

The holidays are a fun and festive time of year. However, they also bring tons of extra garbage, millions of chopped down trees, megawatts of extra power usage, and many expenses to you. Learn to have a lovely holiday season while being kind to the environment and your wallet.



Presented by the [St. Mary's County Commission on the Environment](#).

Resource Conservation:

- Make your trash loads lighter, and recycle during the holidays (and all the time). Learn about [St. Mary's County's single stream recycling](#) at the convenience centers around the county.
- Use old newspapers, maps, or other recycled materials for gift wrapping.
- Collect items like boxes and ribbon all year from various purchases to use for the holiday time.
- Use LED holiday lights.
- Look for holiday cards that are made with recycled paper or send e-cards.
- Give the gift that keeps on giving – a basket of energy efficiency products (CFL light bulbs, motion sensors that turn on lights only when someone is in the room, etc.) will help your friends and loved ones save energy and cash all year long.
- When buying gifts, keep an eye out for those with minimal packaging, or items packed in recycled or recyclable materials (i.e.: cardboard).
- Consider using your holiday meal scraps to start composting in your backyard for the first time! If you already compost, give a friend or loved one a compost bin as an early holiday gift to get them started too. Buy local at Chamber of Commerce member [hardware stores](#).
- Make your own presents, such as a hand-knitted scarf or preserves.
- Bring reusable shopping bags when you go shopping.
- Avoid disposable plates, cups, etc. and use reusable items when having holiday celebrations.
- Give a rain barrel as a gift. A rain barrel reduces pollution in your yard and saves money on your water bill.
- If you have a holiday tree, plan to recycle it into mulch at the end of the season at one of the county's [designated locations](#).

Pollution Prevention

- Combine gift-shopping trips that need to be made by car with friends! You'll save gas AND have more fun. [Public transportation](#) is a great option too.
- Travel by reindeer.



Greening

- If you usually purchase a holiday tree, consider decorating a native potted shrub instead and then transplanting it to your yard in the spring.
- Give a friend or loved one a gift certificate to a [local garden center or nursery](#).
- Visit [local farmer's markets](#) and put together a basket of local produce for a friend or loved one, or buy a friend or loved one a CSA (community-supported agriculture) membership for the spring.

- Have a tree planted in someone's honor.

Education and Awareness

- Share this list with your friends!
- Get a friend or loved one a gift certificate to a class on native plant gardening, urban bee-keeping or another sustainability-related topic.
- As a gift, make a donation in a friend or loved one's name to the one of the local conservation organizations: the Potomac River Association, St. Mary's River Watershed, or Friends of Myrtle Point.

Green Economy

- Shop at local craft fairs.
- Check out the [St. Mary's Chamber of Commerce](#) for more ideas of places you can shop local.
- Buy food from the [local farmer's markets](#) to purchase the freshest and best tasting food.
- Shop for a better **St. Mary's County** by supporting local nonprofit organizations that are bettering the community in a variety of ways, by purchasing a gift from one of the fun options they offer.



Transportation

- Consider chipping in with others to get a friend or loved one a new bicycle as a present! You can also get cheaper, used bikes from [Southern Maryland Online](#), [The BayNet](#), or Craigslist.

New Year's Resolutions for 2012

- Join one of the local environmental groups such as the Potomac River Association, St. Mary's River Watershed, Friends of Myrtle Point, the Sierra Club or the Patuxent Riverkeeper.
- Learn to live more sustainably in the New Year.
- Plant a tree