyclable, please give us a call at 309-454-3169.



Plant a Tree for Christmas

Looking for a meaningful holiday gift? Something that doesn't create more waste? A gift that keeps on giving for generations? Look no further!

As part of the Ecology Action Center's Tree Corps program, you can give the gift of clean air and biodiversity by contributing to the EAC's *Plant a Tree for Christmas* Fund as a tribute to your gift recipient. The recipient will receive a tasteful certificate informing them of your gift. Native trees will be planted in 2022 locally in McLean County--not some far off place.

Trees provide critical habitat for many native pollinator and animal species, remove dangerous pollutants like ozone from the air, provide valuable shading and cooling in urban areas, and sequester climate-changing carbon emissions. Plus, they are pretty and are fun for climbing (once they're big enough)!

You can complete your gift shopping today by giving trees to our community in tribute to the special people in your life. Please be sure to make your Tree Tributes by noon on December 21 in order to receive the certificates before Christmas!

Tree Corps program seeks to plant at least 10,000 trees a year for ten years. 2021 was wildly successful, with over 10,000 trees planted by the end of May. 2022 can be equally successful with your help!

The EAC is joining with churches, civic groups, local governments, and many interested individuals and groups to plant trees around McLean County. Please donate now to our Plant a Tree For Christmas campaign to provide funds for 10,000 trees to be planted in McLean County in 2022!

Any amount from \$5 to \$5000 can help us plant more trees! Learn more and gift trees online at ecologyactioncenter.org/christmas/

Plant a Tree For Christmas!



TREE CORPS
TREE-CORPS.ORG

Energy Program Staff Earns New Certification

Ecology Action Center Assistant Director Larissa Armstrong just received her dual accreditations as a Building Performance Institute* Certified Building Analyst and Certified Envelope Professional. Larissa recently spent a full week in rigorous training to build upon her previous skills, culminating in a full day of testing including a field test where she received a perfect score. These certifications will not only improve the quality of the energy efficiency services provided by the EAC, but may also open the door to new opportunities for energy efficiency for our community.



Full home energy audit services can now include:

- A complete visual inspection of the interior and exterior of the home (including attic and basement)
- An energy bill analysis
- A blower door test measure air-tightness and pin-point air leaks
- Air flow rate tests for exhaust fans
- Natural gas appliance combustion testing to ensure appliances are not back drafting carbon monoxide or exceeding CO exhaust levels

Maybe you have already had a visual inspection audit but would like additional services, or maybe you have never had your home's energy efficiency measured. Winter is an excellent time for a home energy audit. Contact Larissa at larstrong@ecologyactioncenter.org or 309-454-3169 x 15 to schedule!

**The Building Performance Institute, Inc. (BPI) was founded in 1993 and is now the nation's premier standards development and credentialing organization for residential energy auditing and upgrade work. BPI sets the bar for home performance contractors.*

BN Community Composting Update

We're pretty excited about the very enthusiastic response to Community Composting in 2021—over 150 households are now participating. There was even so much response earlier this year that our friends at Better Earth Composting doubled the size of the compost kiosk so it would have enough capacity to make it through the busy weekends when everyone is dropping off their food scraps.

We still hope to locate a second kiosk in our community in the next few months. Bill at AB Hatchery has generously volunteered to host the next kiosk at his store. We could still use some financial contributions to help make it happen—please go to BNcommunityComposting.org for more details.

Finally, we have been asked about what restaurants or businesses are using BPI certified containers. We know that Cecil at Under The Ground BloNo is using BPI certified packaging but not sure about others. If you know of any businesses using primarily BPI compostable containers for takeout or leftovers, please let us know—email Michael at mbrown@ecologyactioncenter.org. Thanks!



PO Box 97
Normal, IL 61761-0097
ecologyactioncenter.org
309-454-3169



Printed on Recycled, Chlorine-Free Paper, Of Course!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Staff

Board of Directors 2021–2022

Michael Brown
Executive Director

Larissa Armstrong
Assistant Director

Riley Francis
Program Coordinator

Jen Gravley
Program Assistant

Gary Kamplain
Program Assistant

Angela Bossard
Administrative Assistant

Nathan Bair
Stewardship Coordinator

Mike O'Grady
President and Ex-officio
McLean County

Carl Teichman
Past President

Jay Ivers
Vice President

Nancy Armstrong
Treasurer

Charles Bristow
Secretary

Kevin Koethe
Ex-officio Bloomington

Tim Golliday

Myra Gordon

Steve Kowalski

Joan Brehm

Julie Emig

Kari Sandhaas

Vince Allen

Elisabeth Reed

Ben Ryburn

George Gordon

Wayne Aldrich

Goverdhan Galpalli

Rachael Lund

Laurie Wollrab



**Bloomington
Normal Water
Reclamation District**