

# Roth: Have an Eco-Friendly Christmas

I learned a great holiday and life lesson from my grandmother Anthony, a wonderful woman who lived a generous life but who never forgot the influence of her Depression-era childhood.

Her slightly used recycled wrapping paper, which found its way around our gift packages each year, was literal more of a lasting gift to me, over the years, than the toys or socks or button-down shirts she would often share with us kids. Thankfully, not a gift that I ever give or receive happens without an inner smile and a loving memory of her kindness and conscientious spirit.

Christmas is a wonderful time of giving for so many families. The Christmas spirit becomes contagious as we all receive joy from giving gifts to others and receiving gifts ourselves. We can add to this Christmas spirit by making our holiday celebrations a bit greener and more sustainable.

There are many simple adjustments we can make to ensure that our holiday festivities are more sustainable. Besides, having a greener Christmas usually leads to saving money, so everyone wins.

There are a number of sustainable gift-wrapping methods we can use. Buying wrapping paper each year can get expensive, and we often use and throw away large amounts of it. One alternative is to wrap our gifts in festively patterned cloth and use cloth ribbons. While cloth will probably cost more up front than wrapping paper, it will save money over the long haul because unlike wrapping paper, cloth can be reused to wrap gifts for many years.

Another surprisingly attractive gift wrapping option is to use old newspapers instead of wrapping paper. This gives a second

life to something we would throw away anyway, and it saves us from spending money on wrapping paper. The newspapers can be recycled after gifts are opened. This is a more sustainable approach than buying wrapping paper each year.

Instead of using incandescent Christmas light bulbs, we can upgrade to LED lights. LED lights last longer and are more efficient than traditional light bulbs, so even though they are more expensive up front, they will save money over time. LED bulbs don't get as hot as incandescent bulbs, so they pose less of a fire hazard. For extra savings and efficiency, timers can be set up to turn the lights off late at night. Some LED lights are even solar powered, altogether eliminating the use of electricity.

There is also a green alternative to sending out Christmas cards. Instead of sending out cards, we can email e-cards to our friends and family. E-cards have exploded in popularity in recent years, and they provide more options than traditional Christmas cards because many are animated video clips rather than pictures. Not only are e-cards more environmentally friendly, they also save money by eliminating the need for stamps.

So this Christmas, let's spread holiday cheer to a new level. Let's have a greener, more sustainable Christmas and save ourselves some green in the process. Happy Holidays to everyone.